

GOWER ON HENRY IV'S RULE:
THE ENDINGS OF THE *CRONICA TRIPERTITA* AND ITS
TEXTS

BY DAVID R. CARLSON

AN ALTERNATIVE CONCLUSION TO THE *CRONICA TRIPERTITA* (3.478–89)

When in late 1399 Henry Bolingbroke (1367–1413) took the English throne as Henry IV from his cousin Richard II (d. 1400), the deposed king's poet John Gower (ca. 1330–1408), who had been long in Henry's favor too, wrote extensively in support of the revolution by which the Lancastrian regime was installed. Aged and probably infirm, Gower had been quiet since finishing with the *Confessio amantis* in the early thirteen-nineties: "A bok for king Richardes sake" (*24), Gower had called it, written "upon his comandyng" (*54).¹ Then came suddenly the substantial body of Gower's Lancastrian apologetics, within a period of a few weeks or months, between late 1399 and early 1400: the some three-hundred line inaugural panegyric, in rhyme royal stanzas, now usually called "In Praise of Peace" — *re vera*, "ad laudem et memoriam serenissimi principis domini Regis Henrici quarti"² — the Lancastrian *Carmen saeculare*, celebrating Henry's installation, and Gower's last writing in English; possibly some of the shorter Latin verse as well; and, most grand, his account of the revolution's advent in the *Cronica tripertita*, in three books, 1062 Leonines, covering precisely the chronological span embedded in the official "Record et proces del renunciacion du roy Richard, le second apres le conquest, et de laceptacion de mesme la renunciacion, ensemblement oue la deposicion de mesme le roy Richard," enrolled in the rolls of parliament in late 1399, on which Gower based his verse enarration.³

¹ Quotations from Gower's writings are from G. C. Macaulay, ed., *The Complete Works of John Gower*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1899–1902). Excepting the Modern English verse translations from the *Cronica tripertita* by A. G. Rigg, other translations are the author's doing. The asterisks indicate lines found in variant manuscripts. See Macaulay, *Complete Works*, 2:2, note to lines 24–92, and 2:4, note to lines 53 and following.

² *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, 3:492.

³ The "Record and Process" is in the *Rotuli parliamentorum: ut et petitiones, et placita in parlamento*, ed. Richard Blyke, John Strachey, et al., 8 vols. (London, 1780–1832), 3:416–24; on the process of its enrollment, see H. G. Richardson, "Richard II's Last Parliament," *English Historical Review* 52 (1937): 40–42. Gower's use of it is noted in Gaillard Lapsley, "The Parliamentary Title of Henry IV," *English Historical Review* 49 (1934): 438–40 and 596–600; see also Paul Strohm, "Saving the Appearances: Chaucer's 'Purse' and the Fabrication of the Lancastrian Claim," in *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of*

Gower's apologetic history ends, as is to be expected, with explicit virulent condemnation of the former king and unqualified praise for his killer, now king himself, in four of the five surviving copies (more or less) as follows:

CRONICA RICARDI, qui **sceptra** tulit leopardi,
 Vt patet, est dicta: **violenta, grauis, maledicta.**
 Vt speculum mundi, **quo lux nequit vlla** refundi,
Sic vacuus transit, sibi nil nisi culpa remansit.
Vnde superbus erat, modo si preconia querat,
 Eius honor sordet, laus culpat, gloria mordet.
 Hoc concernentes caueant qui sunt sapientes,
 Nam male viuentes deus odit in orbe regentes:
 Est qui peccator, non esse potest dominator;
 Ricardo teste, finis probat hoc manifeste:
Post sua demerita periit sua pompa sopita;
Qualis erat vita, cronica stabit ita.

(3.478–89)

[King Richard's history (with leopard arms he dressed)
 Is told: violent, all grave, malevolent the rest.
 Like mirror to the world he leaves, an empty frame
 From which no light reflects and all that's left is blame.
 If now he seeks of pride a final offering,
 His honor stinks, his praise brings blame, his glory stings.
 With this in view let each beware who's not a fool:
 God hates the evildoers when they seek to rule.
 The man who lives in sin is not equipped to reign,
 As Richard testifies; his end makes this quite plain.
 King Richard got his pay; his pride has gone away;
 He lived his life this way — that's all there is to say.]

The boldface in the Latin means to represent significant variants: immediately in the passage's second line, where, in place of "Vt patet, est dicta: violenta, grauis, maledicta," two of the four copies have "Vt patet, est dicta **populo, sed non benedicta**" [Has now been fully told, but certainly not blest].

Fourteenth-Century Texts (Princeton, 1992), 75–94, esp. 89–90. There is analysis of the chronology of Gower's writings of this revolutionary period in R. F. Yeager, "Chaucer's 'To His Purse': Begging, or Begging Off?," *Viator* 36 (2005): 400–405; also, for evidence putting Gower's Lancastrian connection back to the early thirteenth-eighties, see Yeager, "Gower's Lancastrian Affinity: The Iberian Connection," *Viator* 35 (2004): 483–515. On "In Praise of Peace," see now the commentary of Michael Livingston, in *John Gower: The Minor Latin Works*, ed. and trans. R. F. Yeager, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, 2005), 89–132; also Frank Grady, "The Lancastrian Gower and the Limits of Exemplarity," *Speculum* 70 (1995): 552–75.

More extensive variation occurs uniquely in the fifth copy of the *Cronica*, in the same concluding passage having the “populo, sed non benedicta” half-line and a good deal more besides:

**O SPECULUM MUNDI, quod debet in ante refundi,
Ex quo prouisum sapiens acuit sibi visum,**
Cronica Ricardi, qui **regna** tulit leopardi,
Vt patet, est dicta **populo, sed non benedicta:**
Quicquid erat primo, modo cum sors fertur in ymo,
Eius honor sordet, laus culpat, gloria mordet.
Hoc concernentes caueant qui sunt sapientes,
Nam male viuentes deus odit in orbe regentes:
Est qui peccator, non esse potest dominator;
Ricardo teste, finis probat hoc manifeste:
Sic diffinita stat regia sors stabilita;
Regis vt est vita, cronica stabit ita.

[O mirror of the world, which ought to be poured back forwards, from which a wise man may sharpen his well-advised vision: the chronicle of Richard the leopard, who bore the kingdom, has been told to the people, as is clear, but is not blessed. Whatever he was at first, when his lot is now borne downwards, his honor stinks, his praise brings blame, his glory stings. With this in view let each beware who's not a fool: God hates the evildoers when they seek to rule. The man who lives in sin is not equipped to reign, as Richard testifies; his end makes this quite plain. The king's lot stands established, so defined: as goes the king's own life, just so his reign's chronicle will be.]

This less extensively attested alternative ending — in only the manuscript Glasgow, Advocates' Library, Hunterian T.2.17 — can come as a shock, though the effect depends on kinds of knowledge beforehand, certainly not possessed of contemporary (non-collating) readerships. From the texts of Gower's more extensively circulated English-language *Confessio amantis* — from the authorial revisions of its texts, not either available all at once, of course, at the time — emerges some picture of the poet's withdrawal of support from King Richard in favor of Henry, gradually, even before the deposition.⁴ Gower's singular concentration, throughout his literary career, on the matter of right rule — micro- as well as macrocosmic, though above all in the intermediate socio-political sphere of “kingship and common profit” — may reemerge here again at the end-point of the *Cronica*

⁴ On Richard's relations with Gower, see now Frank Grady, “Gower's Boat, Richard's Barge, and the True Story of the *Confessio Amantis*: Text and Gloss,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44 (2002): 1–15; and esp. Peter Nicholson, “The Dedications of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*,” *Mediaevalia* 10 (1984): 159–80. The evidence is reviewed also in George B. Stow, “Richard II in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: Some Historical Perspectives,” *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 3–31.

tripertita.⁵ The distinctive qualities of the alternative ending of the *Cronica* — remoter from events and the new king's praises, it will appear — too emerge best only by contrast with the arguably earlier vituperative-panegyric conclusion in commoner circulation.

What is brought about here, by a few (authorial) strokes, is a precise repetition of what Gower had earlier done with King Richard, by his revisions to the *Confessio amantis*, though for the changed regal situation: an incipient withdrawal of support, implicit, by attenuation of praise. A final couplet (emphatically final: the only elegiac distich in the *Cronica*) describing Richard's particular past regal failing in the one case ("Qualis erat vita") is become a remark about the king — any king — in present tense ("Regis vt est vita"); no longer Richard's particular regal glory ("sua pompa") perishing because of his particular faults ("sua demerita"), but a statement about what fortune or (better) fate in general ("regia sors") does with monarchs: the chronicle of any king's reign will be composed by the king himself, in his own conduct, such as it will unfold in the course of a reign.

The generalization of the concluding couplet is compensated perhaps by more definite statement, in the middle of the verse paragraph, of what had come about in Richard's case. In the one version, what had been sources of pride for Richard ("Vnde superbus erat") all now stand ruined ("Eius honor sordet, laus culpat, gloria mordet"); only so much is the best that can be said of Richard, if anyone yet wants to say it ("modo si preconia querat"). In the alternative version — built now around another generalizing remark on fate: "modo cum sors fertur in ymo" — there is allowance, remarkably, for the possibility that Richard had once been a good king, at the beginning of his reign. Though now "Eius honor sordet" and so forth, it may not always have been so with him: things had yet turned out badly, no matter "Quicquid erat primo."

