

Guitar Lessons at Blackfriars
Vernacular Medicine and Preacher's Style in Henry
Daniel's *Liber Uricrisiarum*

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According to the advice of English Dominican John Bromyard (d. c. 1352), preachers could stand to learn a good deal from guitarists.¹ His *Summa praedicatorum* (*Treatise on Preaching*) advises preachers to take their cues from musicians, who know how to capture an audience's attention and keep it:

Predica, inquit, longa themata vitando, quia sicut tediosum est quod citharedus in aula diu citharam preparat, ita et cetera. Et statim ad quiditatem descendendo inuentiones contra vitia in speciali faciendo, quia qui cithare omnes chordas simul tangit, confusam et ineptam facit melodiam, et quasi ludum videtur facere puerorum. Sic in predicatione. Intente mentes auditorum sunt quasi quedam tentiones chordarum stricte in cithara, quas tangit artifex cum plectro ut reddant consonans modulationem, licet non uno impulso feriantur.²

Avoid long themes in your preaching, for just as it is tedious for a guitarist in a hall to take a long time tuning his guitar, so it is [for preaching]. One should get to the essence of the matter straightaway, launching attacks specifically against the vices. For someone who plucks all the strings at the same time makes his melody confused and inept, seeming to play, as it were, some childish game, and so too in preaching: the minds of listeners are intent, rather like the tightness of the strings on the guitar, which the expert plays with his pick to render the appropriate modulation, but they are not struck at one go.

Bromyard's ideal guitar-player – or more properly his ideal lutist or harpist – avoids tinkering too long with his tuning or overdoing it with a lot of strumming ('plucking all strings at once'). This expert player knows how to entertain any music-hall crowd with a well-composed, melodic

¹ See Peter Binkley's *ODNB* entry on Bromyard, as well as his 'Bromyard and the Hereford Dominicans'.

² Bromyard, *Summa praedicatorum*, art. VIII, §25, tr. adapted from Walls, *Bromyard on Church and State*, p. 145.

riff.³ And, just as a good guitarist arrives on stage with a tuned instrument, the expert preacher will avoid meandering introductions, knowing that it is better to excite an audience with immediate, uncompromising 'attacks upon the vices'. Neither the guitarist nor the homilist should waste any time before getting down to business, whether picking out a pleasing melody or inveighing against sin. Underwriting Bromyard's comparison is the assumption that both preaching and guitar-playing require a sense of each art's peculiarities and purposes. Like the artful musician, the artful preacher is an *artifex*, crafting each sermon to accomplish his particular ends, playing expertly upon the tautly intent, impressionable minds in the audience.

Unlike guitar-playing, however, preaching had purposes altogether more serious than mere entertainment. For Bromyard and his fellows, a sermon should guide the laity along a path towards salvation and away from sinful living. Such serious business called for a more sober professional than the touring guitarist as a model of conduct. Bromyard looks instead to the speaking habits of physicians. He admires their no-nonsense directness. Doctors – as he imagines them – teach patients just enough about their illness to get by:

Et sicut medicus ad infirmi sanationem non in generali docet qualiter curari potest, sed in speciali, quo periculum illud incurrit et quomodo sanari potest, ita in speciali conditiones peccati et pericula sunt recitanda, et speciales inuentiones et doctrine sunt contra illas infirmitates adhibende per plana verba et laicis intelligibilia, non per curiositates et declarationes et rationes philosophorum et dubias naturas animalium, quae omnia litteratorum aures demulcent vel predicatum gloriam querunt, et infirmorum non curant sed cecant.⁴

³ Talents for guitar-playing and teaching sometimes coincide in a person. A teenaged Alastair Minnis laid down his share of riffs as a member of a gigging showband in Northern Ireland in the mid-1960s. Minnis mostly played rhythm guitar (with apologies to the strumming-averse Bromyard) and took frequent turns on organ, bass and lead guitar. His band covered songs of all kinds: rock and roll, R&B, folk, country and western, classics of the Irish songbook. They envied the extraordinary collection of American records over at Van Morrison's (with whom, he says, he would only 'occasionally hang out'). He is typically modest about his guitar-playing capabilities, instead prouder of the *aulae* where he played. Touring the Northern Irish countryside, his five-piece performed in both Protestant and Catholic church halls alike. This was before their rhythm guitarist went up to Belfast to study English, and before such ecumenical music-making seemed an unjustifiable risk in the face of the violence of 'the Troubles' (a euphemism, in Minnis's judgement).

⁴ Bromyard, *Summa praedicatorum*, art. VIII, §25; tr. again adapted from Walls, *Bromyard on Church and State*, pp. 145–46.

And just as the doctor does not teach the sick about how he may be healed in general terms, but rather in specific ones – what danger they are in, and how it may be cured – likewise the conditions and dangers of sin should be spelled out specifically, and specific denunciations and teachings should be applied to counter those frailties in plain words, intelligible by the laity, not by way of far-fetched oddities and declarations and philosophical reasonings and the dubious natures of animals, all of which caress the ears of the learned, or have as their goal the reputation of the preachers, yet fail to heal the wounds of the sick, instead blinding them.

At the bedside, physicians need not – and, ideally, do not – provide patients with a ranging, general overview of medical knowledge. Rather, they educate them about their specific infirmities, passing on only enough knowledge to be immediately applied in treatment. Such targeted instruction about a sickness, or against a sin, entails a direct style appropriate to direct teaching. This style favours ‘plain words, intelligible to the laity’; it avoids sophistry, unnecessary philosophising and allegorical illustration. The latter may be common preaching tactics, but in Bromyard’s book they only serve frivolous purposes, such as literary pleasure or vain self-aggrandisement. His *Summa* lays out a theory of proper preaching style explicitly hostile to stylistic diversion, decoration or invention. Instruction delivered in a plainer mode – stripped of superfluous doctrine and conspicuous flourishes – will best serve the purposes of the discreet doctor and the Dominican alike.

Taken as a pair, Bromyard’s examples of guitar-player and physician appear to present the preacher with competing models for their own practice. One would have preachers be dynamic performers in the pulpit, so as best to exploit the attention and interest of the audience in the service of moral instruction. The other expects them to communicate Christian doctrine bluntly, without any embellishments. Bromyard expresses both of these principles in an inflexible, prescriptive idiom, leaving to the would-be preacher the difficult task of reconciling their competing claims of dynamism and directness. His advice relies on preachers’ sensibilities to balance these priorities, a process Bromyard figures musically, with the dynamic preacher finding a ‘consonant rhythm’ or ‘key’ for the sermon (*modulationem consonans*). Good teachers strike the right note.

