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The Advent of the Printing Press and Britain's Multilingual Textual Culture, 1471–1510

Abstract: This article discusses the effects the new technology of printing had on the rich and multilingual textual culture of late medieval Britain. Before setting up his press in Westminster, William Caxton had books published in Latin, French and English. As soon as he relocated to England, however, he abandoned this multilingual business model and devoted all his energies to print books in English, as did his successors Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde. Not only did they favour English over all other British languages, but promoted a London-based variety of English at the expense of other dialects. Hence, before giving to the press the Scots *Contemplacioun of Synnaris* by William Touris, Wynkyn de Worde chose to have it Anglicized. When Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar established a printing press in Edinburgh in 1508, they replicated the choices of their English counterparts, promoting the standard form of Scots and even Scotticizing Middle English texts, such as *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. I conclude by arguing that the introduction of the printing press in Britain enhanced the prestige of the language variety used by the elite and became instrumental in eroding the balances existing in the British language ecosystem.

Keywords: printing history, Middle English, Old Scots, William Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde, Andrew Chepman, Andrew Myllar

At the end of the Middle Ages the island of Britain constituted a multilingual territory where people communicated in English, Gaelic and Welsh, besides speaking other minority languages that included Norse in some parts of Scotland and the now nearly extinct Cornish in Cornwall. There also co-existed other foreign languages used among migrant communities whose mother tongues were as diverse as Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and German, among others. In addition, two other languages – Latin and French – that achieved special status as instruments

for international communication were commonly used in Britain in scholarly, ecclesiastic, governmental and legal contexts. This article examines how Britain's rich and varied language ecosystem interacted with the new technology of printing and how choices made by printers had repercussions for the island's linguistic diversity. Owing to its enhanced capacity for textual reproduction, the printing press transformed existing patterns of written transmission and gradually displaced the decentralized manuscript culture that was dominant during the late medieval period. I take as point of departure for this essay the year 1471, when the earliest English printer – William Caxton – first published a printed book, and continue my discussion until the year 1510, when the first Scottish printing house stopped being in operation. My goal is to explore to what extent the early printers took into account Britain's rich linguistic culture when making publishing decisions. Ultimately, I hope to determine the degree to which the print book market met the needs and demands of the various linguistic communities that populated the British language ecosystem in the late fifteenth century and the first decade of the sixteenth.

Though a native of the Weald of Kent, William Caxton resided for approximately three decades on the Continent, mainly in Flanders, where he carved out a career as a merchant and diplomat, securing a prominent position in society. In 1462 he was appointed Governor of the English Nation of Merchant Adventurers in Bruges and in 1468 was involved in the negotiations leading to the marriage between Duke Charles the Bold and Margaret of York, sister of King Edward IV of England (Hellinga 2010, 12–26). His prolonged residence in Flanders together with the sort of activities he engaged in suggests that Caxton lived in a multilingual environment and acquired high linguistic competence in Dutch, French and Latin, apart from using his mother tongue.[1] Such multilingual experience was augmented in the summer of 1471, when, for political reasons, he went on exile to the German-speaking city of Cologne (Corsten 1976/1977, 11–13). While we are unsure about the knowledge of German Caxton gained during the eighteen months he spent there, we do know that he used his time in Cologne to discover the enormous business potential of printing texts.

On arrival at Cologne, Caxton contacted the local merchant community, who as it happens were taking advantage of the recent introduction of the art of printing in the city in 1466 and expanded their activities into the publishing business. In 1470 Cologne merchants promoted a new practice of collaboration with local printers and, acting as publishers, commissioned them to print a number of books (Hellinga 2010, 27–28). Finding this business arrangement inspirational, Caxton was quick to follow in his German colleagues' footsteps and commissioned the publication of three works, namely, Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum* (GW 3403), Walter Burley's *De vita et moribus philosophorum* (GW 05784), and the *Gesta Romanorum* (GW 10881). To produce such an ambitious publications programme required a considerable amount of time and capital outlay, in particular for the edition of the substantial *De proprietatibus rerum*, comprising more than

500 pages of the extra-large paper size known as Royal.[2] In this, Caxton's first foray into printing, he notably chose works written in Latin that, despite their English origin, were "meant for the markets pioneered by the early Cologne publishers" (Hellinga 2018a, 298).

Before the safe-conduct issued for his stretch in Cologne expired at Christmas of 1472 (Birch 1923, 51), Caxton returned to Flanders, probably to Ghent (Hellinga 2018a, 313–314). Although he managed to retain his social position and political relevance, Caxton was not reinstated as Governor, thus prompting him to capitalize on the printing and publishing skills he acquired in Cologne. His hands-on experience of publishing enabled him to appraise the market for books printed in Latin and to form an opinion about the commercial value of each one of the languages he was proficient in. Even though "the earliest clientele for printed books is the community defined by Latin as a common written language" (Hellinga 2001, 11), after returning to Flanders Caxton prioritized the publication in vernacular languages, instead of continuing to print in Latin as he had done while in Cologne. He was not the first to explore the possibility of publishing in the vernacular, since some few printers, mainly in Mainz and Italy, had already done so by printing in German and Italian (Hellinga 2010, 34), but he reached this decision independently.

Towards the end of 1473 Caxton published the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* (BMC ix, 129), his own English translation of Raoul Lefèvre's French original. This is the first time a text written in English was reproduced using mechanical means and, in the paratext to the *Recuyell*, Caxton expresses some anxiety about the choice of English over Latin, the language of culture par excellence. He has no qualms in acknowledging the inadequacies of his mother tongue, describing it as "this symple and rude Englissh" (Blake 1973, 99), but bluntly deflects any possible criticism levelled against his own dialect: "[I] lerned my Englissh in Kente in the Weeld, where I doubte not is spoken as brode and rude Englissh as is in ony place of Englond" (Blake 1973, 98). If Caxton ventured to part with the capital resources necessary to publish a book written in a language other than Latin – that he himself calls *brode*, i.e. "coarse, unrefined, vulgar" (*OED* s.v. *broad* adj. 6b) – and in a country where it was not a native language, it must have been because he obtained sufficient assurances that his exposure to financial risk was manageable. Not only did he count on Margaret of York's patronage, since Caxton translated the *Recuyell* "at [her] comaundement" (Blake 1973, 97) and she "largely rewarded" him for it (Blake 1973, 100), but on account of his remarks in the epilogue to the *Recuyell*, he also garnered some support among the community of English expatriates living in Flanders: "I have promysid to *dyverce gentilmen* and to *my frendes* to adresse to hem as hastely as I myght this sayd book" (Blake 1973, 100; emphasis added).

