JOHN LYDgate's Troy Book: The Utilization of "History"
For Moral Instruction

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This study of John Lydgate's Troy Book was originally stimulated by several discussions of medieval literary criticism in conjunction with a lecture on the subject of mythography in the Middle Ages. The present author became aware of the transformation which classical culture had undergone as it was assimilated into the Church-dominated culture of the Middle Ages; at the suggestion of Dr. Charles E. Walton, Chairman of the Department of English, Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, the author investigated the reasons for the transformations and the background of the legend of Troy in the Middle Ages. The present study extends the investigation of the influences which directed classical literature to didactic ends and examines the Troy Book as an example of the medieval utilization of a classical theme for the purpose of moral instruction.

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A student familiar to some degree with the classical story of Troy is likely to be surprised when he encounters Middle English versions of the story. He may find, first of all, that the supernatural elements have been removed, inasmuch as some medieval versions do not tell "how goddes fought in pe filde, folke as pe were," as the author of one work complains that Homer did. Moreover, he may discover that the events of the classical story have been shifted, as it were, to a medieval setting, because often the warriors of Troy are now referred to as knights in the Middle English versions of the story, and incidents are related in which the only remaining classical elements are the names of persons and places.

Emphases have been radically altered: Hector is the hero of medieval Troy, Aeneas is depicted as a traitor, and the Trojans are favored over the Greeks. Finally, the student may be puzzled at what can only be called the attitude of the medieval author, who regards his material as history and pauses to point out the lessons of his story to the reader.

This situation is especially true in the case of John Lydgate's *Troy Book*, in which, for instance, characters are presented as historical models of both good and bad behavior.
and are, sometimes, nearly abstracted into "types." More important, though, is Lydgate's continual emphasis upon the consequences of certain behaviors. He narrates the actions which have led to a character's downfall; then he digresses to discuss the general consequences of such behavior; finally, he returns to his original character and warns the audience to take heed of that character's fate, or simply points out that the character's misfortunes are an example of, perhaps, the consequences of hasty, impulsive judgments. In short, Lydgate takes every opportunity to draw a moral from his story, and often inserts one into it; in a word, he has moralized the story of Troy.

While Lydgate's obvious purpose in the Troy Book is to instruct, the reasons for his alteration of the classical story cannot be completely understood without a knowledge of several influences and forces that preceded his century. Of course, the dominance of the Church in the Middle Ages is an historical commonplace. Similarly, it is unnecessary to demonstrate (and hardly necessary to assert) that much medieval literature was didactic. However, "medieval literature" includes the translations and re-tellings of such classical literature as had survived in the West, and to say that everything was done for the glory of God and His Church in the Middle Ages is too simple an explanation for the alteration and moralizing of classical stories. The complete explanation
lies in several related and overlapping fields—in the development of allegorical interpretation, which provided a natural means for reconciling pagan literature to the Church-dominated society of the Middle Ages; in Biblical exegesis, which gave impetus and legitimacy to the allegorization of classical literature; in the necessary use of pagan writings in the Church schools, which further increased allegorization and turned it more to didactic purposes; and in medieval conceptions of classical fable and theories of poetry, which in themselves were the result and culmination of the earlier influences. Since even a brief review of these forces and tendencies must begin several hundred years before the birth of Christ, it can hardly do more than provide a context, but one that is necessary for a clear understanding of Lydgate's 

Troy Book as an example of the medieval utilization of "history" for the purposes of moral instruction.

Allegorical interpretation began when the behavior of the gods in Homer, the Greek "Bible," could no longer be reconciled to reason or religion. Homer's works had long been used as textbooks with moral interpretations and support for various systems of philosophy being drawn from his stories; but, with the rise of Greek science, some elements became

 unacceptable. 2 Not wishing to reject either science or Homer, the Greeks applied allegorical interpretation as a means of reconciliation. 3 The narrative of actions itself in Homer's works was soon regarded as symbolic; and moral and religious interpretations became current in the fifth century B. C. 4 The Sophists elaborated upon these interpretations; the most detailed explications combined a physical explanation with an ethical one, or used allegory to show that Homer's works contained much more than was readily apparent. 5

The same problems which had necessitated an allegorical interpretation of Homer were later encountered by Jews who had been attracted to Greek philosophy. The Jewish sacred books, also, contained elements which conflicted with later conceptions of morality; an allegorical interpretation of those works allowed the Jews to reconcile their religion to Greek philosophy and to show that Jewish literature did not greatly suffer in comparison with Greek. 6 The work of Philo Judaeus (20 B. C.-A. D. 50) was not the earliest in the allegorization

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2 Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, pp. 53-58.
3 E. R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, p. 205.
5 Ibid., pp. 59-63.
6 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
of the Jewish Scriptures, but it was the most significant; his metaphysical and spiritual explications opened new areas of interpretation and allowed him to show that Greek philosophy was compatible with, and inherent in, Jewish law.\(^7\)