As once was King Richard, so now is King Henry perhaps; despite the fine start, the possibility of poor finish comes in view. The admonitory force of this paragraph-final revision may be anticipated at the opening of the alternative verse paragraph, where the alternative makes the *Cronica*, not so simply the "Cronica Ricardi" in the first place, "Vt speculum," but, more simply, unqualified, a generalized "speculum mundi," effectively no longer an immediate apology for the 1399 revolution, but a something of broader

⁵ The fundamental work remains Russell A. Peck, *Kingship & Common Profit in Gower's Confessio Amantis* (Carbondale, 1978); also George R. Coffman, "John Gower in His Most Significant Role," *Elizabethan Studies and Other Essays in Honor of George F. Reynolds*, University of Colorado Studies in the Humanities (Boulder, 1945), 52–61; Gardiner Stillwell, "John Gower and the Last Years of Edward III," *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948): 454–71; and George Coffman, "John Gower, Mentor for Royalty: Richard II," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 69 (1954): 953–64.

import. The three lines common to both endings, unaltered, already make the point:

Hoc concernentes caueant qui sunt sapientes,
 Nam male viuentes deus odit in orbe regentes:
 Est qui peccator, non esse potest dominator.

In the alternative version, the warning is emphasized by repositioning of the phrases at the paragraph's beginning, then also driven home by the wholly new line there: not just a "Cronica Ricardi," the poem is now a "speculum mundi," "Ex quo prouisum sapiens acuit sibi visum." It must have seemed the more dubious that Henry was a "sapiens" of the requisite sort by the time the alternative conclusion came to be written. The stronger the warning, the greater the danger: whoever wrote the alternative conclusion was suffering disillusionment with the Lancastrian regime, and fear for things to come.

THE *CRONICA TRIPERTITA*'S TEXTUAL CONDITION

The evidence that the alternative conclusion was written after the other, and that the disillusioning person who rewrote it was Gower, is largely textual, even strictly so; fortunately, the *Cronica tripartita* is textually simple, by contrast with both Gower's *Vox clamantis* and the *Confessio amantis*: longer, more widely copied, and more often authorially revised. Though not quite like the obsessive William Langland — neither yet like Geoffrey Chaucer, ever moving on to some wholly new thing — Gower did nonetheless often come back to alter what he had already written; however, in the case of his *Cronica*, there was not the same level of interest, and the time was not propitious. Gower wrote nothing after 1402, and only *epigrammata* after first finishing with the *Cronica* by about February 1400. He died within the same decade, in October 1408; the evidence for the meanwhile is of poor health failing. At some point during these years, Gower's eyesight probably went out altogether. Mercifully, there was no attempt to exploit this disability for enhancing Gower's status as a local *vates*, which would already have been considerable. On the other hand, blindness created practical problems for a meddlesome writer: Gower could no longer (so to speak) proofread himself by himself, nor intervene otherwise, except aurally-orally. Should Gower have wanted to continue to participate in the fabrication of his own writings and the process of their recopying, another person and speaking aloud would have been necessary: a cumbersome business, and its thorough-going or consistent application — over the whole of a thousand-line piece of writing, in a strange language and, within it, a stranger idiom, copy after copy — is not to be expected. In any case, the necessitous introduction of authorial orality — hearing and speaking — into the process of the tex-

tual tradition's formation, not to mention an amanuensis's capacity for transcription, can only have proliferated dread error. An aged blind person mumbling to a well-meaning incompetent is the best case that can be imagined, and the work could not be checked.⁶

What happened with the *Cronica tripartita*, of course, is that its text mostly degenerated. From the moment of its completion, or even before, errors entered the text and were not corrected, but were rather compounded by further errors accumulating in successive recopyings. As the text of his last major poem grew worse, Gower himself would appear to have intervened, as he did also in the case of his other writings, but only three to five times, infrequently by comparison with the others, and not more efficiently. Gower did not intervene to repair errors or the textual degeneration, nor did anyone else. He intervened only substantively to rewrite, but did not bother either about the continuity or coherence of his rewritings. The rewritings were not introduced all at once but serially, and they do not accumulate but instead drift about. Demonstrably later rewritings ignore demonstrably earlier ones, instead effectively reverting to some previous textual state: "rolling revision," but in the especially vexatious Lethean practice peculiar to Gower, by consequence of which textual regeneration in some respects (the introduction of new and improved authorial readings) coincides with textual degeneration in others (compounding accumulated errors) in the same copy, yielding copies at once good and bad, attesting the latest and best authorial final intentions and also high degrees of authorial inattention otherwise and forgetfulness.⁷

In the present case, the alternative conclusion occurs in a copy so degenerate in all other respects that it must represent a later state of the text than any other witness. The copy can only postdate the rest of the tradition, after all the degeneration that was going to occur had already occurred, and after all the other authorial interventions had been made.

⁶ Cf. M. B. Parkes, "Patterns of Scribal Activity and Revisions of the Text in Early Copies of Works by John Gower," in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. Richard Beadle and A. J. Piper (Aldershot, 1995), 81–121 at 85.

⁷ The quoted terms are from Ralph Hanna III, "Authorial Versions, Rolling Revision, Scribal Error? Or, The Truth about Truth," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 10 (1988): 23–40; cf. also Parkes, "Patterns of Scribal Activity," 84 and 86. A pair of instances from other Latin verse by Gower are analyzed in "A Rhyme Distribution Chronology of John Gower's Latin Poetry," *Studies in Philology* 104 (2007): 32–35 and n. 26.

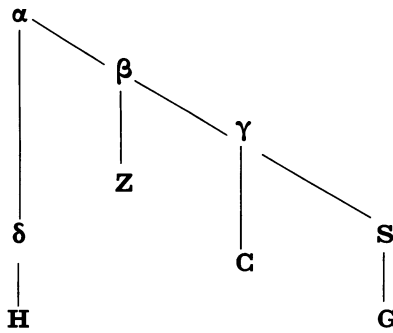
THE TEXTUAL RELATIONS

There are five copies of the *Cronica tripartita*, all dating from the early decades of the fifteenth century: London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iv = **C**; Glasgow, Advocates' Library, Hunterian T.2.17 = **G**; London, British Library, Harley 6291 = **H**; Oxford, All Souls College, MS 98 = **S**; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 92 = **Z**.⁸

The relations among the texts in the five copies can be represented in the form of the following *stemma textualis*, in which the surviving manuscripts themselves are represented by the sigla assigned them above and the Greek letters are meant to represent a series of authorial interventions in the text (or authorial concurrences in copyists' interventions), resulting in new (non-extant) exemplars from which subsequent copies derive, in the following (approximative) sequence: α = the ca. February 1400 initial composition and publication; β = a point soon thereafter when a series of minor errors were allowed to enter into the text, afterwards persisting uncorrected; γ = a point of some substantive revision, of uncertain date, after β , but before ca. 1402; the manuscript **S** itself represents the introduction in ca. 1402 of a series of additional minor alterations then transmitted to the manuscript **G** only; and δ = a single revision that appears to have been made in ca. 1403–5, occurring only in the manuscript **H**. Having only this one post-composition intervention — an only isolated intervention at that — the text in **H** most nearly reflects the authorial original α ; **Z** is as near the original as **H** in most respects (and nearer, inasmuch as it was unaffected by the ca. 1403–5 δ -intervention), except that the β -intervention reflected in **Z** and the rest consists all of copying errors (howbeit ones evidently tolerated by the author); and the other manuscripts are at increasingly great textual removes from the initial composition: **C** more distant than **H** or **Z**, **S** more distant than **C**, and **G** more distant than **S**.⁹ More detailed analysis of rationale follows.

⁸ The manuscripts are described in *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, 4:lx–lxx and lxx–lxxi, whose sigla have been kept, with the one exception, that Macaulay's H₃ (awkward to type) is replaced herein with **Z** (the only letter of the alphabet Macaulay does not use). Significant additional particulars are to be found in Karl Friedrich Heinrich Meyer, *John Gower's Beziehungen zu Chaucer und König Richard II* (Bonn, 1889), 66–69 and 71; also, in the fuller witness-lists of John Hurt Fisher, *John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (New York, 1964), 306 (also 308 and 99–106) *sub numeris* 50 (= **S**), 51 (= **G**), 52 (= **C**), 53 (= **H**), and 61 (= **Z**); and Derek Pearsall, "The Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower's Works," in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. Siân Echard (Cambridge, 2004), 73–97, *sub numeris* 68 (= **G**), 71 (= **C**), 73 (= **H**), 74 (= **S**), and 78 (= **Z**), with discussion, esp. 84–86.

⁹ It may be worth emphasizing that the *stemma* proposed here means to be restrictedly *textualis*, i.e.: (1) it accounts for the texts as transmitted only. No correlation can be observed between the textual matter and the palaeographico-codicological evidence that



has been published, by Macaulay (see n. 8 above) and more fully by Parkes ("Patterns of Scribal Activity," 81–121), of the changes of hands and of the written-over erasures in some of the manuscripts. The patterns of these two kinds of scribal activity do not coincide with the patterns of textual variance. At the two points in the *Cronica* where texts have been scraped out and rewritten, the rewriting once (1.4–12) yielded textual uniformity among the rewritten texts (**HCSG**) and their concurrence with the single other text wherein no rewriting occurred (**Z**) and on the other occasion (3.478–89) yielded textual divergence among the rewritten texts (**H** differing from **CS**, **G** sometimes with **CS** but also differing), though also here again concurrence in part with the manuscript that was not rewritten (unrewritten **Z** with rewritten **H**). To similar textual inconsequence, Parkes's analysis of scribal stints in four of the manuscripts (**HCSG**) shows that the same scribe might use different exemplars on different occasions (87–90: Parkes's "Scribe 4" wrote the *Cronica* in **H**, **S**, and **G** with results differing in ways that reflect differing exemplars); but also that different scribes might use the same exemplar (89: copying the *Cronica* in **C** was shared between "Scribe 4" and another copyist but without any observable shift of textual affiliation). It might be felt that Parkes's analysis is put more conclusively than the evidence warrants, as concerns both the scribes' hands and the extent of the cooperation among them; on the other hand, it seems more likely that in this instance the palaeographical-codicological evidence is simply without textually probative value, despite the rare instruction it may yield for publication routines. (2) Likewise, the *stemma* means to account for texts of the *Cronica* proper only. No correlation between these texts and the texts of the *Vox clamantis* occurring in four of the five manuscripts (**HCSG**) can be observed, probably for reasons developed by Parkes ("Patterns of Scribal Activity," 82): in all four cases, the *Cronica* was always copied separately, later, on blanks and anomalous added quires, after the *Vox* had been completed. None of the observable copyists ever had access to any exemplar that already had concurrent in it both the *Vox* and the *Cronica* at once. Despite the possibility that the same scribe may have written both the *Vox* and the *Cronica* at some time or other, and despite the fact that both works ended up written out together in some of the same manuscripts, the surviving copies of the one work and the other come from different, discontinuous exemplars. This too may be an unusual circumstance; nonetheless, despite the coincidences of scribes and manuscripts — accidents without textual consequence — the two works come from discontinuous, non-overlapping textual traditions.