Bromyard lays out his theory of good preaching in Latin, but the practice of preaching in later medieval England was, in large part, a vernacular enterprise. How else were readers of the *Summa* to reach audiences with plain words, intelligible to the laity, other than by preaching in a language they could understand? Arts of preaching thus comprised

a genre of medieval literary theory written in the Latin of learned textual communities but persistently oriented towards vernacular practice out in the world. As such, the ideas of the vernacular cultivated in *artes praedicatorum* found broad expression in medieval sermons composed according to the protocols of its Latinate theorising.⁵ Whether by reading *artes praedicatorum* themselves or by listening to sermons written in the styles they prescribed, medieval vernacular writers who studied preachers’ conventions might easily put those Latinate lessons in clarity or eloquence into practice in other spheres of vernacular literate activity. This was the case in fourteenth-century England, across genres of Middle English textual making. Preachers’ habits of locution and exposition escaped their original generic situations to be implicated in vernacular drama, prose for lay devotional reading and Ricardian poetry.⁶

Among the many writers who benefited from these preaching lessons in later fourteenth-century England, Henry Daniel OP stands out as an especially keen and insightful student, putting predicatorial theory to creative ends in order to convey, specifically, an abstruse body of medical knowledge in his Middle English prose. Though he has received some critical notice as an early pioneer of Ricardian technical writing, the details of Daniel’s innovative contribution, and especially the sources of and priorities motivating his novel style, remain to be explored.⁷ Here I take up the question of how his professional life and training as a Dominican, an order devoted to the ideas and practices of preaching, contributed to the shaping of his vernacular medical writing. After introducing Daniel and his text, I explore some of the major elements of his expository prose style, reading them against the rhetorical and preaching manuals that were the common fare of Dominican *studia* in his lifetime, and I thereby seek to illustrate what it means for this prose to be ‘preacherly’. Finally, I consider the ways in which this Dominican style (and its concomitant rhetorical attitude) set Daniel apart from other medical authorities in later medieval England – at least, that is, in Daniel’s own estimation. As we will see, Daniel wrote with a cultivated clarity that explicitly invoked the good

⁵ For reservations about Latinate theorising and its remove from situations of vernacular writing, see Wogan-Browne et al. (eds), *Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 316.

⁶ Studies of preaching in later medieval England have richly described its interaction with other literary modes: see Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*; Fletcher, *Preaching, Politics and Poetry*; Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets and the Early English Lyric*; and Spencer’s learned and witty general study, *English Preaching*.

⁷ See, for example, Hanna, ‘Henry Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum* (Excerpt)’. Sarah Star’s illuminating account of Daniel’s contribution to a Ricardian vernacularising project appeared as this chapter was under revision; see Star, ‘Textual Worlds’.

preacher's eloquence coached in *artes praedicandi*, an eloquence which, even in its plainness, might 'play upon the mind' of his readers. He inhabits that professional register of the preacher – somewhere between a guitarist and physician – to strike the right note in rendering rather technical medical matter into an accessible idiom.

Daniel's lengthy Middle English treatise, the *Liber Uricrisiarum* (c. 1379), presents a comprehensive guide to the unsavoury art of diagnosis by inspection of urine – hence the title, meaning 'the book of the judgement of urine'. He followed the *Liber* with his *Herbal*, a compendium on the medicinal qualities of plants (many of which he could grow in his garden in Stepney, outside of London).⁸ While the *Herbal* survives today in only two manuscript copies, the *Liber Uricrisiarum* found a much wider audience, as witnessed by the thirty-seven manuscripts recording it in some form.⁹ In the first of three books, the *Liber* offers a general introduction to the art of uroscopy, emphasising that the medieval medical practitioner's ability to draw the proper conclusions from a patient's urine was crucial to arriving at a correct diagnosis. The second book identifies the many colours of urine the physician is liable to encounter, along with their correspondent diagnoses, and the third describes the kinds of substances sometimes found in urine. In some manuscripts, these three books are followed by an English translation of Latin proverbs on uroscopy. The *Liber Uricrisiarum* is full of learned references to Latin source material, with wisdom marshalled from such venerated authorities as Galen, Constantine the African, Gilbert the Englishman and Avicenna. Throughout, Daniel finds every excuse to wander beyond his uroscopic subject-matter narrowly defined, to instruct his readers in, for example, anatomy, humoral theory, physiognomy and astronomy. Reading the *Liber Uricrisiarum* therefore requires endurance: Daniel writes expansively and indulges his digressive instincts, including deftly deployed proverbs and intriguing illustrative tales drawn from his life. This is no soggy storehouse of medieval medical knowledge. Daniel's artfulness as a writer and teacher animates the *Liber* and, therefore, despite its length and unseemly subject-matter, the result is a true masterpiece of Middle English prose.

Yet the text does not, in fact, begin in English. Addressing himself to a 'brother in Christ', presumably a fellow Dominican, Daniel first offers a

⁸ On Daniel's *Herbal*, see Keiser, 'Through a Fourteenth-Century Gardener's Eyes'.

⁹ On the complicated manuscript tradition of the *Liber*, see Tavormina, 'Uroscopy in Middle English', pp. 87–92.

substantial prologue in Latin, the language which – he admits – is especially dear to his heart.¹⁰ Here he explains that he undertook this daunting vernacular project only in the spare time afforded to him among his other duties:

Presens opus multorum auctorum ex libris eorumque commentatorum dictis multis laboribus prout potui per annos excolegi, non solum ordinis mei obedire laboribus diversis quod infirmitatibus et quandoque fere ad mortem frequenter interceptus.¹¹

With great labour over the years, I have compiled the present work as I could out of the books of many authors and of commentators upon them, frequently interrupted not only by the various preoccupations of my order, but at times brought close to death by infirmities.

This assertion of the humbly derivative quality of the *Liber* matches well with a self-effacing pose typically struck by late medieval vernacular writers, who, as Alastair Minnis has shown, would conventionally present themselves as just such workaday *compilatores*.¹² Daniel's contemporary John Gower, for instance, uses very similar terms to lament how sickness impeded the long, hard work of compiling his *Confessio Amantis*.¹³ But Daniel's modesty accords, too, with Bromyard's advice in the *Summa*: good preachers and good doctors do not care for literary reputation – or, at least, they should seem unconcerned about it. This vernacular writer cowers before the prospect of criticism (or merely pretends to), and he deprecates himself as the 'smallest and lowest of Christ's servants' ('ego quidem tantillus ut puta minimus servorum Christi').

