Literary patronage in the Middle Ages

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LITERARY PATRONAGE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

A THESIS
IN ENGLISH
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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PREFACE

To treat literary patronage historically is, in large measure, to break virgin soil. Patronage as a custom is, of course, recognized, but no comprehensive or connected treatment of it has been undertaken and no investigation of its origin or early phases essayed. The present study was originally planned as such a comprehensive work, but the wealth of available material and the extensiveness of the field made it seem best to defer so large a task and to treat only the earlier and more neglected period at present. Beljame's admirable book, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre après de Dixhuitième Siècle*, breaks the ground very well for a most important era of patronage in England, while incidental treatments, such as that in Miss Phoebe Sheavyn's *Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age*, or that in Wheatley's *Dedication of Books*, together with studies of individual authors or patrons, have sufficed for the Elizabethan period. But until now the Middle Ages have received little attention, though investigations concerning a few individual authors and nobles have yielded interesting results concerning the life of the time. Several years ago Professor R. K. Root promised an article on the subject in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, but other duties prevented the carrying out of his project. Professor Samuel Moore's Harvard dissertation (1911) was also originally planned as a study of the Middle Ages with especial reference to England, but he departed from his plan to examine certain Chaucerian problems only more or less connected with literary patronage. The work as a whole is still in manuscript, but all the material, somewhat enlarged, has been published in various journals, and references to it in these pages are made to the printed articles, which are readily accessible.

The present study attempts in its fashion to supply a connected account of this somewhat neglected phase of medieval literary life, and to look carefully in earlier ages for the origins of medieval patronage. As one may suppose, the ways in which
a patron might be approached and the modes in which his favor might be extended were exhausted at a very early period, so that patronage of letters cannot be said to show much development or progress. In order to be significant as a study of the life and conditions of the early author, any treatment of this phase of the profession must rest on the painstaking collection and comparison of numberless instances, and it is hoped the ones here presented are sufficiently representative. Medieval patronage of letters, too, like other things medieval, was a custom undefined by the usual boundaries of country or tongue, and though English conditions are the first interest of this study, the close relation between England and the continent makes any strict distinction from the rest of Europe impracticable. Wherever it was possible, therefore, to draw illustrations from English life and conditions, I have done so, but whenever evidence was not readily to be had in England (or not so good as on the continent), I have felt free to substitute material outside of England.

As my work has proceeded I have, of course, incurred many obligations. To anyone who is acquainted with the members of the department of English at the University of Pennsylvania, my debt there will be obvious. To several I am more especially indebted. I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Felix E. Schelling, whose kindness, encouragement, and confidence in all things, has helped me in every way. In this particular work my greatest debt is to Professor C. G. Child, who sponsored it, and upon whose time and wide learning I have drawn extensively. To him, too, I am grateful for much encouragement and guidance, and that enthusiasm which he inspires in all his students. To Professor A. C. Baugh, likewise, I am under numerous obligations. He first introduced me to the methods of scholarship, and for his unwearied patience, searching criticism, and helpful suggestions, I am very thankful. To my fellow graduate students at Pennsylvania, also, I owe thanks for their interest and confidence. All the material for this study, I may add, was gathered during my tenure, in the years 1921-3, of the George Leib Harrison fellowship in English.

My debts elsewhere are various. To the authorities of the
Preface

Widener Library, I am grateful for access to much material at Harvard. Sir I. Gollancz, director of the Early English Text Society, kindly sent me Hoccleve’s Lady Money roundels from the Ashburnham Hoccleve manuscript. To Miss Addie F. Rowe of Cambridge, Mass., I am indebted for various kindesses. Finally, to name no more, to Miss Eleanore Butler of Philadelphia, I am especially grateful for the verification of material.

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K. J. H.
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