His decision to concentrate on publishing vernacular texts, particularly in English, produced the desired result, because on 31 March 1474 Caxton put on the market another English title, *The Game of Chess*, originally composed in Latin by Jacobus de Cessolis. For this edition Caxton followed a similar pattern: it was

his own translation done from a French version, with aristocratic patronage – in this case from George, Duke of Clarence – and destined for a local audience too (BMC ix, 130). This publication proved to be successful, since Caxton reprinted it in 1483 (BMC xi, 134–135), whereas the *Recuyell* was not reissued until 1502 (STC 15376). In the prologue to the second edition of *Game*, he comments how the *editio princeps* was indeed well received: "I dyde doo sette in enprynte a certeyn nombre of theym [i.e. of copies of *Game*], whiche anone were depesshed[3] and solde" (Blake 1973, 88).

Both the *Recuyell* and *Game* were printed using Caxton's Type 1 (BMC ix, 129), apparently cast in imitation of the scribe David Aubert's hand, who besides copying a number of manuscripts for the Burgundian court and benefitting from Margaret of York's patronage, also produced printed books in association with Caxton.[4] This collaboration with the francophone Aubert was advantageous to the English printer, since he chose to exploit his linguistic acumen and that of his business partner by publishing books in French and appeal to the local francophone community, much larger than the anglophone one. It was apparent to Caxton that relying on the local English-speaking clientele could work only as a temporary arrangement, but would not guarantee the long-term financial viability of his operation.[5] Thus, in the following months Caxton took part in the publication of two texts printed in French, once again using his Type 1 associated with Aubert. The works were Lefèvre's *Recueil des histoires de Troyes* and Pierre d'Ailly's *Méditations*, which Caxton and Aubert were the first to make available in French editions.[6]

The following year, 1475, Caxton was once more involved in the publication of another edition in French, namely, Jean Miélot's translation of Gerardus de Vliederhoven's *Cordiale* (BMC ix, 131; Mansion cat. no. 27). On this occasion he worked in collaboration with Colard Mansion, another well-connected scribe that also engaged in the business of publishing books.[7] Mansion's calligraphic hand served as a model for Caxton's Type 2 (Hellinga 2018a, 318), which was used to print this edition of *Cordiale*. Before relocating his business to Westminster in 1476 and carrying the fount of Type 2 away with him, Caxton still used it to print an edition of *Sarum Horae* in 1475 (Mansion cat. no. 26; cf. BMC xi, 331–332). Although this is the only text in Latin that he printed in Flanders, Caxton remained faithful to his business principles and intended this edition for a specific and familiar readership. Despite containing the Use of Salisbury, Caxton was not thinking of exporting it to England, but instead intended it for "English merchants in Flanders or perhaps for English persons at the Court of Margaret of York, and not for use in England" (BMC xi, 8).

These two editions printed by Colard Mansion marked the end of Caxton's Continental publishing activities, which began in 1471 in Cologne, continued in 1473 probably in Ghent, and drew to their close in 1475 in Bruges. Displaying great dynamism and adaptative capacity, during this five-year period Caxton

published nine works in three different languages: four in Latin, three in French and two in English.[8] The linguistic diversity of Caxton's output suggests that he envisioned his business as a multilingual enterprise capable of catering for different linguistic communities and of turning their needs and demands into commercial opportunities. Furthermore, the correspondence between some of the titles printed in English and French, as in the case of Lefèvre's works, points to Caxton's incipient development of a dual publications programme in English and French that would have enabled his business to grow and penetrate two separate book markets. As a shrewd businessman, Caxton realized that he could easily use a multilingual strategy to increase profitability, for instance by doubling his textual output. Hence, it is surprising that he consciously excluded Dutch from his plans, even though he had a good command of the language that was indigenous of the southern Low Countries, where he started publishing in the vernacular. It is, however, not unlikely that Caxton contemplated the possibility of publishing in Dutch, but acquainted with the Flemish elites' preference for texts written in French, he chose to abandon that path.[9]

From this initial period in Caxton's career as a printer-publisher, we can surmise a certain desire to lead the way, to be the first to put a text on the market, as happened with every single work he published on the Continent. Naturally, there was little merit just in being the first to bring a book to press at this early stage after the introduction of printing. What really mattered was to be first in identifying and exploiting the market potential of a given text. The fact that other printers followed in his footsteps and published editions or translations of works previously issued by Caxton is indicative that he was successful more in creating demand than in satisfying it, more in shaping the market than in following trends. Although he always operated on a local scale, his choice of texts resonated beyond Flanders and thus contributed to mould literary taste on a Continental scale. His desire to be the first in exploiting a particular text together with the lack of encouragement from his patrons in Flanders in part explains his decision to return to England (Hellinga 2010, 53), where he expected to be the pioneer of printing and to have no direct competitors. Early in 1476 he went back to his native country and established a printing house in Westminster that was already operational sometime in June (BMC xi, 8). While Caxton's was the first printing press to be set up on British soil, it does not mean that British readers had had no access to printed matter. Actually, there is evidence showing that English customers bought printed books even before Caxton became acquainted with the art of printing in 1471.

In September and October 1465 James Goldwell, dean of Salisbury, was in Hamburg, where he bought a copy of Willelmus Durandus's *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, printed in 1459 in Mainz by Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer (GW 9101). Similarly, in 1467 John Russell, at the time archdeacon of Berkshire, was in Bruges participating in the aforementioned negotiations for the marriage between Charles the Bold and Margaret of York and purchased a book containing a selection

of Ciceronian writings printed also by Fust and Schoeffer in 1466 (GW 6922).[10] In the absence of any systematic evidence and the patchy information contained in the incomplete custom rolls (see n. 11 below), the cases of Goldwell and Russell, as well as other later documented cases of book acquisitions, provide anecdotal yet consistent evidence of how British readers accessed printed texts before Caxton set up his printing press in England. Initially books were bought on the Continent and brought to Britain on a personal basis by or for individuals with a university education that were interested in works written in Latin. At first, Britain was left out of the international distribution networks of printed books, with the earliest import recorded in the customs rolls of the port of London dating from the second half of the 1470s. It was a consignment of "xxj libris diversarum istoriarum" dated on 10 January 1478.[11]