Such self-deprecation notwithstanding, Daniel shows himself to be a stylish writer of expository English prose, as he translates uroscopy's key terms or describes physiological processes in the *Liber Uricrisiarum*. Consider, for example, this passage, in which he explains why a knowledge of uroscopy is so useful in diagnosis:

¹⁰ The Latin prologue is unedited, surviving in three different versions in twelve manuscripts. A later English translation survives in two further manuscripts. I quote from the text of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1404, ff. 3^v–4^r, unless otherwise noted. The quoted comments ('lingua . . . michi cara') are on f. 4^r. For a discussion of the English translation of the prologue, see Getz, 'Language of Medical Learning', pp. 12–16.

¹¹ Ashmole 1404, f. 3^v.

¹² *MTA*, pp. 190–99. For another example, see Chapter 5 by Kraebel, pp. 119–20.

¹³ *Confessio Amantis*, pr. 61–62, in Gower, *English Works*, ed. by Macaulay, 1, 4: 'Thogh I seknesse have upon honde / And longe have had . . .'. In a related Latin gloss, Gower cites his 'labores' in compiling the *Confessio* despite his sickness (ed. by Macaulay, 1, 3).

Also uryñ is sayde of þis worde of Grece, 'uryth', *id est* a demonstracioun, a schewynge, for mare certnely and mare verraly uryñ schewes & telles þe state & þe disposioun of mannis body, & namely of þe reynes, þan ony thyng ellys þat commys fra man. And þerfore when we wyll wet & know þe state & þe disposition of mannes body within, & namely of þe ryenes, we take rede & counsell & wyte at þe uryne.¹⁴

Daniel delivers this little lesson in etymology in plain speech, and the hardest word, 'demonstration', is defined in apposition as 'a schewynge'. His foray into Greco-Latin jargon is not a gratuitous show of his own learning, but the basis for a simple and sensible argument for uroscopy's importance for diagnosis. He writes as Bromyard's good doctor is meant to talk. But there is some artfulness here, too, in Daniel's effusive use of doublets and triplets ('schewes & telles', 'take rede & counsell & wyte at'), and in his subtle shift in voice, from the impersonal constructions of the etymology to the first-person plural constructions of the conclusions to be drawn ('þerfore when we wyll wet & know . . .'). This is plain English prose written with an ear for rhythm and in dynamic grammar, a straightforward style to engage an audience.¹⁵

More will be said below about the details of these expository techniques, but first one should note the general affinities between this emphasis on plain style and the notions of preaching articulated, again and again, across the principal texts of the medieval preacher's curriculum. Dominicans, from the very beginnings of their order, devoted themselves to 'study, preaching, and the profit of souls' ('studium vel predicationem vel animarum fructum').¹⁶ All of their intellectual pursuits were to be undertaken with this mission in mind, as Robert Kilwardby (d. 1279), Dominican prior provincial, exhorted the English rank-and-file: 'All our chapters and discussions and debates and all the order's study aim at nothing else than to prepare people and make them fit for the salvation of souls'.¹⁷ Friars preacher convened for such 'discussion and debate and study' at their local conventual *schola* or the more academically advanced *studia*. M. Michèle Mulchahey describes regular attendance of lectures and exercises at a

¹⁴ London, Wellcome Collection MS 225, f. 4^v. At the time of writing, no critical edition of the English text of the *Liber* is available, though a reading edition is forthcoming under the general editorship of Ruth Harvey, M. Teresa Tavormina and Sarah Star, to whom I am indebted for fielding my many questions about the *Liber* and its textual tradition. Jasin's 1983 thesis, a transcription of MS 225, has been an invaluable aid in navigating the text.

¹⁵ On the stylistic features of Daniel's prose, see Jasin, 'Compiler's Awareness', with this passage discussed at p. 514.

¹⁶ Galbraith (ed.), *Constitution*, pp. 203–4.

¹⁷ Quoted in Binkley, 'Hereford Dominicans', p. 255.

conventual school as the 'foundational experience for the Dominican friar' and 'the cornerstone of every day of his life in the order'.¹⁸ Thomas Waleys, another English Dominican, reports that it was specifically at those Dominican institutions that he learned the 'art and theory of the manner (*modo*) and form (*forma*) of preaching' that informs his *De modo componendi sermones* (*On the Manner of Composing Sermons*, c. 1342). He writes *De modo* in a 'simple style' (*grosso stilo*), 'following those things which I, one nourished in the Order of Preachers since my youth and having spent time in various general and provincial *studia*, comprehend of this art'.¹⁹ His *De modo* teaches sermon composition according to lessons in structure and style accumulated by living according to the Dominican rule, among Dominicans, in Dominican *studia*. Such a life produces a sensibility for a particular *forma* and *modus* of the sermon, shaped by long, regular experience listening to them at the order's houses. Waleys's *modus* is something of a house style, habituated in Dominican institutions and practised at the pulpit.²⁰

Living on the outskirts of London, Daniel could have made the daily commute to its Dominican *studium* at Blackfriars for those required sermons, lectures and exercises.²¹ His attendance would have schooled him in a theory and style of vernacular instruction, fit to educate the laity in Christian doctrine. (And, at Blackfriars, friars convening for study could also trade books and knowledge on other topics, medicine included.)²² Many texts on the typical Dominican syllabus offer advice on sermon composition: the foresaid English Dominicans, Bromyard and Waleys, were two popular theorists of proper preacherly style widely read in the

¹⁸ Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, p. 133.

¹⁹ Cited and tr. in *ibid.*, p. 474: 'Secundum ea in Ordine Praedicatorum a pueritia enutritus et in diversis studiis generalibus ac provinciis conversatus de arte huiusmodi comprehendo, grosso stilo composui'.

²⁰ If the homiletic *modus operandi* of friars preacher could be called a *habitus*, it is more akin to Erwin Panofsky's concept of *habitus* as a mental habit, a method of procedure, a set of principles regulating the act, rather than the *habitus* of embodied practices Pierre Bourdieu derived from Panofsky. See Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, pp. 20–21, 27–28. On Bourdieu's postface to Panofsky's book and his elaborations on *habitus*, see Holsinger, *Premodern Condition*, pp. 94–113.