DISTINCTIONS OF THE HARLEIAN MANUSCRIPT (H)

There comes a small series of places where **H** transmits arguably right readings — despite the slight nature of the evidence and the difficulties of deciding, readings that are or ought to have been authorial — alone against the other copies, as follows.

1.191 *ibi* / **H**: *sibi* ω (= *alii omnes*)

Complaining against godless friars, Gower makes a point of some sort about the efficacy of their confessions:

Absque deo fratres fuerant hoc tempore patres,
Nec **ibi** [**H**: **sibi** ω] confessa per eos est culpa repressa.

Forms of *se* are always tricky to construe, in Gower as in contemporary Latin usage generally; in any case, Gower — who was persistently, virulently anti-fraternal — is on thin doctrinal ice here: the sacrament was in friars' trust, and to question that trust was a symptom of lollardy, as more generally it was to suggest that the efficacy of any sacrament was dependent on the personal or individual confessional-penitential state of a priestly placeholder.¹⁰ The **H** reading *ibi*, perhaps suggesting fraternal neglect of the sacrament entrusted them rather than any inefficiency of the sacrament itself, improves by limiting the charge to a particular place and time: friars were failing to remediate sin, but only there and then. The term also reiterates the emphatic *hoc tempore* of the previous line. In any case, *sibi* is nonsense — the juxtaposition with “per eos” does not clarify — whereas *ibi* (howbeit not especially instructive) may not be.

2.22 *dolor* / **H**: *dolus* ω

Near the beginning of Book Two, where Gower turns to the period of Richard's tyranny, beginning in 1397, the writer asserts that the king was already imposing intolerable burdens on the general population, and now, so much the worse, he is to take to murdering persons of importance. Gower laments:

ECCE SCELUS magnum: latitans quasi vulpis in agnum,
Sic **dolor** [**H**: **dolus** ω] expectat quos ira tyrannica spectat.
O fraus, Oque dolus, quos rex sub ymagine solus,
Dum scelus exhausit, tam longo tempore clausit!

It might be suggested that *dolor*, the **H** reading, is the only appropriate end in view for the victims of the king's coming wrath, a *dolor* possibly produced

¹⁰ See esp. *Vox clamantis* 4.677–1232 (= chaps. 16–24).

by the *dolus* of someone “latitans quasi vulpis” (where the reverse — *dolus* produced by *dolor* — is hardly comprehensible). One might wish that Gower had tried writing “Sic **dolus** expectat . . . / O fraus, Oque **dolor**. . .”; *fraus* and the manuscripts’ *dolus*, being synonyms, only repeat a charge against the tyrant, whereas *fraus* and a conjectural *dolor* would escalate, by doubling the charge (besides reproducing the proper order of events, *fraus* causing *dolor*); but there is no evidence to such an effect. In any case, the **H** reading *dolor* (one place or the other) would still eliminate the repetition of *dolus* from one line to the next, a common enough error of copying, be it recollective or anticipatory.

2.38 ullus / **H**: unus ω

The phrase “nec erat tunc **ullus** amicus” in **H** may be more idiomatic than the other manuscripts’ “**unus** amicus,” and more accurate, for describing Richard’s isolation at the moment, by consequence of the terror he inflicted even on those closest to him (“Rex stetit obliquus, nec erat tunc. . .”), though the same observation might favor the less idiomatic lection. The difference may be so inconsequential as to be undecidable.

2.75 statuunt / **H**: statuit ω

The tyrant exulted (2.73 “Celsius in scanno tunc creuit pompa tiranno”) once he had the three great appellants of 1387 in custody — Gloucester, the earl of Arundel, and Warwick — and he determined to murder them (2.74 “Nulli parcebat”), but by means of parliamentary trials:

Stat scelus extentum, **statuunt** [**H**: **statuit** ω] quo parlamentum
Vt sit finalis sic vlcio iudicialis.

The **H** reading “statuunt” may be the more difficult, possibly an Anglicism, whereby the collective “parlamentum” — though grammatically singular, conceived as a number of persons and so treated as a plural — goes with a plural verb, making clear also the shift of subject, from “scelus” to “parlamentum.” Too, the shift from the past tenses of the previous lines (“creuit,” “parcebat,” “fauebat”) to the present (“Stat” and “sit”), already effective, is perpetuated in “statuunt,” but not in “statuit,” which may be inaccurate: it cannot yet properly be said that the parliament at issue has determined anything, having yet to meet. Finally, a mistaking of source “statuunt” for “statuit” (the four minims with nasal suspension miswritten as three with the brevigraph missed out) may be more likely to have occurred than a reversed mistaking, of source “statuit” for “statuunt”; “statuit” may even have been a copyist’s conjectured correction, meant to smooth out a perceived difficulty of “statuunt,” but needlessly, whereas a scribal correction the other way around is harder to imagine.

2.118 labe / **H**: fine ω

Gower prays God grant Gloucester proper burial — whose lurid murder has just been recounted — “*Spiritus atque statum teneat sine labe [H: fine ω] beatum!*” The final phrase of the rest of the tradition is a liturgical commonplace, and so acceptable; however, the phrase “*sine labe*” isolatedly in **H** shifts the emphasis significantly, from God’s of course boundless grace (it goes without saying), to the matter actually at hand: the criminal guilt of King Richard, who has just snuffed out another innocent: *spiritus sine labe*. As it was for others, so for Gower too this killing was Richard’s greatest trespass: murder of an innocent who begged pardon, who was the killer’s relation, who was of the blood royal: “One vial full of Edward’s sacred blood, / One flourishing branch of his most royal root.”¹¹ Though the lapse into thoughtlessness is understandable, as a copying or authorial *menda*, the more pointed remark seems rhetorically the more apt at this culminating point. Also, a similar phrase recurs later in the *Cronica* (though again with variation: see below), again for describing the murder of the innocent soul Gloucester, when the matter of Richard’s crimes comes up in Henry’s first parliament. When he found something that worked — phrases, whole lines, still longer combinations — Gower often tried to make it work repeatedly:

Et tunc tractatum fuit illud opus sceleratum,
Quo dudum Cignus periit sine labe benignus.
(3.368–69)

The only remaining disjuncts in **H** appear to be a pair of simple mechanical errors of copying: 1.133 “*tales qui legis [H: regis ω] collaterales / Extiterant gentes;*” and 1.219 “*Reddat ei [H: eis ω] munus tribus*” (the verb’s subject is God), both yielding nonsense; except that there also comes a passage in **H** of rather more complex variation, for explanation of which resort to an hypothesis of authorial intervention is exigent.

1.55–56]

In discussing events of the “Appellants’ Coup” in late 1387, Gower remarks on the non-involvement of Henry Percy (1341–1408), Earl of Northumberland (created 1377). Gloucester, the Earl of Arundel, and Warwick were as one in leading the coup (1.50 “*Non hii diuisi, sed in vnum sunt quasi visi*”), Gower writes, but were not alone; they had significant seconds, whom Gower names using the peculiar heraldic-prophetic appellations that characterize the *Cronica*:

¹¹ On the episode, see Matthew Giancarlo, “Murder, Lies, and Storytelling: The Manipulation of Justice(s) in the Parliaments of 1397 and 1399,” *Speculum* 77 (2002): 79–92. The English verse is Shakespeare, *Richard II* 1.2.17–18.

Penna coronata tribus hiis fuit associata;
 Qui gerit 'S' tandem turmam comitatur eandem,
 Nobilis ille quidem — probus et iuuenis fuit idem —
 Sic quasi de celis interfuit, ille fidelis;
 Hac sub fortuna **presens** aquilonica luna
Non fuit ad sortem, sequitur sed mente cohortem.

The *penna coronata* is Thomas Mowbray (ca. 1366–1399), Earl of Nottingham (from 1383), and later Duke of Norfolk (created 1397); the noble *iuuenis* “Qui gerit ‘S’” is Henry Bolingbroke, whose Lancastrian collar of the same linked letters Gower was to wear in effigy;¹² and the *aquilonica luna* is Percy — but he was not at the time involved, Gower asserts. Already, this is a peculiarly anticipatory passage. Any number of other persons were also not implicated in the 1387 events. Percy’s non-participation is remarkable only with hindsight of the sort that Gower could have by the time of his writing in 1400, when Percy had become remarkably involved in putting Henry on the throne.