Christian writers quickly recognized the utility of allegorical interpretations, and soon made use of it—for the same reasons that it had earlier been used by Greek and Jewish exeges. In the second century A. D., it was clear that Christianity, if it were to survive, would have to absorb the elements of pagan religion and philosophy which had preceded it.\(^8\) Allegorical interpretation, aided by the beginning philosophy of Neoplatonism, was the means by which that absorption was accomplished.\(^9\) Clement of Alexandria (c. 160-c. 215), the founder of Neoplatonism, attempted to reconcile Christianity and paganism in his *Miscellanies* and also applied allegorical interpretation to Homer.\(^10\)

Much of the Old Testament was difficult to accept for those who took an ideal view of Christianity or had been

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introduced to the new religion through the Gospels. The anthropomorphisms, the harsh punishments, and the not totally attractive picture of God presented in the Old Testament were difficulties which had to be overcome. The threefold interpretation—literal, moral, and spiritual—of Origen (185-254), a pupil of Clement, overcame the difficulties, standardized the method of Christian exegesis, and, in preserving the Old Testament, insured the continuing application of allegorical interpretation.

As Christianity gained currency in the fourth century, it was legally recognized as a religion: Christian schools were established, and a paradox was immediately encountered. While there was no danger in the study of grammar and rhetoric as such, the textbooks were liberally illustrated with quotations from pagan authors; thus, in his education, a youth became familiar with pagan mythology and classical literature in general—both of which the Church disapproved. However, while the Church Fathers might (and did) oppose pagan learning, they could hardly oppose education. The problem was compounded by the fact that the Fathers themselves were products of the

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11 Fatch, op. cit., p. 76.
12 Ibid., p. 79; Moore, op. cit., p. 351.
13 M. L. W. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe, p. 45.
14 Loc. cit.
classical curriculum. There was some opposition to the use of the classics in the schools, but the Church never forbade their study; also, while the Fathers opposed the pagan authors, they, nevertheless, used them in their own writings and thereby established a precedent for later educators.\textsuperscript{15} The general Church attitude toward pagan authors became one of acceptance—as long as they were directed to ecclesiastical ends.

Jerome (c. 347-419) changed his attitude toward the classics several times during his life. While he renounced classical studies at one point, his writings reveal that he never completely abandoned them.\textsuperscript{16} Also, though he abstained from reading pagan literature for fifteen years, he began to teach it again later in life.\textsuperscript{17} His attitude toward the classics was generally tolerant; he admitted that Christians could learn something from most pagan authors; and, since a program of secular studies as a preparation for Biblical interpretation is implicit in Jerome's outline of Christian education, he evidently considered the study of pagan literature as the means to an end.\textsuperscript{18} To the early Middle Ages and later times, Jerome represented the humanism of the Church,

\textsuperscript{15} D. Comparetti, \textit{Virgil in the Middle Ages}, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{16} Laistner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{17} E. K. Rand, \textit{Founders of the Middle Ages}, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{18} Laistner, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 48-49.
and his views were influential.\textsuperscript{19}

The influence of Augustine (354–430) in all areas of thought was great and far-reaching.\textsuperscript{20} His attitude toward pagan learning, stated in \textit{On Christian Doctrine}, determined the views of most ecclesiastical writers on the subject for the next thousand years.\textsuperscript{21} In discussing problems of Scriptural interpretation, Augustine showed how various branches of knowledge could contribute to the understanding of "unknown signs" in the Bible.\textsuperscript{22} He cautioned that the "falsities of heathen superstition" should be rejected, but warned his reader not to ignore profane knowledge which would aid in Scriptural interpretation:

For we ought not to refuse to learn letters because they [the pagans] say that Mercury discovered them; . . . Nay, but let every good and true Christian understand that wherever truth may be found, it belongs to his Master; and while he recognizes and acknowledges the truth, even in their religious literature, let him reject the figments of superstition. . . .\textsuperscript{23}

After discussing other branches of knowledge which would be useful in exegesis, Augustine restated his attitude toward pagan learning:

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{19}Curtius, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 447.
\bibitem{20}Charles Guignebert, \textit{Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Christianity}, p. 205.
\bibitem{21}George Saintsbury, \textit{A History of Criticism and Literary Taste}, I, 380.
\bibitem{22}\textit{On Christian Doctrine}, II.xi-xvii.
\bibitem{23}\textit{Ibid.}, xviii.
\end{thebibliography}
... if those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have said aught that is true and in harmony with our faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it.  