²¹ On Daniel's biography, see Keiser, 'Gardener's Eyes', and Harvey, 'Scientific Gardener'.

²² The medieval library at the London Blackfriars held a fourteenth-century copy of Avicenna's *Canon Medicinæ*, now London, British Library MS Royal 12 G. vi, given to Blackfriars by a certain Friar Nicholas of Worcester. John Dille, another friar some years Daniel's junior, donated books in 1421 that reflected his own medical interests: a second copy of Avicenna's *Canon*, as well as a treatise and aphorisms ascribed to the physician Urso of Salerno. These are, respectively, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud. misc. 728 and Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.2.50. In his *Herbal*, Daniel mentions a former student, 'þat was my disciple and now is my mayster'; this could well be Dille, who appears to have served as prior provincial for a time around 1404. See Little, 'Provincial Priors', p. 497.

fourteenth century. Dominicans on the Continent wrote popular *artes praedicandi*, too, including works by Humbert of Romans (d. 1277, master-general of the order, 1254–63) and Jacobus de Fusignano (d. 1333). Medieval preachers could also look back for rhetorical advice to the pseudo-Ciceronian tradition and Augustine of Hippo's *De doctrina Christiana*. These texts – some Dominican, but all part of a broader medieval intellectual reading list – formed a rich repository of stylistic principles and tactics.

Daniel, then, writes his medical prose in that *stilus grossus* – an unpolished style nurtured by his order – and he adapts a preaching style cultivated among friars preachers at their *schola* and *studia* for his new uroscopic purposes in the *Liber* (a suitably 'gross style' for its substance, as it were). Preachers' principles and tactics of expression proved especially useful to Daniel as he translated complex Latin medical concepts into English. Learned Dominicans themselves debated whether and how to translate the subtleties of high theology into their vernacular sermonising.²³ When Daniel wrote his *Liber*, he found himself in an analogous predicament: many technical terms of Latin medicine had no English equivalents. Daniel's solution reflects his Dominican training. In one version of his prologue, he announces his intention to import some Latin words to make his own English lexicon sufficient to communicate the tenets of uroscopy:

Nec mireris, O lector, si inveneris me ponere terminos quandoque Latinos et quandoque prope Latinum, quod facio magis brevitatis causa. Quapropter et expositus semel termino uno per quanto michi occurrexit non iterum expono eundem.

Do not wonder, reader, if you find that sometimes I use Latin terms and sometimes somewhat Latin ones, which I do largely for the sake of brevity. Hence, when a term has been explained once, as often as it seems proper to me, I do not then explain it over and over.²⁴

Daniel worries that his occasional use of a Latin or 'Latinish' term will invite criticism, and he pre-emptively his reader's possible confusion with assurances of his reluctance to use them at all. He defends his practice of 'proper exposition' of such Latinisms as judicious and efficient, apparently sensitive to the potential accusation of trafficking in oddities, like the pedantic preachers so reviled by Bromyard. Of course, there is an irony

²³ On this debate among Italian Dominicans, see Cornish, *Vernacular Translation*, pp. 109–14.

²⁴ I quote this version of the prologue from Gloucester, Cathedral Archives MS 19, f. 1^v.

to this hand-wringing: his caveat about Latinisms is made in Latin, for precisely those readers who could handle a few Latinate neologisms. His apology, then, serves to index something about his own language as much as excuse it, drawing the Latinate reader's attention to an element of his good vernacular style.

Popular rhetorical treatises of the fourteenth century offered guidance on precisely how to handle difficult words, or concepts too heavy or strange for popular, lay audiences. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* called this technique *explanatio*:

Explanatio est quae reddit apertam et dilucidam orationem. Ea comparatur duabus rebus, usitatis verbis et propriis. Usitata sunt ea quae versantur in consuetudine cotidiana; propria, quae eius rei verba sunt aut esse possunt qua de loquemur.

Explanatio renders language plain and intelligible. It is achieved by two means, the use of current terms and of proper terms. Current terms are such as are habitually used in everyday speech. Proper terms are such as are, or can be, the designations specially characteristic of the subject of our discourse.²⁵

Augustine offers analogous preaching advice in his *De doctrina Christiana*:

Quamuis in bonis doctoribus tanta docendi cura sit, uel esse debeat, ut uerbum quod nisi obscurum sit uel ambiguum, Latinum esse non potest, uulgi autem more sic dicitur ut ambiguitas obscuritasque uitetur, non sic dicatur ut a doctis, sed potius ut ab indoctis dici solet.

Good teachers have – or ought to have – such care in teaching that a word which cannot be expressed in good Latin except obscurely and ambiguously, but which as given in the common idiom has neither ambiguity nor obscurity, should be expressed not as the cultured but rather as the uncultured are wont to express it.²⁶

These two rhetorical authorities instruct readers to accommodate difficult words of some conceptual heft by providing explanations in plainer, lighter speech. In *Ad Herennium*, familiar 'current terms' (*verba usitata*) can explicate unfamiliar 'proper terms' specific to a discourse (*verba propria*). Augustine warns that 'good Latin' can be obscure and ambiguous where the common, uncultured idiom would be much clearer. Medieval manuals followed suit. Waleys' *De modo* recommends that the preacher structure

²⁵ Caplan (ed. and tr.), *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium de ratione dicendi*, pp. 270–71.

²⁶ Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, in Sullivan (ed. and tr.), *Rhetoric of Augustine*, pp. 81, 83.

his sermon around 'singularly weighty words' (*verba . . . singulariter ponderanda*) principally as a mnemonic strategy, using keywords as *aides-mémoire*. But this mnemonic convenience grounds pedagogical procedure. The meanings of these keywords, Waleys says, should be 'set forth in other plain words (*verbis claris*), for when they are not understood by the listeners they lack all profit'.²⁷ Waleys reinforces those lessons in 'definition' and 'explanation' that preachers learned from their rhetorical exemplars: weighty words require a few more plain ones to understand.