With no local competition in England, Caxton found himself in a comfortable position when he started operating from his Westminster premises in 1476, as he had anticipated and wished for. Actually, his move to England makes him an all-time pioneer, since Caxton was the first native printer to introduce the new technology into his homeland. Without taking appropriate precautions, this competitive advantage might have been squandered. But Caxton, with his long experience as a merchant, acted prudently, at first trying to understand his new environment and modulate his business model to the particularities of the book trade in England. Soon he realized that the Latinate needs of the university-educated readership were already well covered by Continental printers (Coates 2014). Aware that their technical expertise, commercial capability and productive capacity were superior, Caxton gave no priority to this line of business. Still, he did not abandon it entirely as shown by his editions of *Rhetorica nova* (1479; Duff 368) and *Epitome Margaritae eloquentiae* (1480; Duff Suppl. 46), both of them bespoke productions authored by Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni, who taught at the University of Cambridge.[12]

Caxton's editions of Traversagni's works are illustrative of his overall attitude towards the publication of works written in Latin, the language of the first text to come off his press in Westminster. In June 1476 Caxton printed *Propositio ad Carolum ducem Burgundiae*, patronized by its author John Russell, thus showing the sort of precautions the printer put in place to limit financial risk (BMC xi, 103; Carlson 2006, 46). In addition, Caxton did not neglect two specialized sectors that required books in Latin, namely, the ecclesiastic market and, to a lesser extent, the educational one. In regard to the former, Caxton omitted theological works, already supplied by Continental printers, but centred on liturgical and devotional texts, whose demand from institutional customers was expected to remain stable. Soon after setting up business in England, he produced a stream of religious publications starting with his edition of the *Ordinale* of 1476–1477 (Duff 336), followed among others by the *Horae ad usum Sarum* of ca. 1477–1479 (Duff 175) reprinted in ca. 1484 (Duff 178–179), the *Officium visitationes beatae Mariae Virginis* of 1480

(Duff 148), the *Psalterium* of 1481 (Duff 354) and the *Officium transfigurationis Jesu Christi* of 1487 (Duff 146).[13]

As regards the educational market, it was also characterized by a constant demand but from individual customers, who tended to use these products intensively, thus making for a high turnover. It also provided a guaranteed revenue stream, but unfortunately for Caxton, "already before he established himself in England, monopoly of this educational end of what came to be called the 'Latin trade' had already been established by Continental printing firms" (Carlson 2006, 56). Hence, his first educational publication in Latin did not appear until 1487; it was the anonymous grammatical treatise known as the *Janua*, used for elementary teaching of Latin and on many occasions wrongly identified as one of Donatus's grammars, which were actually meant for native speakers of the language (Duff 129; cf. BMC xi, 54). He was more adventurous in the case of educational texts that might contain some Latin but used primarily English and, therefore, were intended for a local clientele whose needs were not attended to by Continental printers. The same year 1476 Caxton printed a bilingual version – with some Latin but mostly English – of Cato's *Disticha moralia* (Duff 77), which met his commercial expectations, since he reprinted it the following year (Duff 76) and again in 1483 (Duff 78), finally producing an expanded edition in 1484 that contained moral exempla too (Duff 79). In the prologue to this enlarged edition Caxton pronounced it to be "the beste book for to be taught to yonge children in scole" (Blake 1973, 64). Other books he printed for school purposes include texts in English such as Lydgate's *Stans puer ad mensam* of 1476 (Duff 269) and the *Book of courtesy* of 1477 (Duff 53). Lastly, another text meant for learning purposes, known as *Vocabulary in French and English* or *Book to understand French and English* of 1480 (Duff 405), deserves special attention, because it is Caxton's only book printed in England that makes extensive use of French. It is ultimately based on a text in French and Flemish and consists of a rudimentary phrase-book in French and English that Caxton chose to print after rightly identifying the need for this type of didactic material (Hanham 2005). While his market diagnosis was accurate, Caxton failed to satisfy this need properly, as he did not reprint it. Moreover, after his death, Richard Pynson put another manual to learn French on the market, but did not reprint or reuse Caxton's text, producing instead a completely different one (Duff 406; ca. 1493–1496). Pynson's work was well received by the public, since Wynkyn de Worde reprinted it in 1499 (Duff 407).

As Coates (2014, 46) has argued, "Caxton and his successors, and early printers in Scotland as well, realised that they would be in a better position if they chose to print the sort of books which could not be obtained elsewhere". In view of the Continental printers' technical and productive superiority, it became apparent to printers in England that they could gain a competitive edge by printing books in English, a language that had been ignored since the invention of the new technology. A glance at printing statistics from the incunabular period reveals

the extent to which the business of printing books in England was dependent on titles written in the country's native language. While a little over 70 per cent of all incunables printed on the Continent were in Latin and less than 30 per cent in the various vernacular languages, the situation in England is practically the reverse, with 33 per cent of books in Latin, near 60 per cent in English and the remaining 8 per cent in Law French (Hellinga and Trapp 1999, 17). In fact, the languages of books printed in England during the fifteenth century are exactly the same ones used by Caxton when he started publishing books on the Continent, but with very different proportions. Besides, while the French works he printed in Flanders were of a literary kind, in England French was used to print texts of the common law under the auspices of the Inns of Court and the Inns of Chancery in order to serve the needs of the legal profession.[14]

The figures in the previous paragraph show England to be an exception in the context of Europe in terms of printed production. In order to complete the picture we need to assess how British readers consumed printed books and the share English and Scottish printers had of this market. Margaret Lane Ford (1999a) has analyzed 4,300 early printed books that we know existed in England and Scotland until the 1550s. For instance, this survey shows that during the 1480s books issued in Westminster and London represent only a 12 per cent of all books in the corpus printed in the same decade, a percentage that remained more or less constant for the period covered by Ford's research, with England supplying a mere 10 per cent of all books positively known to have been owned in Britain until the middle of the sixteenth century (Ford 1999a, 183 and 189). It becomes clear, then, that the early printers operating in England had a modest market share despite all their efforts, while Continental printers occupied a dominant position in the British book market. Note, however, that not only did Continental printers benefit from the local printers' limited productive capacity, but also from legislation favourable to importing books that was passed in 1484, granting the right to "any Artificer or merchaunt straungier of what nacion or Contrey he be or shalbe of for bryngyng in to this Realme or sellyng by retaill or otherwise of any maner bokes written or imprynted" (Blayney 2013, I, 40; cf. Rode 2012).