H has a differing version of the remark about Percy that indicates a hindsight still more advanced into the future. The same noble, who had not involved himself in 1387 but had had a major role in the 1399 events, was still later implicated in rebellion against Henry, in 1403, when his son the younger Henry Percy (“Hotspur”) was killed at Shrewsbury, and again in 1405. The passage in **H** — still a remark about the 1387 events — anticipates these later events, ca. 1403–5, calling Percy himself deceitful already and now blaming him for supporting the “Sun” King Richard, by whose deceits Percy is said to have been bewitched and eclipsed:

Hac sub fortuna **fallax** aquilonica luna
Eclipsata dolis sequitur consortia solis.¹³

An instance of the peculiar Gowerian disaccumulated revision, it seems: a demonstrably late passage of revision, ca. 1403–5, made its way into a copy of the *Cronica* that in other respects is textually early — with the exception of this passage, **H** is closer to the ca. 1400 original writing and publication than any other surviving copy — but the revision was not otherwise circulated; it occurs in none of the other manuscripts, including those manuscripts (**CSG**) that incorporate other revisions (not in **H**) as late as or later than this peculiar revision in **H** alone. The revision was made ca. 1403–5

¹² On the collar and Gower’s effigy, see now John Hines, Nathalie Cohen, and Simon Roffey, “*Iohannes Gower, Armiger, Poeta*: Records and Memorials of his Life and Death,” in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. Echard, 23–41 at 26 and 36–40.

¹³ On the revision, see Parkes, “Patterns of Scribal Activity,” 85, 91, and 94; and for Percy’s career, see J. M. W. Bean, “Henry IV and the Percies,” *History* 44 (1959): 212–27.

but not retained — lost track of, memorially or otherwise, by the time the other revisions occurred.

THE HATTON MANUSCRIPT (**Z**) AND THE TRADITION'S BIFURCATION

Z may once be right against all the other evidence, at 3.444 sibi] **Z**: si ω . Richard is said to be starving himself to death in prison:

Sic se consumit quod vix **sibi** [**Z**: si ω] prandia sumit,
Aut, si sponte bibit vinum, quo viuere quibit.

"Si" is incomprehensible, but an error easily made especially perhaps in the context, following just after "se," by anticipation of the "si" to come in the next line. Most likely, some suspension mark or other brevigraph has been missed out, possibly more than once: this is the sort of simple error that could have been made independently by **H**, on the one hand, and again independently, on the other, by the antecedent of **CSG**, or still more often.

It is also an easy enough correction to make conjecturally, even accidentally; and it might be preferable to understand the reading in **Z** this way, as its independent correction, at the one point, of a textual original already faulty here, which the rest of the manuscripts transmit faithfully: the copies transmitting source-error "si" are the good copies, in the sense that they reproduce accurately, whereas the copy that has the substantively right reading "sibi" at the one point — the reading that makes sense — is nevertheless the poorer copy because it deviates from source.

The same might be said about the peculiar **Z** reading 1.5 Ricardi] **Z**: Principio ω :

Dum stat commotus Ricardus amore remotus,
Ricardi [**Z**: Principio ω] regis oritur transgressio legis.

The **Z** reading is not so bad, possibly preferable *metri causa*: making a more spondaic line, and obviating the common equivocation in treatment of final -o otherwise occurring within the line itself. But it spoils the doubled line-internal rhyme ("Principio regis" with "transgressio legis") and the symmetry of the line's triple repetition of the usually only line-final pattern, dactyl-spondee — effects with which Gower would have been pleased at this point of heightened rhetorical emphasis. In context of the work otherwise in **Z**, "Ricardi" here is more probably to be regarded as a copyist's error of recollection from the previous line, rather than as the authorial reading, all the other evidence having it wrong.

In general this is the case with **Z**: textually it appears to be a poor copy, carelessly written. It is more often in simple error than any other manuscript. Its small-compass failures are so numerous that classification of them is otiose: virtually all imaginable varieties of copying errors occur, repeat-

edly.¹⁴ Not a great deal of attention is required for correcting errors of this sort tacitly while reading it, however, and the concurrence of the other manuscripts invariably confirms such corrections. In its propensity for such slips, it is not a good copy; substantively, however, it is the best copy, in a particular sense. **Z** does not have the five briefer right readings that isolate **H** from the rest of the tradition (at 1.191, 2.22, 2.38, 2.75, and 2.118, discussed above), nor does it have the two idiosyncratic errors in **H**, at 1.133 and 1.219; and the belated ca. 1403 revision of the remarks 1.55–56 about Henry Percy, called “fallax” in **H** only, does not occur. **Z** is not a copy of **H**, nor of an altogether **H**-like exemplar; the five minor degenerate readings that **H** only avoids have already entered the tradition, there to remain. Out-taking its numerous small mechanical faults, however, in terms of its textual substance, **Z** is as near a reflection of the ca. 1400 original writing and publication as any copy to have been transmitted, **H** excepted.¹⁵

¹⁴ Here is such a list, nonetheless:

Four times quia] **Z**: qua **ω**, at 1.90, 2.14, 2.81, and 3.58; also 1.3 quia] **Z**: qui **ω**; as well as other misreadings of source *q* + brevigraph: 1.59 quam] **Z**: quem **ω**, 2.174 quo] **Z**: quocue **ω**, 3.172 quoque] **Z**: [enclitic] -que **ω**, 3.486 [enclitic] -que] **Z**: qui **ω**.

Contracted forms probably from misread brevigraphs (especially suspensions of nasal consonants): 2.81 adherat] **Z**: aderant **ω**, 2.186 sperat] **Z**: sperabat **ω**, 2.166 capere] **Z**: carpere **ω**, 2.175 morteque] **Z**: mortemque **ω**, 2.197 conceptum] **Z**: contemptum **ω**, 3.228 quodammodo] **Z**: quodammodo **ω**, 3.447 meminit] **Z**: memorat **ω**, and possibly also 3.127 Creuit] **Z**: Cernit **ω**, and 3.177 continet] **Z**: sustinet **ω**; also, vowel confusions by contracted nasals: 3.150 homo] **Z**: humo **ω**, and 3.222 timor] **Z** (possibly anticipating 3.223, the same term in the same metrical position): tumor **ω**.

Confusion of “s” and “f”: 1.168 fors] **Z**: sors **ω**, 1.182 forte] **Z**: sorte **ω**, and 3.259 satis] **Z**: fatis **ω**; and possibly 1.26 subtili] **Z**: fallaci **ω**. Also, confusion of “r” and “t”: 1.165 petit] **Z**: perit **ω**.

Spelling variants and errors, including sibilant spellings: 1.142 possit] **Z**: poseit **ω**, 1.148 Signum] **Z**: Cignum **ω**, and 3.163 sceler] **Z**: celer **ω**; and possibly also related to pronunciation: 2.137 facta] **Z**: fata **ω**, and 3.283 cuntis] **Z**: cunctis **ω**. Also a full range of the possible errors with vowel distributions: 1.6 retrograda] **Z**: retrograda **ω**, 1.115 obliquus] **Z**: obliquus **ω**, 1.127 Turrem] **Z**: Turrim **ω**, 2.273 perliamentum] **Z**: parliamentum **ω**, and 3.121 erat] **Z**: erit **ω**.

Omissions of *et*: 2.267, 3.236, 3.372; also omission of 1.158 *terra* and 3.224 *se*; and possibly related confusions of biliteral monosyllables: 2.31 vt] **Z**: et **ω**, 2.66 ab] **Z**: in **ω**, and 3.336 Et] **Z**: Vt **ω**. Also, initial omission of a whole line, 2.328, the line then written out *in margine* with a mark for its insertion to follow 2.326.

¹⁵ **Z** has also the important distinction of being the only independent copy of the *Cronica*, which is transmitted by the rest of the manuscripts as a kind of appendix to the *Vox clamantis*. And an independent state would have been the original form of the *Cronica*'s publication — possibly in something like pamphlet form — immediately following its completion, ca. February 1400, at a point of near-crisis for the Lancastrian regime, just after Richard's murder, when the poem's matter would have been of immediate interest. It ought perhaps also to be pointed out that the examination of the textual tradition herein indicates that the state of the text in **Z** is in fact also early, relatively speaking — that the

With **H**, **Z** represents the earliest state of the text in evidence. The pattern of affinity is persistent, and no other pattern occurs: **HZ** share arguably earlier, better readings against the remainder, **CSG**. The tradition bifurcates along these lines most markedly in two passages of (relatively) extensive authorial revision.

2.208–10]

By this point in Gower's narration of events, 1387, Richard is become not only a poor king, but a danger to all around him, though he has yet to act openly against his putative enemies: like a volcano, Gower puts it, about to explode, though not yet quite having done so. **HZ** read

Restat adhuc dira mons Ethna latente sub ira
 Regis, **qui** faces magis obtinet **ille** voraces.
 Quem rex iratus **tetigit de face** reatus,
Eius in ardore subito perit ille dolore.

Though effective, the passage is unmetrical, twice in the same way: it treats the stem vowel in the oblique cases of *fax* it uses as if the vowel were long. Gower's verse elsewhere shows a high degree of tolerance for such putative errors, as does that of other contemporary Latin poets — a degree of tolerance so high that it is difficult to regard such stem-vowel usages as errors. The only error was equivocation — treating the same vowel in the same syllable now one way, now another; consistency — the same one way always, or the other, but not both — sufficed to make normative.¹⁶

In the present instance, however, Gower (or some critic?) seems to have learned that the antique usage differed, and so the passage was put metrically right. **CSG** read

Restat adhuc dira mons Ethna latente sub ira
 Regis, **dumque** faces magis obtinet **inde** voraces.
 Quem rex iratus **quamuis sine labe** reatus,
Tangit in ardore subito perit ille dolore.

direction of textual change went from something much like **Z** (unrevised) to **S** (revised), for example — not late, as I implied elsewhere, ignorantly, in “Gower's Early Latin Poetry: Text-Genetic Hypotheses of an *Epistola ad regem* (c. 1377–1380), from the Evidence of John Bale,” *Mediaeval Studies* 65 (2003): 243–317 at 294 n. 3; see also Fisher, *John Gower*, 99–106.