After pointing out that even the Israelites took spoils from Egypt and turned them to better uses, Augustine stated a view and implied a method which was to prevail throughout the Middle Ages:

... in the same way all branches of heathen learning have not only false and superstitious fancies and heavy burdens of unnecessary toil, which every one of us... ought to abhor and avoid; but they contain also liberal instruction which is better adapted to the use of the truth, and some excellent precepts of morality; and some truths in regard even to the worship of the One God are found among them.*

In short, he believed that pagan learning must be directed toward Christian ends, a view which was to become the philosophy of education, so to speak, in the Church schools. Augustine's words also reveal the Christian interpretations that were being applied to many pagan authors: "... and some truths in regard even to the worship of the One God are found among them." Interpretation of Vergil's works had become common in the fourth century; Augustine and others had interpreted the Fourth Eclogue as foreshadowing the birth of Christ.  

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24 Ibid., xl.
25 Loc. cit.
The problem of reconciliation was increased after the final collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, when the Church became the dominant institution in the West. Education was totally in the hands of the Church, and, being completely directed toward Christian purposes, it, naturally, underwent some changes. However, the curriculum, still based upon pagan authors, remained largely unchanged. Some writers might oppose classical studies in the Church schools, but no other body of writings was considered to be suitable for education. Thus, while the study of theology and an understanding of the Scriptures were the goals of Christian education, they were goals that could not be reached without prior training in the classics. The Church justified the use of pagan literature on the grounds that it would promote the faith. Classical studies were turned to didactic purposes, and, in the familiar phrase, "philosophy" (meaning all knowledge) became the handmaiden of theology.

The work of Gregory the Great (540-604), who was elected Pope in 590, was also widely influential throughout the Middle

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27 Ibid., p. 9.
28 H. O. Taylor, The Emergence of Christian Culture in the West, p. 108.
30 H. E. Barnes, An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World, I, 313.
Ages, especially in the area of Biblical exegesis. His allegorical interpretations largely determined the later medieval tendency to neglect the literal level of the Bible for the symbolic (usually moral) meaning. His attitude toward secular studies and pagan literature was less liberal than most, although he followed the general practice in condoning them if they were an assistance to the study of theology, and, thus, directed toward Christian ends.

Some attempts were made to replace the old, largely pagan curriculum with a Christian one with the rise and spread of monasticism in the fifth and sixth centuries. However, there was no longer any need to oppose paganism, and the reading program had become fixed. A few alterations were made—quotations from the Vulgate Bible and the Church Fathers were added to the grammar books—but the pagan authors remained as the greatest part of the reading. The general attitude of the Church also remained unchanged; secular studies were accepted, but only an ancillaries to the study of theology.

31 Ibid., p. 334.
34 Laistner, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
35 Comparetti, op. cit., p. 80.
36 Ico. cit.
In short, they were directed toward the ends of Christian and moral education, as is evident from the encyclopedic preservations of the time and the work of Christian educators.

While not all of the material in Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Mercury and Philology* (early fifth century) had been Christianized, it is a significant work both for its influence and for what it reveals about the changed conceptions of pagan culture. Capella's work is a treatise on the liberal arts prefaced by an elaborate account of the marriage of Mercury and Philology—but the mythology has been allegorized. Capella's book was one of the most widely-used texts of the Middle Ages; the allegory of the first two books, as well as their educational content, was greatly influential.

Cassiodorus (c. 490-c. 583) was the first writer to establish Augustine's attitude toward pagan learning on a large scale; his *Institutiones* not only preserved secular knowledge, but recommended its study while directing it to ecclesiastical ends. He urged that the liberal arts in general be studied, but the goal was better understanding of the Scriptures.

38 Sandys, op. cit., p. 241.
40 Barnes, op. cit., p. 334.
41 Sandys, op. cit., p. 265.
At one time, Cassiodorus had collaborated with the Pope in planning a Christian university founded on the classical model in which secular studies would serve as preparation for theology and Scriptural interpretation. Unfortunately, the plans collapsed with the death of the Pope, and Cassiodorus turned to other work. He was influential in the spread of monasticism in the West; one monastery which he founded was a center of both secular and religious learning and contained a large library of classical works. His work may be summarized as the study and promotion of all knowledge, but always with Christian ends in view.