Under commercial conditions that were so favourable to the importation of printed books, it comes as no surprise that Caxton should display greater tendency to publish in the vernacular than the rest of printers, with 71 out of 111 titles printed in English since he set up business in Westminster (Atkin and Edwards 2014, 28); that is, 64 per cent of his output was in English. These figures are even more revealing when instead of counting the number of published titles we take as reference the number of total surviving edition sheets: 91 per cent English (3,845) and 9 per cent Latin (395), against 63 and 28 per cent respectively for all incunabula printed in England (BMC xi, 43, table 5). Notwithstanding that the commercial context induced Caxton to concentrate on the publication of English texts, he probably made this choice readily, as would suggest his partiality for the

vernacular when he was in Flanders. If Caxton became the printer with the highest percentage of English publications during the incunabular period,[15] he did so at the expense of abandoning the multilingual business model he devised in Flanders and replacing it with an almost monolingual one in English, which left no space for replicating the dual formula he developed on the Continent.[16]

Once determined to print primarily in English, Caxton had to decide on the variety of English he wanted to adopt for the printed dissemination of texts. During the late medieval period one of the characteristics of Middle English was its regional variation, of which Caxton was well aware as late as 1490, when he wrote the prologue to the edition of *Eneydos* (Duff 404) – his translation from the French *Livre des* Énéides – and observed, "that comyn Englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from another" (Blake 1973, 79). In addition to his perception of English's synchronic variation, later in the same prologue Caxton also mentions how the language evolved during his lifetime: "our langage now used varyeth ferre from that whiche was used and spoken whan I was borne" (Blake 1973, 79). The English linguistic system seemed too unstable while lacking a variety that achieved recognizable social prestige to the effect that "written English ... was in general the English of the particular locality the *user* came from" (Lass 1999, 6; italics added). Hence, it would have been natural for Caxton to choose his Kentish dialect, which he considered to be as suitable as any other English dialect, as we saw above (see p. 85 above). As a business-conscious writer, however, Caxton took the opposite point of view and gave all priority to the *user* of his textual wares –that is, to the consumer– to whom the variety of choice should be both recongizable and easily understood. Considering that Caxton continued envisioning his business primarily as a local affair serving the needs of a local market and clientele, he had to decide on a variety that should be as close as possible to the one used in the particular location his *customers* came from.

When Caxton moved to his premises in Westminster he was hoping to attract customers among the people who frequented Westminster abbey and the Palace of Westminster, including members of parliament, courtiers, clerks, prelates and people attending services, among others, all of them supposedly literate and from more or less comfortable backgrounds. These formed his primary target audience, as can be inferred from his prologue to *Eneydos*, where Caxton also mentions how he adjusted the register to suit this kind of public: "for as moche as this present booke is not for a rude, uplondyssh[17] man to laboure therin ne rede it, but onely for a clerke and a noble gentylman ... I have reduced and translated this sayd booke into our Englysshe not over-rude ne curyous,[18] but in suche termes as shall be understanden" (Blake 1973, 80). Caxton wanted to keep away from the register used for spoken and informal communication, as well as from using unnecessarily recherché expressions. His mission was to find a compromise between these two poles that should be representative of his regular customers' style of language. The one variety of English that was readily available to Caxton and enjoyed currency

among the social circles more likely to visit his shop was the nascent standard form of Middle English that emerged from the normalization of linguistic usages effected precisely at the administrative offices in Westminster.[19]

The form of English used by Caxton in his editions is analogous to, but not identical with, Chancery Standard, although its influence is apparent (Horobin 2011, 75). This deviation from the standard is not due to a predetermined choice, but the result of the inconsistencies, vagaries and fallibilities that naturally occur when human agents are involved in processes of textual reproduction. Moreover, as Caxton relied mainly on foreign compositors whose command of English was in all likelihood limited, we surmise that they were more inclined to follow their copy-text closely, even with texts composed by older English authors like Chaucer or Gower. In the case of texts authored by Caxton himself, whether translations or paratexts, his own spelling is inconsistent, even within the same text, thus suggesting that tolerance for variation continued to be higher after the introduction of printing than nowadays, especially for a variety that we tend to associate with the standard.[20] In sum, Caxton's publications retain a spelling system that is clearly conservative and reflects more or less consistently Middle English pronunciation prior to the Great Vowel Shift (Hotchkiss and Robinson 2008, 6).

In addition to increasing this written variety's visibility, Caxton's editions served as models for all other printers active in England during the incunabular period, all of them foreigners.[21] Not being native speakers, they were more likely to adopt "a spelling system so far removed from the English then being spoken ... rather than trying to devise an efficient phonetic" one, as Hotchkiss and Robinson have argued (2008, 6). While the early printers made no concerted effort to standardize the language,[22] the fact of the matter is that London-based English with all its variation and lack of consistency became the dialect of choice for printed texts. The printers' preference for this metropolitan variety of English gradually reduced their level of tolerance for all other regional dialects that had enjoyed written transmission during the manuscript period, eventually becoming the form of English favoured by every educated person for their written communication (Görlach 1999, 463).

On 10 July 1499 Wynkyn de Worde, who inherited Caxton's printing house in Westminster, published *The Contemplation of Sinners* (Duff 106), a work composed in Older Scots by the Franciscan Observant William Touris. In this work, Touris provides moral and religious advice in the form of meditations, one for each day of the week, "so that for euery daye a man may fynde in the same to rede and to remembre a new excercycyon,"[23] as announces the prologue (2022, 94). The same prologue avoids mentioning that the *Contemplation* was originally composed in Older Scots and instead identifies its language as "Englysshe" (2022, 95), nonetheless acknowledging that "our grosse natyue langage, and specyally in dytement[24] of meter, can not agree in all poyntes with the perfeccyon of Latyn" (2022, 94). *The Contemplacioun of Synnaris* is the first work of literature originally composed in Older Scots to appear

in print, but De Worde's edition effectively erases all information that might betray the work's Scottish origin. The printed version provides no details about the author or the person responsible for its linguistic adaptation,[25] and fails to mention its having been Anglicized for publication. In fact the only contemporary name to appear in the prologue is that of Richard Foxe, Bishop of Durham and Lord Priviy Seal,[26] who commissioned De Worde to publish this edition and at whose request the text was "compyled[27] and fynysshed" (2022, 92).