¹⁶ Cf. the remarks of Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066–1422* (Cambridge, 1992), 314 and 391 n. 5; or “Metrics,” in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington, DC, 1996), 106–110 at 110. Some near-contemporary Anglo-Latin examples of 1392 are discussed in David Carlson and A. G. Rigg, eds. and trans., *Richard Maidstone: Concordia (The Reconciliation of Richard II with London)*, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, 2003), 36 and 129–30.

Though the series of changes introduces metrical rectitude, the same changes enfeeble the passage. By better connecting the royal firebrands to the metaphoric volcano of the king's wrath, revised "inde" may improve the other version's excessive "Regis, qui . . . ille," all in the same line, "ille" then repeating two lines on with a different reference. On the other hand, first, "dumque" connects ("-que") and then leaves a subordinate clause hanging stranded ("dum"). Second, "quamuis sine labe" — a cliché to which Gower often resorts for filling out the second half of his rhymed hexameters with double dactyls — also confuses: interposed between the two adjectives "iratus" and "reatus," modifying the line's "rex" (who cannot both have such qualities and also be "sine labe" himself), it must describe the as yet to be clarified "Quem" with which the line begins. Third, the loss of "Eius," to make way for the requisite finite verb "Tangit," a changed tense, makes "ille" pointless or less clear, where once the two pronouns worked together (the king was "the latter," "Eius," and his victim "Quem" was "the former," "ille"). Finally, the new verb unmoors "in ardore" too, necessarily kept for making rhyme — is it to be taken adverbially, now, with "Tangit"? or with the more distant and already modified "perit"? — where in the other version the reference is more clearly to *ardor* of the wrath of the king. Metrical rectification of a sort, but that also introduces substantive incoherence: the odd combination here, of improving correction and sensible degeneration, suggests authorial revision, from the **HZ** version to the **CSG** version.

3.479J

The same conclusion might be reached about the other strongly bifurcating passage, segregating **HZ** from **CSG**, though the evidence is not so extensive. The variation occurs in the opening couplet of the verse paragraph with which the *Cronica* ends, quoted in full above. **HZ** read

CRONICA RICARDI, qui scepra tulit leopardi,
Vt patet, est dicta: **violenta, grauis, maledicta.**

where the other manuscripts **CSG** have a different post-caesural phrase in the second of the lines:

CRONICA RICARDI, qui scepra tulit leopardi,
Vt patet, est dicta **populo, set non benedicta.**

No prosodic motive for making the change — one way or the other — occurs, nor will physical damage explain it; the change is substantive and authoritative, involving an author-like judgment. To conclude by summing up the chronicle of Richard that has now been retold as "violenta, grauis, maledicta" differs sensibly from describing it as "set non benedicta"; the one escalates, or the one mitigates. But "set" — marking a strong disjunctive change of direction that never comes — and "populo" — where "est dicta"

gains nothing by the specification “est dicta populo” — appear to be metrical fillings-in, feeble or senseless, between the rhymes “est dicta” and “non benedicta” in the **CSG** version. Inasmuch as the “populo, set non benedicta” version of the line is inferior in sense, for these reasons, to the “violenta, grauis, maledicta” version, it is to be regarded as the revision, belated, the premise being that the text got worse, rather than better, as it was revised and recopied. The author wanted “non benedicta” badly enough by this point, it seems, to suffer the inferior “populo, set.”

Perhaps the premise is poor, or misapplied; in any case, it is still significant that, though in the same passage it differs in other respects, the manuscript uniquely having the idiosyncratic concluding verse-paragraph quoted at the beginning, **G**, shares “populo, set non benedicta” with **CS**, rather than “violenta, grauis, maledicta” with **HZ**, as if the mitigation of Richard's criticism, to be carried still further forward in the **Z**-conclusion, were already occurring at this earlier point of revision reflected in **CS** too. In any case, by virtue of concurrence in this phrase, the **G**-conclusion is established as deriving from, or at least as relating the more closely to, a **CS**-like text rather than an **HZ**-like text.

There is the one other conjunctive-disjunctive variant of this type, 1.71 fraudis] **HZ**: fraudes **CSG**, in a line describing the machinations of Richard's favorite Robert de Vere (1362–1392), called “Aper” (as the gloss *ad* 1.63 explains, “Comitem Oxonie, qui per aprum designatur”):

Querit Aper latebras, **fraudis** [**HZ**: **fraudes CSG**] mortisque tenebras,
Quo regnum periat regisque superbia fiat.

The possibility of copyists' misreading and miswriting either way — even independently, repeatedly, either way and then back the other — obviates choice, and the difference is not much to signify in any case. Though impossible to decide, right reading or wrong, the distribution still contributes. Excepting the ca. 1403 “Percy” remark variant unique to **H**, the only places where **H** and **Z** disagree are where one or the other has a small-scale variant, involving only a letter or two, such as an idiosyncratic error or a spelling variant. In such cases, **H** is consistently the more often correct (as might be expected by light of the generally greater propensity for mechanical error evident about the copying of **Z**). Substantively, nonetheless, **H** and **Z** are the nearest of relatives, against the rest of the tradition. Their concurrence represents a state of the text nearer the ca. February 1400 original writing than any of the other evidence; consequently, their shared readings are to be preferred, even in cases of relative indifference otherwise.

SITUATION OF THE COTTON MANUSCRIPT (C) AMONG THE REMAINDER

Among the manuscripts of the segregate other sort, **CSG**, the position of **C** is anomalous. With **SG**, **C** has the later (degenerate) readings “iratus quomuis sine labe reatus” and so forth in the passage at 2.208–10, and the “populo, set non benedicta” phrase at 3.479, in the major passages of bifurcating revision already discussed. Additionally, **C** has its own high rate of idiosyncratic mechanical error and trouble with spelling, like **Z** though not conjunct with it in any indicative fashion.¹⁷

Most remarkable about **C**, however, is its persistent substantive agreement in correct lections with **HZ**, against **SG**, despite its having the revisions at 2.208–10 and 3.479 with **SG** and its own idiosyncratic errors. The nine or eleven places of **HZC**-concurrence also segregate **SG** in error.

1.14 semper mala quin faciebat / HZC: ipsum, qui iure carebat SG

In the *Cronica*'s first reference to Richard, he is characterized:

REX INDURATUM cor semper habet neque fatum
Tale remordebat, **semper mala quin faciebat**.

C has the (metrically indifferent) variant order of terms “mala semper quin faciebat,” nevertheless substantively like **HZ**, by contrast with the phrase offered at the same post-caesural point by **SG**: “**ipsum, qui iure carebat**.” The two assertions about the boy king, neither of them particularly accurate or generous, are different, the one more general than the other: practicing *mala* would comprehend disregarding the law though not vice versa; and the **SG** reading has the greater degree of anachronistic impropriety about it. Charges of incompetence, even maladministration troubled Richard's reign from the mid-thirteen-eighties; charges of law-breaking and superiority to the law were the more serious — the chief grounds for his deposition, in fact — and also later, exclusively from the late period of his tyranny, from the

¹⁷ The idiosyncratic mechanical errors in **C** are as follows:

Errors reading vowels, for example “i” for “e” twice, at 1.175 Possit] **C**: Posset **ω**, and 2.167 fatiatur] **C**: fateatur **ω**; also, 2.244 optatus] **C**: aptatus **ω**; but especially final vowels: 2.15 do] **C**: de **ω**, 2.131 magnificate] **C**: magnificati **ω**, and 2.285 variate] **C**: variata **ω**.

Trouble with minims: 1.186 nimius] **C**: munus **ω**, 2.229 ictis] **C**: ictus **ω**, 2.287 dicuntur] **C**: ducuntur **ω**, and 3.323 sacratus] **C**: sacratis **ω**.

Trouble twice about marks of suspension of nasal consonants: 3.340 regnant] **C**: regnat **ω**, and 3.431 pregnat] **C**: pregnat **ω**.

Omission of an entire line at 3.468, and twice omissions of a medial consonant: 3.69 affimare] **C**: affirmare **ω**, and 3.197 fata] **C**: facta **ω**.

Finally, variants about the spelling of sibilants (such as occur also in **Z**): 3.188 celeres] **C**: sceleres **ω**, and 3.347 recisum] **CZ**: rescisum **HSG**.

summer of 1397 and on.¹⁸ The **SG** reading cannot properly be characterized as error, but is, rather, an acceptable variant; the greater anachronism about it may suggest that the **SG** reading is the revision, rather than the other way round: it appears to be the later version, at least in this sense, that it takes the later events of 1397–99 into account.

1.34 vbique / **HZC**: ille **SG**

Likewise, early in the *Cronica*, Gower describes Richard's employment, in August 1387, of the justices of the realm to obviate the force of the "Commission of Governance" enacted to supervise his reign, by preparing legal grounds for charging with treason those nobles who had imposed the "Commission" on the young king. The "Appellants' Coup" of the fall of 1387 begins here, according to the historiographical tradition, with Richard's provocative legal maneuvering; the justices — under coercion, it was later charged — provided Richard with the means he wanted to strike at his putative enemies.¹⁹ In Gower's verse narration, here first occurs a patterned line that he was to reuse, once in each of the books of the *Cronica*, at significant points:

Tunc rex letatur, super hoc quod fortificatur,
Quo magis ad plenum diffundat **vbique** venenum.