Henry Daniel's stated practice of explaining the 'Latin or somewhat Latin terms' in his medical text, then, was a coached preacher's tactic, and how to do so effectively was already a preoccupation of preaching style. Throughout the *Liber* he defines a good number of 'proper terms', that specialist's Latin vocabulary necessary for readers of his uroscopy, directly and deliberately. Indeed, Daniel is so deliberate in his approach to definition that 'definition' (or, rather, 'discripcion') is among the first words he defines. This pedantic gloss appears early in his text, as he provides his Middle English readers with a technical 'discripcion' of what is arguably his art's most proper term, 'urine', as it is defined by his authorities: 'Als sayis all auctores o þis faculte, þis is þe discripcion of vryn . . .'.²⁸ Before providing that promised 'discripcion', however, he offers another clarification: 'Þe dyscripcion of a thyng is þe discryng what a thyng is', and only then does he go on to explain that urine is 'a lete [i.e., slow] and a suptel meltyng and clensyng of þe blud and of þe humoures'. A bit further on in the same discussion, he notes that 'definition' is another term of art for this familiar practice: 'diffinicion and discripcion are all an to say' – an equivalence he reiterates later in the text: 'Þis maner of malady is callyd of Constantyn in his fyrst buk of medcyns, 20 capitulo, *heroes*, and þus he discryes and diffynys it. *Dyscrim* and *diffrum* [*sic*] a thyng is for to tell and to tech what þe thyng is'.²⁹ These may seem like gratuitous explanations: could readers not assume description is describing? Or that these two words are synonyms, without being told twice? But coming so early in the text, these lessons may be meant less for the reader's information than as a means of signalling an authorial self-consciousness about the procedures of translation. They point, in other words, to a pedagogical tactic of the *Liber*. For Daniel, 'telling what things are' through this habit of

²⁷ Quoted and tr. in Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, p. 114.

²⁸ The discussion in its entirety, including the portions quoted, is taken from Wellcome MS 225, f. 5^v.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 21^r. This particular section of the *Liber* is discussed at length by Walsh Morrissey, 'Anxious Love'.

deliberate description is how this text explains its proper terms using current ones, and how it sets forth the meaning of weighty words using lighter ones. These are techniques of instruction pulled from the preacher's script.

Daniel defines the 'proper terms' of uroscopy formulaically, but the variety of such formulae at his disposal is itself impressive – and here his artful particularising of the general preacherly style begins to emerge. He will sometimes expeditiously translate Latin into English: 'We call in Latin *epar* þe lyuer in Ynglyss'.³⁰ He glosses other terms with quick, efficient declaratives: '*canales pulmonis* are þe pipis o þe lungys'.³¹ He attends to the differences between a technical term and popular English usage: '*dies usualis*, i.e., þe day usuall, i.e., as þe comon peple callys and usit þe day'.³² Despite all his learning, he happily includes himself among the common speakers of English: the tissue known in Latin as *omentum*, he says, resembles 'a maner mete we call pudding'.³³ As promised in the Latin prologue, the English *Liber Uricrisiarum* moves along quickly thanks to these descriptions: when jargon is defined, it can be used as a shorthand later. This brevity is another ideal of the preacher's *modus componendi*. Augustine, for example, warns against too much clarification: 'For though one gives pleasure when he clears up matters that need to be made understood, he becomes wearisome when he keeps hammering at things which are already understood'.³⁴ Waleys, too, warns against longwindedness, and Jacobus de Fusignano discourages indiscriminate description (*indifferenter diffinire aut describere*) in favour of sparing and approachable definitions.³⁵ Daniel's homespun metaphors – a reference to pudding here, or to raven's feathers and church bells elsewhere – exemplify the concisely evocative style of definition advocated by medieval arts of preaching.

A similar personalising, as it were, of a general preacherly style comes out in Daniel's use of another common homiletic technique. That is, Daniel often uses the Latin tag 'Anglice' ('in English') to signal a vernacular translation of foregoing Latin. Hence, for example, his primer on the cardinal directions: 'Alsa þare are 4 partys of þe world: *oriens*, *auster*, *occidens* & *boria*: Anglice est, south, west and north'.³⁶ In his dense introduction to humoral principles, 'Anglice' functions similarly:

³⁰ Wellcome MS 225, f. 6^r. ³¹ *Ibid.*, f. 77^r. ³² *Ibid.*, f. 57^r. ³³ *Ibid.*, ff. 78^v–79^r.

³⁴ Sullivan (ed. and tr.), *Rhetoric of Augustine*, pp. 87, 89.

³⁵ For Waleys, see Charland, *Artes praedicandi*, p. 338: 'praedicator ne sermonis prolixitate auditores fatiget'. For Jacobus, see Wenzel (ed. and tr.), *Art of Preaching*, pp. 58–59.

³⁶ Wellcome MS 225, f. 16^v. Voigts, 'What's the Word?', p. 820, discusses this particular deployment of 'Anglice', marking the juncture between Latin and English.

Alsa þar are 4 humores, *vir sanguinis*, *colera*, *fleuma* and *malancholya*, Anglice blud, color, flemme and malancoly. Now is þar 4 qualiteis awnswerand to þe 4 elementys and to þe 4 humores as *caliditas*, *frigiditas*, *siccitas* and *humiditas*, Anglice hathede, dryhede, caldhede and mosthede. Now þis word aunswerand in þis mater is as mykyll for to say as acordande in kynde.³⁷

This introduction to the four humours and four qualities permits Daniel to use these Latin terms in his subsequent discussions without glossing them each time. He defines an English word proper to humoral theory here, too – *aunswerand* (answering), which he will later use in this specialist, humoral sense.³⁸

This ‘Anglice’ tag was a staple of the macaronic syntax of fourteenth-century preaching texts. The Latin sermons of the English Dominican Robert Holcot (d. 1349), for example, as preserved in Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 210, mark translations of some Latin terms and concepts into English with the same tag. Sometimes Holcot translates just a single term: ‘pedagium . . . Anglice tol’.³⁹ Elsewhere ‘Anglice’ introduces a more complicated translation of the preceding Latin. Consider, for example, his expansion of Luke 2.49 as the theme for a sermon (‘In hiis que Patris mei sunt oportet me esse’):

In quibus verbis tria includuntur, scilicet: ligamen obedencie, oportet, conamen diligencie et sedulitatis, *me esse*, solamen reverencie et magne dignitatis, quia *in hiis que patris mei sunt*. In hiis, inquam, etc. Anglice: bond of buxumnesse, life of bysynesse, stat of worthynesse.