On 23 June 1503 the French printer Antoine Vérard published in Paris a book titled *The Kalendayr of the Shyppars*,[28] an Older Scots translation of the *Compost et kalendrier des bergiers*, a miscellaneous compendium containing all sorts of practical information and folk science, first published in 1491 (GW 5906), that enjoyed enormous popularity and was reprinted on many occasions and in multiple textual incarnations.[29] Even though the very spelling of the title in Vérard's edition reveals that it was written in Older Scots, the colophon, on the contrary, reads that it had been translated into English: "Heyr endysh the kalendar of shyppars translatyt of franch in englysh" (sig. m7v).[30] It was not long before the success of the French almanac was recreated in England, although not to Vérard's benefit. In 1506 a new edition was printed in London by Richard Pynson (STC 22408) containing an explanatory prologue, where the previous edition is described as "prynted in parys into corrupt Englysshe & nat by no englysshe man"; consequently, in "Englande no man coude vnderstande them [i.e. the copies of the French edition] parfytely" (A2r).[31] Hence –Pynson continues explaining– "newely nowe it is drawen out of Frenche into Englysshe," giving the impression that he had commissioned to have the French text translated afresh. What Pynson's edition actually presents, however, is nothing more than a revision of the Older Scots translation to render it "into playne Englysshe" (A2r). As happened with William Touris's work in 1499, seven years later another text written in Older Scots was Anglicized "to the entent that euery man may vnderstande [it]" (A2r; cf. Sommer 1892, I, 67).

And lastly, on 8 December 1508 Wynkyn de Worde printed a new edition of *Kalender* (STC 22409) prepared by his apprentice Robert Copland, who "revised [and] partly retranslated" it (Erler 2004).[32] The edition opens with a prologue written by Copland recounting how he obtained a copy of the *Kalender* —in his view composed "in rude and scottysshe language"— and next mentions how he "shewed the sayd boke vnto my worshypful mayster Wynkyn de Worde at whose commaundement and Instigacyon I Roberte Coplande haue me applyed dyrectly to translate it out of frensshe agayne in to our maternall tonge".[33] Copland refers solely to Vérard's edition with the main purpose of discrediting it and justifying the publication of a new version, but avoids mentioning Pynson's edition entirely. Aware that they would be competing for the same customers, Copland preferred not to give Pynson's edition any additional publicity.

These multiple instantiations of the *Kalender* display the London printers' lack of tolerance towards other dialects and their spelling conventions that would

be transferred to their public. Both Pynson and De Worde continued reprinting this work in the following years, taking full advantage of Vérard's publishing initiative. Pynson's editions appeared in ca. 1510 (STC 22409.3) and 1517? (STC 22409.7); De Worde's in 1511 (STC 22409.5), 1516 (see n. 32), 1520 (Gwara 2018) and 1528 (STC 22411); and even the London printer Julian Notary issued an edition in 1518? (STC 22410). All the interest in publishing this almanac proves that Vérard's take on the *Kalender*'s market potential, after all, was not inaccurate. It just happens that he chose the *wrong* linguistic variety for his edition, because not being cognizant of English, Vérard was unable to tell the difference between the London-based variety favoured by English printers and the Older Scots of the translation he printed, as Sommer suggested (1892, I, 69).

Vérard's editions of *Kalendayr* and *Art* marked the start of a campaign to penetrate the English market that was cut short in the case of the books he printed in English (Boffey 2000, 173–175).[34] Printing texts translated inadvertently into Older Scots certainly prevented him from attaining the success he needed to continue expanding in England. But Vérard's hopes of developing a publications programme in English were also curtailed by Pynson and De Worde, who intentionally used his translating into Older Scots as an excuse to undermine Vérard's position as a competitor. When about 1503 Vérard printed *The Castle of Labour* (ca. 1503; STC 12379), whose Scottish features are markedly toned down, Pynson and De Worde still reacted by promptly publishing two separate editions in 1505 and 1506 (STC 12380, 12381), respectively. Even if the linguistic choice of Vérard's edition this time could not be used as a pretext,[35] Pynson and De Worde's reaction shows that their sole purpose was to erode the Parisian printer's plans for expanding into the English book market.

Pynson and De Worde's shunning of Older Scots reveals the limits of their commercial approach, which in hindsight appear as short-sighted and unenterprising, since they never contemplated the possibility of printing books for their Scottish neighbours, in this way taking advantage of their linguistic affinity and of the fact that the printing technology was not yet available in Scotland. But this lack of interest in their neighbours was in fact mutual, as there is no evidence that contemporary Scottish customers owned books printed in England. First, because the Scottish Latin-reading public could afford to ignore the output from English printers, since they had access to much greater diversity from Continental printing houses, thanks to the networks of Scots abroad (Durkan 1959, 385–386; Ford 1999a, 199–201). And second, because Scottish customers had little or no interest in books printed in English, since all available evidence suggests that "English-language books seem to have had no market in Scotland" (Ford 1999a, 195). In sum, for Scottish readers in Scotland to be able to buy books printed in Older Scots, they had to wait for the technology of printing to be introduced in their homeland.

Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar set up the first Scottish printing press in Edinburgh at the request of King James IV by means of a patent granted on 15

September 1507 (Livingstone 1908, no. 1546). As the patent reads, Chepman and Myllar had,

> takin on thame to furnis and bring hame ane prent with al stuf belangand tharto and expert men to use the samyne, for imprenting within our realme of the bukis of our lawis, actis of parliament, croniclis, mess bukis ..., and al utheris bukis that sal be sene necessare, and to sel the sammyn for competent pricis.