The repetitions are 2.25 "Sed magis ad plenum tunc fuderat ille venenum" and 3.56 "Quo magis ad plenum conspergitur omne venenum"; Gower liked the line and made it work more than once. The **SG** variant "**ille**" (anticipating 2.25?) here leaves the favored line metrically short, in a way that can only be regarded as degenerative error that Gower ought not to have tolerated.

1.170 iniquis / **HZC**: amicis **SC**

In the Appellants' parliament of 1388, the so-called "Merciless" parliament, the chief justice Robert Tresilian was tried and condemned; then, the parliament turned to the case of the rest of the justices, those who had collaborated with Richard in August 1387 in the matter of the "Commission of Governance":

IUDICIBUS RELIQUIS falsisque scienter **iniquis** [**HZC**: amicis **SG**],
Vt patet ante nota, conclamat curia tota.

¹⁸ See esp. Caroline M. Barron, "The Tyranny of Richard II," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 41 (1968): 1–18.

¹⁹ On the episode, see esp. S. B. Chrimes, "Richard II's Questions to the Judges, 1387," *Law Quarterly Review* 72 (1956): 365–90; also D. Clementi, "Richard II's Ninth Question to the Judges," *English Historical Review* 86 (1971): 96–113.

Falsehood is inevitably always witting, by definition; “wittingly friends” is hardly sensible, unless reference be to some intent to deceive on the part of the remaining justices — nowhere “ante nota” in fact. The parliamentary finding was not that the justices had deceived, but that they had been false and knowingly iniquitous, as the charge reads in **HZC**. The **SG** reading “amicis” is degenerative error again, prompted perhaps by someone’s inappropriately clichéd thinking of false friendship (“falsis amicis”) in a context where the notion was not apt.

1.213 verba / **HZC**: laude **SC**

The *Cronica*’s first book concludes with summary of the 1388 “Merciless” parliament’s achievements, incorporating a final hymn-like encomium set off from the rest:

Sic emendatum regem faciunt renouatum,
 Cercius vt credunt, et sic cum laude recedunt.
 Concinit omne forum, benefactaque laudat eorum.
 Talia dicentes sunt vndique **verba**, [**HZC**: laude **SG**] canentes:

“IN CRISTI SIGNO sit semper gloria Cigno;
 Laus et in hoc mundo sit Equo, quem signat hirundo;
 Vrsus et ex ore populi fungatur honore.
 Hii tres Anglorum fuerant exempla bonorum:
 Regnum supportant, alienaque pondera portant.
 Reddat eis munus tribus est qui trinus et vnus.
 Amen.”

“Canentes” does the deictic job already, without help from “laude” — emplacing a liturgical ready-made (“Amen”) at the end of the line, perhaps prompted by “cum laude recedunt” and “benefactaque laudat” in the two lines preceding, adding nothing nor explaining. To construe the alternative “verba” as specifying “talia” (*talia verba dicentes*, as implied by the punctuation used above) may yield a needless precision in context, about what the “omne forum” was doing at the moment; to construe as “Talia dicentes,” then “verba canentes,” does not improve. Nonetheless, Gower appears to have been impressed with his ability to reproduce *ipsissima* “verba” on such occasions; he purports to introduce other such verbatim reproductions elsewhere in the *Cronica* too (e.g., 2.314–17). “Verba” insists on this Gowerian conceit, howbeit excessively, it may possibly be felt, whereas “laude” does less or nothing, only filling the line.

2.4 lingua / **HZC**: penna **SG**

The *Cronica*’s second book — the matter of it to be what elsewhere Gower calls “Opus inferni,” namely, “pacem turbare, iustosque regni interfi-

cere," which now "Ricardus capitosus dolosa circumvencione facere non timuit"²⁰ — begins with lament:

O DOLOR IN MENTE, sed prodolor ore loquente!
 Heuque mee penne, scribam quia facta gehenne!
 Obice singultu, lacrimis, pallenteque vultu:
 Vix mea **lingua** [**HZC: penna SG**] sonat hec que michi Cronica donat.

The shift from 2.2 "penne" to 2.4 "lingua" might be regarded as incongruous — or repetition of "penna" from 2.2 again in 2.4 might be regarded as a lapse of recollection. "Lingua" is the more difficult reading, by virtue of the incongruity of the shift; with 2.2 "penne," "lingua" comprehends the possible tools; also, it can ring literally truer with the verb supplied ("lingua sonat") in a way repeated elsewhere in the *Cronica*. The alternative proposed in **SG** ("penna sonat") jars in context of 2.2 "penne, scribam quia," while also repeating; and later in the same book come other lines (2.233–34 "HEU! MEA PENNA madet lacrimis, dum scribere suadet / Infortunata sceleris quibus horreo fata") matching "penna" with another form of the same literally appropriate verb. The only other place in the *Cronica* where either subject, "penna" or "lingua," recurs is at 1.151 "Inuidus et paci lingua fuit ille loquaci," where the adjective supplied again matches literally.

2.278 Sic / **HZC: Tunc SG**

The worst crime of Richard's 1397 "Revenge" parliament itself from a certain perspective was its condemnation, to deprivation and exile, of the archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel, who was among Gower's patrons.²¹ Out of order, then, from the perspective of a strict reconstruction of the real chronology of the parliamentary *acta*, Gower moves the parliament's dealings with the archbishop to the already rhetorically emphatic final position, and then pounds the podium:

Sic de finali rex pondere iudiciali
 Exilio demit Thomam, nec amore redemit.
 Sic pater absque pare, quem rex spoliauit auare,
 Partes ignotas tunc querit habere remotas;
Sic [**HZC: Tunc SG**] pius Antistes casus pro tempore tristes
 Sustinet, et curam sperat reuocare futuram.
 Cristus eum ducat, saluetque salute reducat,
 Sic vt vterque status sit ei cum laude beatus!

²⁰ In the prose headnote to the *Cronica tripertita*, *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, 4:314.

²¹ For Gower's manuscript presentation to the archbishop, see Fisher, *John Gower*, 99–100 and 105–6; Parkes, "Patterns of Scribal Activity" (n. 6 above), 92–93, expresses reservations about the surviving copy. In "Manuscripts and Illustrations" (n. 8 above), 95, Pearsall remarks: "'campaign' is not too strong a word to apply to the impetus given by Lancastrian patrons to the production of copies of Gower's works."

“Tunc” makes alliteration with the end of its line, “pro tempore tristes,” including the rhyme word, making a nice line-length package, it might be felt. “Tunc” also recalls or repeats from the immediately previous line, however, and then also spoils the carefully built anaphora, which goes otherwise “Sic”/ x/ “Sic”/ x/ “Sic”/ x/ x/ “Sic,” effectively to conclude, so that Gower can then go on to something new. At another place as well — 1.182 Sic] **HZC**: Hic **SG** — the **SG**-exemplar seems to have had trouble reading in-source “Sic” (in line-initial position there too) and again came up with something different, though to less damaging effect.

3.291 et ad/ **HZC**: quibus **SG**

The matter of Richard’s resignation of the throne — 29 September 1399, before witnesses, but in the Tower of London, where Richard was being held captive, rather than in parliament, which convened publicly only the next day, in his absence (“ac sede regali cum pannis auri solempniter preparata tunc vacua absque presidente quocumque”),²² to hear it announced that the king had already resigned the throne, “hillari vultu”²³ — was of such explosive potential that Gower cannot be faulted for passing by the crucial points quickly, rather than dwelling:

R. non comparet, alibi sed dummodo staret,
Causas assignat, **et ad [HZC: quibus SG]** H. sua ceptra resignat.

Hypotaxis is the more sophisticated, subtle, one generally feels: an improvement. In this particular case, it has also the benefit of burying deeper in subordination the still more bizarre Lancastrian cognate assertion, to the effect that, not only had Richard resigned the throne “vultu hillari,” he had also sought to nominate Henry to succeed him. Where Gower was to be circumspectly brief, the “Record and Process” makes opera, props and all:

Et statim idem rex, renunciacioni et cessioni predictis, verbotenus adiunxit quod, si esset in potestate sua, dictus dux Lancastrie succederet sibi in regno. . . . Et, in signum sue intencionis et voluntatis huiusmodi, annulum auri de signeto suo patenter de digito suo tunc ibidem extraxit, et digito dicti ducis apposuit, desiderans hoc ipsum vt asseruit omnibus regni statibus innotesci.²⁴

The legal issues alone that this putative nomination created would appear to have sufficed to preclude celebration: the nomination would have made the Lancastrian kingship to depend on Richard’s authority, at a moment when the immediate tactical objective was to remove all authority from him. The

²² *Rotuli Parliamentorum* (n. 3 above), 3:417.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3:416.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:417.

putative nomination was in fact soon forgotten, not repeated by the chroniclers, for example.²⁵ **SG** "quibus" may be Gower's contribution to the later process of forgetting, official or spontaneous, as if the nomination of Henry followed inevitably, unremarkably, from Richard's willingness to subscribe the "Schedule of Renunciation" ("Causas assignat") presented him in the Tower. **HZC** "et ad" is substantively closer to the letter, of what was said to have happened at the moment, originally: first, Richard resigned, and then he nominated Henry, only afterwards, as a distinct gesture. On grounds only of the external evidence, then, **HZC** "et ad" is (slightly perhaps) the more likely to have been Gower's first thought.