In which words [i.e., of the theme] are three things included, namely, the bond of obedience in *must*, the work of diligence and action in *I [must] be*, the reward of reverence and great worth in *about my Father’s business*. In English: bond of buxomness, life of busyness, state of worthiness.⁴⁰

Holcot’s sermons, along with others like it, rehearsed for Daniel the tactics of translating difficult Latin into an accessible English. This Latin was not only difficult for its obscure words – like ‘pelagium’ – but for the particular forms it took: this threefold, intricately rhymed Latin gloss on a gospel verse (*ligamen obedencie, conamen diligencie, solamen reverencie*) is rendered

³⁷ Wellcome MS 225, f. 14^r.

³⁸ See, for instance, *ibid.*, f. 81^v: ‘And þis maner of colre [*colera citrina*] is lest noyous and lest wykked of all colers, for it is mast temper in qualite and mast aunswerand to sanguis’.

³⁹ Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 210, f. 43^v. Quoted in Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons*, p. 15. On Holcot, see also Hanna’s contribution to this volume, and *EFA*.

⁴⁰ Peterhouse MS 210, f. 33^r, quoted and tr. in Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons*, p. 18.

as measured, tail-rhyming English (bond of buxomness, life of busyness, state of worthiness). Neither Daniel nor Holcot invent this ‘Anglice’ tag, of course, but its association with preaching is important. Daniel reprises this translation tactic practised in one domain – the purview of his professional order – while writing in a new one, as he assembles an English medical vocabulary in his *Liber Uricrisiarum*. It is borrowed, in other words, from one professional register to serve similar purposes in another, and ‘Anglice’ could thus have the ring of the preacher’s voice even when implicated in medical prose.

And this is not the only ‘pulpit idiom’ found in the *Liber*.⁴¹ Daniel commonly uses another Latinate preacher’s tag, ‘verbi gratia’, to introduce an illustrative example, but tells his readers what he means by it (‘*Verbi gratia, id est* exampyll . . .’).⁴² And, as a preacher would, he calls such examples ‘similitudes’.⁴³ In sum, then, Daniel writes his vernacular medical text in the voice of the friar preacher, with habitual recourse to sermon style in translating the proper terms of uroscopy into current ones, and weighty words into plainer ones. For Daniel, medical prose clearly had much to gain from the practice of preaching.

Writing with style entails more than competent adherence to prescribed principles. Style accommodates eccentricity. On this point, the Dominican master-general Humbert of Romans sent mixed messages to the members of his order looking for rhetorical guidance in his *De eruditione praedicantium*. He takes a hard line against stylistic embellishment: ‘A sermon should be simple, and devoid of all the empty ornaments of rhetoric’.⁴⁴ Humbert then cites Seneca in preferring language that is ‘simple and unaffected’ over an ‘ingenious style’. Ideal Dominican language should pattern itself upon the practical language of medicine: ‘A sick man does not look for eloquence in his doctor, and a doctor who gives his prescriptions in flowery language is like a ruler who cares more for elegance than practicality’.⁴⁵ But a simple, unadorned, pragmatic style is a style nonetheless; it takes craft to write clearly without any impression of affectedness, eloquence or ingenuity. The preacher crafting such a

⁴¹ I borrow this term from Spencer, *English Preaching*, p. 112.

⁴² Wellcome MS 225, f. 53^v; see also f. 14^v: ‘*Verbi gratia*, I se be exampyll paraventour þis man is calidus & humidus . . .’.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, f. 5^v: ‘Item a noþer similitude *id est* exawmple of causyng and of genderyng of vryn . . .’.

⁴⁴ Humbert of Romans, *De eruditione praedicantium*, published as *Treatise on Preaching*, ed. by Conlon, p. 43. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, pp. 61–62, discusses Humbert’s ‘oblique’ approach to the problem of translation in preaching.

⁴⁵ Humbert of Romans, *Treatise on Preaching*, ed. by Conlon, p. 44.

transparent style needs to be inconspicuous about it. In *De doctrina*, Augustine calls the ideal homiletic eloquence 'a kind of careful negligence' (*quadam diligens neglegentia*), a deliberate and thoughtful style that does not advertise itself as such.⁴⁶ The conscientious preacher must affect an unaffected way of speaking. And, despite his aversion to ornament, Humbert suggests that preachers have a 'graciousness and sweetness of speech'.⁴⁷ A sweet style makes the medicine go down; a sermon must be graceful to have a lasting effect, otherwise it has been composed and delivered in vain.

What kind of rhetorical eloquence, then, was proper to a preacher's graceful style? Robert of Basevorn, in his *Forma praedicandi*, recommends the devices of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, while Humbert of Romans directs readers to the rhetorical advice of Augustine: 'the bishop of Hippo describes in detail the metre, the length of syllables and the oratorical figures which may be properly used'.⁴⁸ Humbert also recognises that this gracefully unaffected preaching requires an unteachable gift for gab, a knowledge of the 'intricacies and the resources of language'. He proposes a number of disqualifying attributes for the preacher on that basis: 'a weak memory, or an ignorance of Latin, or an inability to express himself well in the vulgar tongue, or any fault of this kind'.⁴⁹ The preacher's fluency in Latin and the vernacular did not just facilitate explanation – only those with a talent for language could compose sermons with the required 'sweetness of speech', or that Augustinian quality of 'careful negligence'. These stylistic requirements introduce a new kind of difficulty to the task of the Ricardian prose translator. The related difficulty of expressing Latinate sense through vernacular words worried a number of Middle English writers (Daniel among them), and recent scholarship has carefully attended to the debates over the possibility of translation and its politics in the late-fourteenth century.⁵⁰ But for Dominican preachers, any such trepidations over the lexical or political difficulties of proper translation were accompanied by a corresponding anxiety over handling that language with proper graciousness and careful negligence, enjoined by Augustinian authority and professional codes alike. Finding the right words might be hard, and arranging them into a right order harder, but finding the right key – a register both plain and sweet – demanded that every vernacular

⁴⁶ Sullivan (ed. and tr.), *Rhetoric of Augustine*, p. 81.

⁴⁷ Humbert of Romans, *Treatise on Preaching*, ed. by Conlon, p. 44.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43 and 42, respectively.

⁵⁰ See Hanna, 'Difficulty', and Cole, 'Chaucer's English Lesson'.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

preacher aspire to an unteachable eloquence over and above matters of word and sense.