Like Caxton, Myllar learnt the art of printing abroad, probably in Rouen, where he acted as the publisher of at least two editions printed in 1505 and 1506.[36] Like Caxton, Myllar was a printing pioneer who introduced the new technology into his country of origin (Mann 2001, 185). And also like Caxton, Myllar brought with him from abroad, probably from Rouen, all the printing equipment, including printing press and founts of type, as well as "expert men to use the samyne," since at first there were no capable compositors in Scotland. Therefore, apart from the capital outlay of buying all these material resources and hiring employees, moving them from the Continent to Scotland involved further expenses, which were met by Chepman. Aware of this operating expenditure, the King wanted to give them an additional safeguard against any potential foreign competitors and included the following clause in the patent:

> thai [i.e. Chepman and Myllar] sal nocht be hurt nor prevenit thairin be ony utheris to tak copyis of ony bukis furtht of our realme, to ger[37] imprent the samyne in utheris cuntreis to be brocht and sauld agane within our realme to caus the said Walter and Androu tyne[38] thare greit labour and expens. (Livingstone 1908, no. 1546)

Chepman and Myllar located their premises in "the south gait" (i.e. the Cowgate) of Edinburgh, as indicated in some colophons of the editions they started printing in 1508. As a matter of fact, their entire collaborative production took place in the year 1508,[39] the earliest dated item being John Lydgate's *The Maying and Disport of Chaucer* (STC 17014.3), printed on 4 April 1508, followed on 8 April by an edition of *Golagros and Gawane* with Lydgate's balade "Thyngis in kynde" appendixed to it (STC 11984), and on 20 April by an edition of *The Porteous of Noblenes* (STC 5060.5), Androw Cadiou's Older Scots translation of Alain Chartier's *Le bréviaire des nobles*. The remainder of works printed by Chepman and Myllar include texts by the Scottish poets William Dunbar (*The Ballade of Barnard Stewart*,[40] STC 7347; *The Goldyn Targe*, STC 7349), Walter Kennedy (in collaboration with Dunbar, *The Flyting*, STC 7348), Blind Harry (*The Wallace*, STC 13148), Robert Henryson (*Orpheus and Eurydice*, STC 13166; *The Praise of Age*, appendixed after *The Flyting*) and Richard Holland (*Buke of Howlat*, STC 13594), as well as the Middle English romance *Sir Eglamour of Artois* (STC 7542) and a mirror for princes in verse titled *De Regimine Principum* (STC 3307),

apart from other brief poems appendixed as filler items.[41] The production of the first Scottish printers, intense though short-lived, culminated in 1509–1510 with Chepman's unaided publication of their lengthiest item, the Aberdeen breviary (STC 15791), the first Latin work to be printed in Scotland intended to supersede Sarum service-books (Dickson and Edmond 1890, 83–99).

As Caxton did throughout his entire career, Chepman and Myllar also prioritized vernacular works over Latin ones. And just as Caxton printed texts by English poets –like Chaucer and Lydgate – as well as translations from French – e.g. his *Recuyell* –, Chepman and Myllar chose to print texts originally composed in Older Scots by Scottish poets – like Dunbar and Henryson (Mann 2001, 185) – as well as works translated from French – like *The Porteous of Noblenes*. Besides, there is a third linguistic category of texts intermediate between the two poles of original creation and translation: just as De Worde – Caxton's successor – issued an Anglicized version of William Touris's *Contemplacioun of Synnaris*, Chepman and Myllar printed Scotticized versions of texts originally written in Middle English such as *Sir Eglamour* and Lydgate's poems. Chepman and Myllar's concentration on Older Scots and its contemporary literature together with the unquestioned orthographic Scotticization of Middle English texts (cf. Boffey and Edwards 1999) was favoured by the existence of a written standard that started to emerge after Older Scots began to be used to record the Acts of the Scottish Parliaments in 1424. The printing activities of Chepman and Myllar, in addition, coincided with the surfacing of a feeling of linguistic and national affirmation best epitomized in a famous line from Gavin Douglas's *Aenedos* (1513), where he connects Older Scots with Scottish national identity by describing the former as "the langage of Scottis natioun" (I.Prol. 103). If throughout the best part of the fifteenth century Older Scots was referred to as 'Inglis', in 1494 we find the first attested use of the word 'Scottis' to designate the language spoken in Lowland Scotland. Significantly, the second recorded occurrence of this word appears in the colophon to Chepman and Myllar's edition of *The Porteous of Noblenes*: "Heir endis the porteous of noblenes translatit out of franche in scottis."[42]

The advent of the new technology of printing transformed the manuscript transmission of texts that had dominated the late medieval period, not only because of its multiplying capacity, but also because of the capital investment necessary for the publication of textual objects produced by mechanical means. Before copies of a printed book could come onto the market, firstly, the printer had to obtain a printing press and all its appertaining equipment, but secondly, he had to pay for the paper, ink and labour costs required for the production of an entire print run. Printers had to incur these considerable expenses before earning any sales revenue, let alone making a profit, thus facing serious financial risk, as Gutenberg himself had to learn when his famous edition of the Bible threw him into bankruptcy and forced him to surrender his printing house (Pettegree 2010, 29). Caxton's previous experience as a successful merchant surely helped him to navigate the

perils of producing printed books and to keep his business afloat. If he managed to articulate an incipient multilingual model for his printing activities while on the Continent, after relocating to England Caxton adapted to new market conditions and strategically focussed on exploiting the market for books printed primarily in English, with more than 90 per cent of all his edition sheets in this language.

In actual fact, none of the other linguistic communities in Britain offered a social ecosystem with similar cultural vigour and economic muscle that could guarantee the financial viability of an independent printing press. A case in point is the first Scottish printing house, which, despite enjoying an effective monopoly on Older Scots publications, receiving endorsement from the monarch and establishing their premises in a vibrant city, failed to secure economic self-sufficiency and had to cease operating after only three years.[43] And even more striking is the belated and limited use of the printing technology for the transmission of texts written in Welsh, a language that had widespread currency in Wales. The first book printed in Welsh was issued in London in 1546 (STC 201310),[44] and it was not until 1585 when a book in Welsh was actually printed in Wales.[45] It becomes apparent that the metropolitan ascendancy over Britain's printing production capacity together with the financial exigencies of the market economy took the business of printing and publishing books in a direction contrary to the promotion of the island's native multilingualism. Not only did Caxton and his successors centre on the publication of texts in English, they also tried to obscure its own linguistic diversity by giving precedence to a London-based variety, as did the first Scottish printers by favouring a prestigious variety of Older Scots at the expense of all other dialects and languages spoken in Scotland, even Scotticizing Middle English texts. In sum, the introduction of the printing press in Britain, as happened in the rest of Europe, contributed to enhance the prestige of the language variety used by the elite, while giving little or no visibility to other languages and dialects, thus becoming instrumental in eroding the balances existing in the British language ecosystem.

Notes

1 Note, however, how in the prologue to his edition of the *Recuyell* (see p. 85 above) Caxton downplays his command of languages and alludes with some modesty to the "unperfightnes that I had in bothe langages, that is to wete in Frenshe and in Englisshe" (Blake 1973, 98).
2 Corsten (1976/1977, 4) calculates that it took approximately 500 days to print this work and that the paper needed for a print run of 100 copies would cost around 450 marks or 112.5 Rhenish guilders, a significant amount of money.
3 I.e. 'dispatched' (*OED* s.v. *depeach* v.).
4 Hellinga (2018a, 314–321). For biographical information, see Paviot (1999, 9–18).