3.369 labe / **HZC**: iure **SG**

The murder of the "Swan" Gloucester, again, is mentioned for the last time with reference to Henry's first parliament's finding in October 1399 that, what was a mystery earlier, had in fact been a crime:²⁶

Et tunc tractatum fuit illud opus sceleratum,
Quo dudum Cignus periit sine labe [**HZC**: iure **SG**] benignus.

Nor is this the first occurrence of the phrase's application to Gloucester in the *Cronica*: 2.118 "Spiritus atque statum teneat sine labe [**H**: fine **ω**] beatum!" has it already in some form. As argued above, the idiosyncratic **H** lection 2.218 "sine labe" is the more likely right there on grounds of substance only, despite the evidence of the rest of the tradition's concurrence in another reading. The phrase used at both places falls into a pattern common enough in Gower's later Latin verse to be quasi-formulaic: "sine" in fourth-foot final position occurs twenty-one times in the *Cronica* (only four times in some other in-line metrical position), and preponderantly, in fifteen of these instances, it is then followed by a disyllabic noun, to start the fifth foot, iambic words including "labe," "iure," and "fine" and so forth in ablative case, though also once only (3.454) in genitive case: "sine laudis honore." The most common phrase in the position is "sine iure" (six times: 2.40, 2.107, 2.145, 2.222, 3.88, and 3.113); the next most frequent appears to be "sine labe" (four times, but only if the variable occurrences at 2.218 and here at 3.369 are included: 2.70, 2.218, 3.84, and 3.369).²⁷ With such a degree of repetition, variants will occur. Generally, Gower's choice of follow-

²⁵ Other evidence for this episode's official forgetting is in H. G. Wright, "The Protestation of Richard II in the Tower in September, 1399," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 23 (1939): 151–65, and G. O. Sayles, "The Deposition of Richard II: Three Lancastrian Narratives," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 54 (1981): 257–70; see also Chris Given-Wilson, "The Manner of King Richard's Renunciation: A 'Lancastrian Narrative'?", *English Historical Review* 108 (1993): 365–70.

²⁶ See *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, 3:452–53.

ing noun appears appropriate; the only variants come at these two places, 2.218 and 3.369; “sine fine” occurs only once elsewhere, appropriately and invariant (3.7 “O res laudanda! O res sine fine notanda!”); the pattern of choice — clear preference for “sine labe” where apt — argues both, again, that **H** is right at 2.218, despite its isolation, and that here, at 3.369, **HZC** “sine labe” is more likely right, whereas the **SG** reading “sine iure” is degenerate: some faulty recollection of a Gowerian commonplace, less apt in the context of the poem’s descriptions of Gloucester. The innocent soul of the earl of Gloucester had been snuffed out “sine iure” in fact, though to say so is to emphasize the criminality of others, whereas the other phrase focuses attention (yet again) on his imputed quality: “sine labe.”

3.438 suos/ **HZC**: suis **SG**

Richard’s death resulted from his sorrow at the failure of the “Revolt of the Earls” in January 1400, Gower is not alone in asserting, when such aristocratic supporters as the former king still had were all killed.²⁸ Though Richard regrets their sufferings (3.435 “et eorum funera fleuit”), his despair comes of the consequences of their deaths for his own situation (3.436 “Tunc bene videbat, quod ei fraus nulla valebat”):

Ecce dolor talis suos [**HZC**: suis **SG**] est, quod spes aliqualis
Amodo viuentem nequit conuertere flentem.

The point is not that the former king suffers such regret for his dead adherents (“dolor talis suis”) that he starves himself to death, but that he suffers so for his own helplessness (“dolor talis suos”).²⁹ The substantively inferior **SG** reading is easily enough explained as an error of copying, engendering also prosodic malfunction: a long syllable *-is* cannot fit the position.

DEGENERATION IN THE ALL SOULS (S) AND GLASGOW (G) MANUSCRIPTS

Though **C** concurs with **SG** in the major segregative revisions at 2.208–10 and 3.479, it also concurs elsewhere with **HZ**, in the generally though sometimes only dubiously better, more minor readings just listed. In a number of

²⁷ The other occurrences of phrases of the type are at 1.124, 2.43, 2.84, 2.112, 2.170, 2.236, 2.266, 2.320, 3.7, 3.26, 3.118, 3.208, 3.219, 3.260, and 3.454. It is noteworthy that all the examples but for the one (1.124) occur in the later books of the *Cronica*, as if Gower came on to the phrases’ convenience only belatedly.

²⁸ On these events of 4–15 January 1400, see Alan Rogers, “Henry IV and the Revolt of the Earls, 1400,” *History Today* 18 (1968): 277–83; Peter McNiven, “The Cheshire Rising of 1400,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 52 (1970): 385–92; also David Crook, “Central England and the Revolt of the Earls, January 1400,” *Historical Research* 64 (1991): 403–10.

²⁹ Various accounts of how Richard died were put about, little agreeing among themselves: for a survey, see Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven, 1997), 425–26.

these cases of the **HZC**-concurrence against the **SG**-concurrence, it is hard to decide which is the better reading: the more authorial, or the nearer the February 1400 original composition. Where the evidence is clear, or at least relatively clearer, however, the **HZC**-concurrence is always better, the **SG**-concurrence never. Additionally, wherever there is concurrence of three manuscripts against two in some matter of substance, the pattern is always **HZ** against **SG**. **C** sometimes concurs with **SG**, sometimes (more often and to better effect) with **HZ**. What never comes in evidence, however, is any substantive concurrence of **H** and/or **Z** with **S** and/or **G**. And, judgment permitted, the segregative **SG** readings are always inferior.

Degeneracy reached the **SG** pair in several waves, so to speak: with all the rest of the tradition, **SG** want the five right readings that isolate **H**; **SG** have the metrical though poor "quamuis sine labe" revisions at 2.208–10 and at the ending 3.479 "populo set non benedicta," with **C**; but then **SG** have also the nine additional deviations into error that segregate them from **HZC**. Consequently, the text in these two manuscripts is most degenerate, in this sense, and most distanced by error from Gower's ca. February 1400 original publication of the *Cronica triperitita*.³⁰

SG are yet both quite good copies, **G** slightly less so, in the sense of appearing to have been carefully written, having relatively few of the simple mechanical errors or variants of spelling that occur so frequently in **Z** and

³⁰ By light of the textual considerations, Macaulay's decision to favor **S** as he did for establishing the text of his edition was a mistake. It was carefully written and is a presentation copy for the archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel (or a copy of the presentation copy: see n. 21 above) — a personage of importance, both in his relations with Gower and in his own right. Besides its text of the *Cronica*, the manuscript has other unique Gowerian contents, written for the archbishop, which enable dating its production fairly precisely to 1402: it is a remarkably early copy too, in other words, dating from the *Cronica*'s author's lifetime, within eighteen to thirty months of the poem's first completion and publication. Despite these its strong attractions, the manuscript's texts are at best idiosyncratic, arguably inferior or degenerate, and ought not to be preferred — all else being equal — before other witnesses. However, a critical text of the *Cronica triperitita*, established along the stemmatic lines set out herein — to make a text as near the ca. February 1400 initial publication as the evidence permits (leaving subsequent authorial revisions for other presentation) — would differ from the text printed in Macaulay's edition at only the following points (Macaulay's edition's lection before the bracket, followed after the bracket by the critically established reading with its witness-list): 1.14 ipsum, qui iure carebat] semper mala <**C**: mala semper> quin faciebat **HZC**, 1.34 ille] vbique **HZC**, 1.71 fraudes] fraudis **HZ**, 1.93 dum] cum **HC**, 1.170 amicus] iniquis **HZC**, 1.182 Hic] Sic **HZC**, 1.191 sibi] ibi **H**, 1.213 laude] verba **HZC**, 2.4 penna] lingua **HZC**, 2.22 dolus] dolor **H**, 2.38 vnus] vllus **H**, 2.75 statuit] statuunt **H**, .118 fine] labe **H**, 2.208 dumque] qui **HZ**, 2.208 inde] ille **HZ**, 2.209 quamuis sine labe] tetigit de face **HZ**, 2.210 Tangit] Eius **HZ**, 2.236 pereant] periant **HZC**, 2.278 Tunc] Sic **HZC**, .145 quasi] sua **H**, 3.291 quibus] et ad **HZC**, 3.369 iure] labe **HZC**, 3.444 si] sibi **Z**, and 3.479 populo set non benedicta] violenta, grauis, maledicta **HZ**.

C, for example. At 3.239, **G** reads “tunc” with **ZC**, where **SH** have “nunc,” the only instance of such a distribution of readings, the anomaly, in other words, indicating coincidental error among the poorer (less carefully written) copies **ZCG**; and at 3.473, where “mulset” is the reading of the others, **G** has the spelling variant “mulcet” in company with **Z** (which has the several additional instances of such spellings listed above). And at two places, **S** has idiosyncratic errors: 3.109 prius **S**] pius ω and 3.131 viles **S**] miles ω .

With these four exceptions of minor errors or spelling variants, **SG** always agree. **G** even concurs with **S** in the same “prius” for “pius” error at 3.428 that is peculiar to **S** in its other occurrence at 3.109, as also in two other readings, one of them also patent nonsense that might easily have been corrected if it was already in a common source for the two manuscripts: 1.69 parte] **HZC**: parce **SG**; and 1.182 Sic] **HZC**: Hic **SG**. **SG** are so close to one another, even in patent error in this way, that the one must be a copy of the other; the only evidence to indicate descent is the idiosyncratic revised conclusion in **G**.

Were **S** a copy of **G**, it would have to be imagined that, despite the presence of the revision in the hypothesized source **G**, **S** was able to revert accurately to the conclusion attested by **C**, but without also reverting to the more numerous other correct readings still in **C** that **C** shares with **HZ**. This is to try to imagine the unimaginable: that the source from which **S** was copied was both **G** and not **G**, that the source had all of the errors of **G** but also not all of the errors of **G**.