Throughout his *Liber*, Daniel likewise finds creative ways to, as it were, honey the rim of the glass bearing his medicine. His translation at times proves to be quite inventive indeed, as he expresses the matter of uroscopy in accessible, delicately weighed English, no matter how indelicate the subject might seem to modern ears. For instance, he renders a pithy if crude Latin axiom on the digestive process into an English one:

Egestion is in schytyng, ingestyon is etyng, and degestyon is defyng, as says þe vers: *Qui bene degerit, ingerit, egerit, est homo sanus. 3yf þu wyll ete, defy, and schyte, þu art hale whar þu gas or sittys.*⁵¹

Grossus stilus indeed. Daniel preserves the proverbial feel of this unrhymed Latin 'vers' by rendering it as a rhyming couplet in English, a sort of verse that his vernacular readers would likely recognise.⁵² So Daniel communicates the axiomatic quality of the Latin original; this pragmatic aspect of language requires proper vulgarisation as much as its technical terms do. He is considerate of this intricacy of language as he translates with a wit and wisdom worthy of the standards set by Humbert. He versifies this Latinate vocabulary into easily comprehended English.

Daniel has other ways to cushion the delivery of his medical concepts for English readers. Elsewhere, for example, he turns to a domestic vocabulary to describe the making of seed in the gonads of both sexes. The *semen* of men and women, he says, is 'traveld and swynkyn as buttur in þe kyne, and swongyn and wroght and knodyn in þe ballok stans of þam bath as past or dawgh in a vessell'.⁵³ Biological process is illustrated by a pair of images drawn from daily life: butter in the churn, dough in the kneading bin. Both images are expressed through doublets and triplets of synonyms: 'traveld and swynkyn', 'swongyn and wroght and knodyn'. Indeed, this sort of synonymous reiteration – reminiscent of ps.-Ciceronian *synonomia* so favoured by Latin writers and late-medieval translators alike – is a ubiquitous tactic of Daniel's vernacularising *modus*: he brings together English near-synonyms as if to refine his translation toward a proper sense of a Latin term.⁵⁴ Such a tactic befits a plain instructional style – it is both quick and precise in its way, and it relies

⁵¹ Wellcome MS 225, f. 30^v.

⁵² On the quotation and translation of Latin proverbs in Middle English texts, see Cannon, *Literacy to Literature*, pp. 183–89.

⁵³ Wellcome MS 225, f. 130^v.

⁵⁴ On doubling in Middle English prose, see Mueller, *Native Tongue*, pp. 147–61.

on words that are current and clear, rather than swapping one specialist term for another. These English reduplications have a gracefulness to them in their verbal variety, too, as each new English rendition smooths the reader's approach to a more exact sense of the corresponding Latin. This seems to be Daniel's realisation of the 'careful negligence' so prized by Augustine and Humbert in good teachers. In the *Liber* he teaches with deliberation and thoughtfulness.

But such rhetorical embellishment can easily be taken too far, and arts of preaching scold those who do preach pretentiously or in too high a style. Bromyard, for example, condemns too-clever instruction through subtleties and animal allegories as pointless literary bloviation, crafted to glorify the preacher himself. Waleys complains of preachers who 'seek the display of their own knowledge and not the utility of the people'.⁵⁵ Precisely such concerns are reflected in Daniel's prologue, and specifically when he takes pains to have Latinate readers of the *Liber* believe he composed this vernacular medical text with its utility, rather than self-serving ostentation, in mind. He thought it was useful, for one, because it was to be the first uroscopy in English, as far as he knew.⁵⁶ After all his studies, he would not wish to be a 'lamp underneath a bushel', keeping all this knowledge of Latin uroscopy to himself.⁵⁷ We have already seen him introduce himself as a simple man barely up to the task of translating Latin uroscopy into a new vernacular. His commitment to that performance is total:

Ego quidem tantillus, ut puta minimus servorum Christi articulus, et primus ut reor hanc facultatem in Anglica lingua docens, inproperia et obloquia quomodo evadere potero, qui invidia pleni sunt et, ut aliis sapientes esse videantur, solum linguacitate languentes sunt nequam homini modernorum?⁵⁸

Indeed, how will I – who am certainly the lowest and smallest of Christ's servants, and since, as I reckon, this is the first work teaching this faculty in the English language – how will I possibly avoid the mockery and naysaying of those who are full of envy, and who are so many mere blatherers blathering, in order to be seen as wise by worthless men of these modern times?

Daniel humbles himself 'as the lowest of Christ's servants' and trembles at the prospect of critical attacks from uncharitable quarters. From this pitiful

⁵⁵ *De modo componendi sermones*, in Charland, *Artes praedicandi*, p. 338: 'Ad ostentationem suae scientiae et non utilitatem populi quaerere'.

⁵⁶ Ashmole 1404, f. 3^v: 'Nec hanc scienciam in anglico traditam memini me legisse sed neque audisse'.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 3^v: 'Idcirco ne lucernam sub modio'. ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 3^{r-v}.

defensive crouch, he launches his (characteristically Dominican) counter-attack. Such envious critics make for bad readers and even worse speakers; their language is inordinate and unruly. (I have translated Daniel's Latin phrase 'linguacitate languentes' as 'blatherers blathering', and an early English translator of this prologue renders it the 'much speche of spekyng men'.)⁵⁹ Even worse, their critique is all badly motivated, since, like bad preachers, Daniel's worst readers care little about knowledge and quite a bit more about the appearance of knowing. His *Liber*, he says, will provide a good training in uroscopy to those who would put that knowledge into practice with discretion and not live a 'pompous, chatty, mistaken life, as physicians nowadays habitually do' ('vita pomposa verbosa ac mendosa ut medici moderni solent'). Thus, Daniel takes issue with modern physicians' disordered lifestyles: a self-styling pomposity (*vita pomposa*) on the one hand and a profligate style of speech (*vita verbosa*) on the other. These modern physicians are hardly the figures of stylistic rectitude so admired by the Dominican preachers of prior generations. Bromyard had pointed to doctors' sparing bedside manner as a model for the good preacher's directness. For Humbert of Romans, their pragmatic manner of speech, stripped of flowers or the markers of eloquence, was what inspired patients' confidence. Daniel's low opinion of modern medical discourse – full of boasting, falsities and fables – cuts against his order's longstanding tendency to idealise doctor's professional manner as a model for preaching.