5 Copies of these editions in English eventually ended in the hands of customers living in England, but this source of revenue initially must have been considered too uncertain and unreliable. Cf. Ford (1999b, 214–215) and Wang (2004).

6 BMC ix, 131. They must have made a good choice of texts, since these were reprinted in the 1480s by printers based in Haarlem, Lyon and Paris. Note that Caxton must have come across the edition of the original Latin version of Pierre d'Ailly's *Méditations* printed in Cologne about 1472, when he still resided in the German city (GW M31978). When Caxton was already back in England, an edition in French of Lefèvre's *Histoire de Jason* (ca. 1476; Duff 244) was printed with his Type 1 and hence we cannot rule out his involvement, particularly because Caxton himself printed his English version of *Jason* in 1477 and was well aware that the French original was already available in print (BMC xi, 332).

7 For biographical information on Mansion, see Rouzet (1975, 136–139) and Vandamme (2018). For his relation with Caxton, see Hellinga (2018a, 303–310; 2018b).

8 To these editions we should also add his involvement, direct or indirect, in the publication of the French *Jason* ca. 1476; cf. n. 6.

9 The printer Jacob Bellaert was the first to publish Dutch translations of Lefèvre's *Recueil* and *Jason*, titled respectively as *Vergaderinge der historien van Troyen* (Haarlem, 1485; ILC 1421) and *Historie van den vromen ridder Jason* (Haarlem, 1484–1485; ILC 1417). These translations were printed in parallel with Bellaert's editions of the French original versions (ILC 1416, 1420), thus following a dual pattern similar to Caxton's. Note, however, that the Dutch translations failed to gain much favour among customers (Bruijn 2019, 95–101). For Caxton's knowledge of Dutch, see Bakker and Gerritsen (2004, 10) and Putter (2021).

10 See Armstrong (1979, 268–269). While these are some of the earliest attested English book purchases, it is more than likely that before then printed books were already circulating in Britain. König argues that the type of illumination in two copies of the Gutenberg Bible is probably indicative that they were "shipped to England in the 1450s" (1983, 46).

11 PRO E 122/194/22, m. 2: "twenty-one books of diverse histories"; quoted from Needham (1999, 151). Although this is the first documented shipment, the custom rolls offer an incomplete record because of numerous archival losses (Needham 1999, 155–156).

12 Note that the first attempt in Britain to publish this type of scholarly work took place in the university town of Oxford and is attributable to a jobbing printer, whom the book collector James Goldwell commissioned to print the *Expositio in symbolum apostolorum* by Tyrannius Rufinus in 1478 (Duff 234). For an overview of the publication of works of learning in England, see BMC (xi, 51–52) and Willoughby (2014).

13 Apart from these works, Caxton also commissioned the Paris printer Guillaume Maynyal to print the *Missale ad usum Sarum* in 1487 (Duff 322 & Suppl. 30) and the *Legenda Sarum* in 1488 (Duff 247 & Suppl. 25). Both these editions were printed using the red-printing typical of liturgical texts that Caxton was unable to execute with the necessary technical competence, hence the collaboration (cf. BMC xi, 307–308).

14 Law French derives from Anglo-Norman, although it does not represent the social usage of this language, but a professional variety that had become fossilized. Up until the mid-fifteenth century Law French "was the only language in which formal pleadings could be framed orally at the bar" (Baker 1999, 411) and continued to be commonly used for all types of legal literature throughout the sixteenth century (Baker 2016, 1–5).

15 Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson were the other incunabular printers with a significant production in English, representing 82 and 39 per cent respectively (BMC xi, 43, table 5).

16 Note that already from his Westminster premises Caxton participated in the dual publication of Lefevre's *Jason* in French and English; cf. n. 8.

17 I.e. 'provincial, unsophisticated' (*MED* s.v. *uplondish* adj. b).

18 I.e. 'subtle, sophisticated; abstruse, recondite' (*MED* s.v. *curious* adj. 3a).

19 This variety started to take shape in the 1430s, after English was increasingly adopted for official records. For an overview of the various hypotheses regarding the process of standardization of English, see Wright (2020).

20 The prologue to *Eneydos*, although he published it towards the end of his life, shows significant spellling variation; cf. Salmon (1999, 24).

21 All printers active in England during the incunabular period whose name is known to us were born overseas: William de Machlinia (*fl.* 1482–1490) came from Mechelen, in Brabant; Wynkyn de Worde (*d.* 1534/5) was probably a native of Woerden, in Holland; Johannes Lettou (*fl.* 1475–1483) probably came from the eastern Baltic; Julian Notary (*d.* in or after 1523) came from Brittany; Richard Pynson (*d*. 1529/30) was of Norman origin; Theodoricus Rood (*fl.* 1480–1484?) came from Cologne. I have taken this information from the *ODNB*, except for De Worde, for which I follow Hellinga (2018a, 323–339).

22 Rutkowska (2020) has recently suggested that printers like Caxton, De Worde and Pynson display various degrees of regularizing efforts, though these are not necessarily conducive to standardization.

23 I.e. 'exercise, whether bodily or mental' (*OED* s.v. *exercition*, a). Note that the *OED* states that this word occurred in Scottish (cf. *DOST* s.v. *exercitioun* n. 5), further suggesting that the prologue was written by Touris himself and not by the adaptor. This occurrence of the word predates the earliest attested one in the *OED*, of 1525.

24 I.e. 'a written or spoken composition' (*OED* s.v. *ditement* 1a, marked as Scottish; cf. *DOST* s.v. *dytement* n. 2). This occurrence predates the earliest examples attested in both the *OED* and *DOST*.

25 This work's attribution to William Touris is based on scribal evidence contained in the heading and colophon to the poem in the manuscript copy of the text in the British Library, MS Arundel 285, produced in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. This version of Touris's poem is available in Bennett's edition (1955), although it does not include the Latin *catenae* that appear in De Worde's edition, whose text is now available in a critical edition (Touris 2022, with a discussion of the work's transfer to England on pp. 23–28).

26 Note that the copy in the Library of Congress (Incun. 1499 .c63 BV4831) contains a marginal note in a contemporary hand that misidentifies "Rycharde, Bysshop of Dureham" (2022, 92) as "Bury, called Philobiblos, temp. Ed:3. Aº 1334."; that is, Richard Bury (*d.* 1345), author of the *Philobiblon*, who once was also bishop of Durham.