The more plausible hypothesis is that **G** was copied from **S** — in the process reproducing even small faulty features of **S**, with only the two exceptions (at 3.109 and 3.131), as well as all the more substantive variants in **S** — and that the revised conclusion was added in **G**, and in **G** only, rather than the revised conclusion being available for **S** and then being rejected by **S** in favor of reversion.³¹

³¹ What would appear to be another witness to the **G**-version of the conclusion has been published, in Richard J. Moll, “Gower’s *Cronica tripartita* and the Latin Glosses to Hardyng’s *Chronicle*,” *Journal of the Early Book Society* 7 (2004): 153–58. The glosses to the unpublished earlier version of Hardyng’s work (in London, BL, Lansdowne 204) cite Gower’s *Cronica* three times: once by paraphrase of *Cronica* 1.97–110 (Moll, “Gower’s *Cronica tripartita*,” 155); once by quotation of *Cronica* 1.5–8 + 15–16 + 21–22 as a continuous eight-line passage, with a variant version of 1.15–16 — perfectly satisfactory in itself though otherwise unparalleled (“Stultorum vile cepit consilium iuuenile / Et sectam senium decreuit esse reiectam” in the gloss, by contrast with all the manuscripts’ “Stultorum vile sibi consilium iuuenile / Legerat, et sectam senium dedit esse reiectam”), but wanting other variants, of a sort that would indicate the textual affiliation of the copy Hardyng was using (*ibid.*, 154); and finally, by quotation of an apparent excerpt from the concluding verse-paragraph of *Cronica* 3 (*ibid.*, 155–156):

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence is that the conclusion uniquely in **G** was added at what was textually the last possible moment, after all the errors that segregate **H** from the rest, after the revisions that segregate **H** and **Z** from the rest, and after the errors that segregate **C** from **SG**. Only at this very end of the text's evolutions and devolutions did someone intervene again to revise. The only person who could have been adequately interested to make such an alteration — where there were already two endings already in existence (“violenta, grauis, maledicta” and “sed non benedicta”), both of them satisfactory enough to be recopied — was someone who also had the authority to do so, as long as he lived to intervene, though he no longer had the capacity for thoroughgoing general textual correction or even supervision. As Siân Echard has shown, the manuscript in which the alternative *Cronica* ending appears is valedictory in several ways, having Gower's auto-epitaphic verse in it and depiction of him in the grave.³² By this point too, Gower had established a record of intervening in just this manner: both by altering what was already textually fine, then forgetting and rewriting again, and by withdrawing support from a source of his own poetic power, an established monarch for whom formerly he had written. The **G**-conclusion, however it be read — as incipient condemnation of Henry IV or only mitigated praise — would appear to be Gower's latest attested words.

-
- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 | O speculum mundi quod debet in aure refundi |
| 2 | Ex quo prouisum sapiens acuat sibi visum |
| 3 = 3.485 | Cum male viuentes deus odit in orbe regentes |
| 4 = 3.486 | Est qui peccator esse potest dominator |
| 5 = 3.487 | Ricardo teste finis probat hoc manifeste |
| 6 | Sic diffinita fecit regia sors stabilita |
| 7 | Regis vt est vita <i>Cronica</i> stabat ita |

Line 4 here omits “non” by mistake, evidently: the Gower manuscripts all read “Est qui peccator non esse potest dominator,” sensibly as well as metrically. Lines 1–2 and 6–7 have readings otherwise attested by **G** alone, distinguishing it from all other texts. Evidently, Hardyng's glosses will adjust the *Cronica* texts to suit his immediate purposes — paraphrasing and excerpting — and the glosses' tolerance for a high rate of significant error, even in small compass, does not engender credence. Nonetheless, Hardyng does not appear to have been inclined to invent. His witness must have been **G** or **G**-like. And his reading “debet in aure refundi” deserves consideration as possibly authorial, in preference to the only other attestation to such a line in the corpus, the difficult (nonsensical?) lection peculiar to **G** itself 3.478: “debet in ante refundi.”

³² Siân Echard, “Last Words: Latin at the End of the *Confessio Amantis*,” in *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A. G. Rigg*, ed. Richard Firth Green and Lynne R. Mooney (Toronto, 2004), 99–121 at 99–100.

The evidence does not permit precision about the date of Gower's final intervention. The revision came after the ca. 1402 fabrication of **S** — specially for presentation to the archbishop Thomas Arundel — which does not have it, and from which **G** appears to have been copied. Probably also, the revision came after the events of ca. 1403–5 that led to the revision of the remark about Henry Percy at 1.55–56 — whereby, now calling Percy “fallax,” Gower affirmed his support for Henry against rebellion — attested in **H** but nowhere else, and evidently forgotten by the time **G** came to be made.

The best hypothesis may be that what caused Gower's turning away from the Lancastrian regime, but after the events of ca. 1403–5 that made Percy “fallax,” was Henry's execution of the archbishop of York Richard Scrope, at York, 8 June 1405, the feast-day locally of Saint William the Confessor (d. 1154), also an archbishop of York. Scrope rebelled against Henry, it was said, because

optavit idem archiepiscopus, Ricardus Scrope, quod corona regni restitueretur rectae lineae, vel cursui, et ecclesia Anglicana haberet suas libertates, privilegia et consuetudines secundum justas leges regni Angliae ab antiquo usitatas, . . . [et] quod clerus et communitas regni non sint oppressi per exactiones et taxas decimarum, quintadecimarum, et subsidiorum, nec per alias impositiones iniquas, eo modo quo jam opprimuntur.³³

[the same archbishop, Richard Scrope, wished the kingdom's crown be restored its rightful lineage, or descent, and the English church enjoy its liberties, privileges, and customary rights, in accord with the laws of the realm of England in force of old . . . ; moreover, that the commons and clergy of the realm be not so oppressed, with imposts, taxes, and subsidies, tenths and fifteenths, nor with any such other exactions, of the sort by means of which they are at present being oppressed.]

Though the instigator of the rebellion, Henry Percy again, with whom Scrope may have collaborated, did not suffer so — he fled abroad, to die

³³ “Hae fuerunt causae, quare decollatus est archiepiscopus Ricardus Scrope,” in *Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, ed. James Raine, 2 vols., *Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* (Rolls Series) 71 (London, 1886), 2:305. On the episode, see esp. Peter McNiven, “The Betrayal of Archbishop Scrope,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 54 (1971): 173–213; and, on its aftermath, esp. John W. McKenna, “Popular Canonization as Political Propaganda: The Cult of Archbishop Scrope,” *Speculum* 45 (1970): 608–23; also, for broader context, Simon Walker, “Political Saints in Later Medieval England,” in *The McFarlane Legacy*, ed. R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (New York, 1995), 77–106; and Mary-Ann Stouck, “Saints and Rebels: Hagiography and Opposition to the King in Late Fourteenth-Century England,” *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n. s. 24 (1997): 75–94.

still contumelious in February 1408, weeks before Gower too passed away — the archbishop himself was taken immediately and killed, over the strong objections of England's other archbishop, Thomas Arundel, among others. But nothing availed with the king on the occasion:

Non sacri temporis prodest presencia,
 Nichil nobilitas, nil reverencia
 Persone, ordinis nec preminencia:
 He habent voces vacuas.³⁴

[The feast-day's occurrence did not at all avail, nor noble birth, nor the reverence of his person, nor the preeminence of his office: so many soundless voices.]

Henry was to suffer for his sin, it was said, even to the extent of contracting leprosy: "Regis vt est vita, Cronica stabit ita." Besides God, others too found the king's murder of the archbishop a disillusioning crux of the reign. As another poet put it on the occasion, evidently at the same remove from the Lancastrian regime to which Gower himself belatedly may have come:

Anglorum recolens prima fastigia,
 Nunc horum intuens dira discidia,
 Cuntorum metuens simul excidia,
 Mutata miror prospera.

[Thinking back to the first heights of the English, now face to face with their harsh deep division, bound as well to fear at once the slaughter of them all, I wonder at prosperity's mutation.]

"Quicquid erat primo": Gower would not have been alone, in other words, in finding Henry's murder this time too much to bear — "modo cum sors fertur in ymo" — from someone who had come to the throne, howbeit objectionably, but promising better, including respect for church and the law. By 1405, Gower's "Electus dei" — "Quem deus elegit,"³⁵ he had said — was murdering God's own; so,

³⁴ The verses "Non . . . vacuas," "Anglorum . . . prospera," and "Quid . . . verisimilis" are from the poem "Quis meo capiti," in London, BL, Cotton Faustina B.ix, fols. 243v–244v, where the penultimate line quoted reads "stages." The poem was printed from this source by Thomas Wright, in *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History Composed During the Period from the Accession of EDW. III. to that of RIC. III.*, 2 vols., *Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* (Rolls Series) 14 (London, 1859–61), 2:114–18; another, longer 21-stanza version of the poem (unpublished) is in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 851: see A. G. Rigg, "Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (II)," *Mediaeval Studies* 40 (1978): 397.

³⁵ The phrases quoted from Gower are "Quem deus elegit," *Cronica tripertita* 3.320, and "Electus Cristi," "In Praise of Peace," prol.1.

Quid mirum effluam totus in lacrimas,
Defleam, lugeam tantas miserias,
Procerum, plebium st<r>ages innumeras:
Nunc finis verisimilis.

[What wonder that I weep and wail, all tears, lament immiseration on so great a scale, the countless slaughter of nobles and common-folk: it is as if the end were now upon us.]

University of Ottawa