Daniel's performance of modesty as a medical writer in his Latin prologue is further belied by the rest of his English book. The *Liber* not only corrects bad translations of Latin terms, but its author renders its English uroscopy with a deft hand. His corrections are blunt and direct. Many people who think themselves wise doctors mix up kidney stones (*calculus*) and intestinal pains (*colica passio*); but such 'wys lechys' are discounted as no more than 'jangelers and smaterers', so easily 'dissayved' by a resemblance between the terms in Latin.⁶⁰ Similarly, he is exasperated by a common erroneous distinction between two respiratory conditions, *ptisica* and *ethica*. He insists these are one and the same. If only physicians would look back to their Latin authorities, with a better knowledge of the language, they might learn this, too, 'but Latyen hath many an unstedfaste k[n]okker at his gate'.⁶¹ Daniel, judging by the *Liber*, has worn down his knuckles rapping at Latin's door, with all the treatise's technical clarification and dense reference to his old authorities. He kept knocking and, in

⁵⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS e Mus. 187, f. 1^r.

⁶⁰ Wellcome MS 225, f. 50^r.

⁶¹ Ashmole 1404, f. 51^r.

his prologue, he stands holding the door open to his English readers, letting them in on a long intellectual tradition. Yet – in keeping with his order's priorities for preachers – he presents himself modestly, as a paragon of perseverance rather than brilliance.

Daniel's low opinion of contemporary physicians surfaces throughout the *Liber*, and he is particularly disdainful of their pompous way of speaking. It would seem that their speech, earlier elevated to an ideal of plainspoken eloquence by Waleys and Bromyard, had by Daniel's day taken on the worst qualities of modern preachers' style. These bad doctors speak just like bad Dominicans. His conflated criticism of Dominicans' and doctors' speech comes attached to a minor point of uroscopic polemic, as he rails against the frequent confusion of whitishness ('whytished') with true whiteness ('verra whythede'), or sometimes with yellowishness ('zalowyshed').

Bod oft-tym whytished in uryne or in ypostasi is taken for zalowyshed and for verra whythede among þes dog lechys and emang þam þat has not verra undyrstandynge, þat seis lytill and spekis mykyll and wald be sene and may not for dulhed lere, as mony of myn awn ordor.⁶²

Ignorant medical practitioners – 'these dog leeches' – misrecognise 'whitishness' in urine. For one, they lack true ('verray') understanding of these finer shades. They adjudge the evidence with little discernment but nevertheless they talk at length about what they see (they 'see little' though they 'speak much'). These practitioners are too stupid or slothful to learn proper doctrine (they 'may not for dullness learn'), yet they speak nevertheless for appearances (they 'would be seen'). Daniel's 'dog leech' exemplifies all those stylistic failures of ostentatious preaching deplored by Waleys and Bromyard, rather than that good, spare medical style of the physician they idealised. They cannot meaningfully explain difficult, proper terms (like whiteness and whitishness), never mind craft a definition balancing fulsomeness with a pleasing brevity. Indeed, these physicians have no interest in doing so. Instead these talkative types cultivate a vain, longwinded style (they clearly didn't read their Augustine). Daniel explicitly links the stylistic failures of bad medical and mendicant speech. Pompous physicians speak too much and study too little, just 'as mony of myn awn ordor', he says. Indeed, Daniel's 'dog leeches' have much in common with his fellow *domini cani*, or 'dogs of God'.⁶³ So the model

⁶² Ibid., f. 134^r. Jasin, 'Compiler's Awareness', p. 521, discusses this comment as a critique of other medical practitioners, but not other Dominican preachers.

⁶³ Friedman, 'Friar Portrait', p. 182.

profession of well-ordered, disciplined talk in Dominican preaching manuals is here discredited as a field of practice rife with the same profligate and useless speech so deplored by the same. Daniel, modest though he is, has little good to say about his contemporaries and peers, whether they be his fellow Dominicans or his fellow students of medicine.

Reading the *Liber Uricrisiarum* against the theories of the vernacular advanced in Dominican preaching texts reveals how Henry Daniel builds his treatise's English style of medical translation according to the principles and procedures of vernacular instruction cultivated over the course of his professional life as a friar preacher. Such principles outline a way of teaching in English which prizes plain expression of learned doctrine over ingenious high style. It is ever searching out a balance between brevity and clarification, and it is sharply critical of stylised, inflated language designed for self-promotion rather than the teaching of others. In this, the *Liber* might be an instructive case for scholars of a Ricardian vernacular culture soon to flourish after this text's original composition in the 1370s. Daniel transposes certain notions of vernacularity articulated in a precedent Latin discourse around preaching into his Middle English medical prose: notions like Augustine's careful negligence and Humbert's unadorned graciousness, appealing brevity and clarifying directness, found expression in the compositional style of his uroscopy. While he was among the first translators of Latinate medicine into the vernacular, Daniel could find models for making that knowledge accessible to a new English readership, as readily theorised in the mendicant curriculum and practised in mendicant life.

Ever the conscientious teacher, Henry Daniel knew that many English readers would have no need for a compendious, encyclopaedic uroscopy like the *Liber* (never mind the patience for it). For this reader, Daniel translates a number of aphoristic rules, which he found appended to the *De urinis* of Isaac Judaeus:

Now sall I say þe rewles þat Ysaac gyfes in þe last end of hys *Buk of Uryns* sa þat wha may not con þe substaunce and þe pith of þe thyngys þat are said before, or ellys paraventour he may not report þam be hart, lat hym hald hym paed with comon reules shortly gyfen . . . Wha sa may not have o þe gavyls, lat hym glene after þe byndars.⁶⁴

Daniel likens a complete reading of the *Liber* to a heavy harvest. These shorter rules, then, make provision for lighter minds. Such gleaners may

⁶⁴ Wellcome MS 225, f. 138^r.

gather up what kernels of insight they might find, coming along after better reapers have swept the fields. This agricultural metaphor evokes an Old Testament scene – when Ruth begs to gather up the remnants of the grain harvest in Boaz's fields (Ruth 2.7: 'ut spicas colligeret remanentes, sequens messorum vestigia'). It would also recall, for English readers of his own time and for centuries afterward, a regular seasonal practice allowed to certain of the poor, the gleaning of fields after harvest.⁶⁵ Chaucer, another modest Ricardian *compilator*, poses as a gleaner in his *Legend of Good Women*, and perhaps he best describes the feeling of learning from teachers who combine a compendious mind with generosity and thoughtfulness:

And I come after, glenyng here and there,
And am ful glad yf I may fynde an ere
Of any goodly word that ye han left. (F.75-77)

⁶⁵ Ault, 'By-Laws of Gleaning'; Jordan, 'The Gleaners'.