27 The word *compile* should not be understood here as "to translate" (used with this meaning by Caxton in 1483), but rather as "to make, compose, or construct (a written or printed work) by arrangement of materials collected from various sources" (*OED* s.v. *compile* v. 4 and 2, respectively), since it is possible that the Latin *sententiae* did not accompany the Older Scots poem (MacDonald and McDonald's introduction to Touris 2022, 24).

28 STC 22407. For a bibliographic description of this translation, see MacFarlane (1900, no. 68). Note that in 1493 Vérard published an edition of the French version (GW 5908; cf. MacFarlane 1900, no. 24). For biographical information on Vérard, see Winn (1997, 15–38).

29 See Sommer (1892, I, 11–26). Note that the bibliographical information provided by Sommer is not up-to-date. A facsimile of Vérard's edition is published as the second volume of Sommer's work. For a discussion of this miscellaneous work, see Driver (2003).

30 While there is no doubt that the translation was done in Older Scots, it presents some linguistic oddities that are attributable to Vérard's French compositors, whose knowledge of Older Scots was next to nothing (Duff 2012, 120; Sommer 1892, I, 67). The same happens with *The Book Intytulyd the Art of Good Lywyng & Good Deyng* (STC 791), printed by Vérard in Paris on 30 May 1503 and described as translated "of franch in englysh" (sig. ii7r), whereas the translation's language is again Older Scots (Driver [1996, 401 n. 44], somewhat sceptical about this text's linguistic ascription, has described the language as "very odd, perhaps most closely resembling Dutch?"). We know the translator of *Art* to be a certain Thomas Lewyngton, a native of the diocese of St Andrews (Stubbings 1994, 538). In view of the linguistic and bibliographical similarities between these two translations and editions, Duff affirms, "Both these books are clearly the work of one

man, and he was evidently a Scotchman" (2012, 188; cf. Sommer 1892, I, 30). It seems reasonable to assign tentatively the translation of *Kalendayr* also to Lewyngton even if we have no definitive proof (cf. Stubbings 1994, 538). For a bibliographical description of Vérard's edition of *Art*, see MacFarlane (1900, no. 67). As happened in the case of *Kalendayr*, Vérard had previously published the French version of *Art* (MacFarlane 1900, nos 18–19).

31 Although Sommer offers a transcription of the entire text of Pynson's edition (1892, II, 7, here), in my quotation I follow Boffey (2000, 177).

32 On the basis of the state of some woodcuts used in this edition, the STC dates it to ca. 1516, despite the date in the colophon. Nonetheless, it seems that the colophon reproduces the exact same text of a now lost edition of 1508 (Erler 1993, 54; Boffey 2000, 177).

33 Sig. A1v, quoted from Boffey (2000, 178). The entire prologue is edited by Sommer (1892, I, 32–33).

34 Duff argues that Vérard "printed in the Scottish language for sale in Scotland" (2012, 120), although he provides no supporting evidence. In 1508 he published *The Passion of Owr Lord* (STC 14557), another English translation "whose orthography again betrays compositors who were unpractised in English" (Boffey 2000, 175). Vérard also printed Latin editions of books of hours (STC 15901) and liturgical books (STC 15904, 16139.5, 16180 and 16182a) for the English market, not the Scottish.

35 The prologue to Pynson's edition makes no comment about the translation printed by Vérard and refers only to the 1505 text as written in "rude langage" (STC 12380, sig. A3r).

36 These are books printed for the English market. First, Joannes de Garlandia's *Multorum vocabulorum equiuocorum interpretatio* (STC 11604.5), where the interpretation is provided in "Anglie lingue" as stated in the colophon. Second, *Expositio sequentiarum* (STC 16118) according to the Use of Salisbury for "ecclesia Anglicana" as stated in the colophon. Both these texts were used as Latin school-books with glosses in English. For a bibliographical discussion of the two editions, see Dickson and Edmond (1890, 31–42, with facsimile reproduction of the colophons on pp. 35, 41). Durkan (1959, 425–426) conjectures that these works may actually have been printed in St Andrews rather than Rouen. For biographical information on Myllar, see Durkan (2004).

37 I.e. 'to give orders or take steps (to) do something' (*DOST* s.v. *ger* v. 2).

38 I.e. 'to waste (effort, time, etc)' (*DOST* s.v. *tyn(e* v. 6).

39 Prior to his collaboration with Chepman, Myllar printed or had printed for him another little book (STC 7350) containing poems attributed to Dunbar (*The tretis of the tua mariit wemen and the wedo; I that in heill wes; I maister andro kennedy*) and the anonymous *My gudame wes a gay wif*; see Mapstone (2008a, nos 10a–d). Also tentatively attributed to him is the printing of a

Scots translation of Donatus's *Ars minor* ca. 1507 (STC 7018); cf. Mapstone (2008b).

40 This text was probably "written and published as part of the official reception of Aubigny [Bernard Stuart, third Seigneur d'Aubigny] in May 1508" (Kinsley 1979, 310).

41 For discussion and digital reproductions of most of these printed editions, see Mapstone (2008a).

42 The text is taken from the transcription in Mapstone (2008a, 5). For the use of the word 'Scottis', see Hendricks (2017, 227).

43 Note that the printing of books in Scotland continued to be marginal throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, whereas during the second half the output from Scottish presses was increasingly anglicized (Bald 1926).

44 It was John Prise's *Yny lhyvyr hwnn* (translated as "In this book"), printed by Edward Whitchurch (STC 20310). For a discussion of its authorship, date and contents, see Gruffydd (1969). The earliest publication in Gaelic dates from 1558 (STC 17566.5), while there are no records of early British editions in Cornish and Norse.

45 STC 21077. Already in 1529, Lewis Gethin, rector of Llandegla-yn-Iâl and Llanferres, demanded that Welsh was not bypassed by the printing revolution, which could have disastrous consequences for the language's survival. Gethin argued that the printing press had spread across all European countries and, therefore, "it would be no harder / If the same work were done in our language" (Gruffydd 1998, 55). Besides, he also envisaged that this technology would be instrumental in articulating Welsh national identity and keeping the language alive: "Although we might lose our land and our towns / Let us keep our language with us" (Gruffydd 1998, 55). For an overview of early modern publishing in Welsh, see Rawlins (2022, 49–53).

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