Christian use of allegorical interpretation had continued since the time of Origen, but it had not been restricted to Biblical exegesis. The interpretation of Vergil's Fourth Eclogue as foretelling the birth of Christ has already been mentioned. In the sixth century, Fulgentius, a Christian grammarian, surveyed mythology with the aid of allegorical interpretation. His Mythologicon was the first

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42 Ibid., op. cit., p. 241.
43 Ibid., p. cit.
44 Litourette, op. cit., pp. 331-332.
46 Minor secular allegorical works from the time of Philo to the fourth century are cited by L. K. Born, "Ovid and Allegory," Speculum, IX (October, 1934), 367.
47 Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 393-394.
systematic application of allegory to pagan literature.\textsuperscript{48}

Fulgentius also interpreted the \textit{Aeneid} as an allegory of the life of man in his journey to "Wisdom," drawing a symbolic meaning from nearly every syllable of the first line.\textsuperscript{49}

Moreover, his allegorization of the \textit{Aeneid} stimulated many other works of the same nature.\textsuperscript{50}

Greater use of classical studies is shown by the work of Isidore of Seville (d. 636), who integrated pagan learning into the educational system of the Church.\textsuperscript{51} His \textit{Etymologies}, a collection of secular and ecclesiastical knowledge, was widely used during the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{52} Through a use of allegorical interpretation, Isidore directed his blend of pagan learning and Christian principles to ecclesiastical ends.\textsuperscript{53}

In his major theological work, the \textit{Sententiae}, he also emphasized pagan knowledge as a prerequisite to Biblical studies.\textsuperscript{54}

Since Isidore's \textit{Etymologies} was a standard text for the Middle Ages, the later edition of the book by Rhabanus Maurus

\textsuperscript{48} J. E. Spingarn, \textit{A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance}, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{49} Saintsbury, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 395.

\textsuperscript{50} Atkins, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{51} Curtius, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 455.

\textsuperscript{52} Latourette, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 341.

\textsuperscript{53} Barnes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 355.

\textsuperscript{54} Curtius, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 457.
(c. 776-856) was also important. Aside from minor changes, the most important alteration was the expanded use of allegorical interpretation throughout the encyclopedia. The usefulness of the work and Maurus' reputation made the revision widely popular in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Maurus assembled other compilations, usually drawing from Christian sources; however, he advocated a study of the Ancients as long as the heathen elements were avoided. Maurus' view was identical to Augustine's: pagan works were "not to be shunned, but their truths appropriated, as from unjust possessors." One other point in Maurus' doctrines is significant for what it reveals about the uses that were being made of pagan literature. He defined grammar (a term which was nearly synonymous with the study of literature) as "the art of explaining poets and historians."

The early stages of the process by which classical literature was turned to moral-didactic purposes should be clear. Allegorical interpretation made such works "acceptable" to the beliefs of later times; Biblical exegesis gave legitimacy

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56 Ibid., p. 221.
57 Barnes, op. cit., p. 337.
58 Quoted in H. O. Taylor, The Mediaeval Mind, I, 222.
and impetus to the allegorization of secular literature. With the growing dominance of the Church, it was natural that interpretations of classical works would be Christian ones. Pagan literature had long been the foundation of the educational curriculum: its necessary use in the Church schools made inevitable its direction toward the ends of Christian education. Even after this opposition to paganism had ceased, classical literature was still "interpreted": students were taught to read it for the sententia, for the lesson which could be drawn from it.

Belief in the instructional value of profane literature continued throughout the later Middle Ages. Since the pagan authors always had their detractors, those who wished to defend them had to argue for the utility of classical studies, and, in the Middle Ages, utility meant moral value. Interpretation and allegorization continued until even the works of Ovid were moralized, and classical fable, in general, was elaborately defended on moral grounds. Ideas of poetry in the later Middle Ages and conceptions of classical literature down to Lydgate's own time provide the rest of the context necessary to understand the Troy Book as the moralization of history.

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60 Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 78.
CHAPTER II

THE MEDIEVAL BACKGROUND: IDEAS OF POETRY
AND CONCEPTIONS OF CLASSICAL FABLE

Secular and pagan writings continued to be used for didactic purposes during the later Middle Ages. Attitudes during the twelfth century ranged from the decidedly humanistic to the traditional "handmaiden" view that the arts were only ancillary disciplines. The later twelfth century also saw the beginning decline of literary studies which culminated in the thirteenth-century neglect of the arts during the dominance of logic and dialectic. The Scholastic opposition to secular poetry led to its defense--on Scholastic grounds--in Dante's Convivio early in the fourteenth century. Classical literature continued to be commented upon and interpreted, especially in the case of Ovid's works, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Finally, classical fable and secular poetry were praised and justified by several authors other than Dante, and were elaborately defended on moral grounds by Boccaccio near the end of the fourteenth century.

Hugh of St. Victor's Didascalicon (c. 1130), a well-known and widely-used work in the tradition of earlier medieval compilations and handbooks, illustrates the general attitude that secular and classical literature should be read for
instructional values. The author clearly states the purpose of the work: "The work, moreover, instructs the reader as well of secular writings as of the Divine Writings."\(^{61}\) In the section that treats of secular literature, Hugh distinguishes between the "arts" and the "appendages to the arts," the latter being "only tangential to philosophy."\(^{62}\) However, he admits that the appendages occasionally "... touch in a scattered and confused fashion upon some topics lifted out of the arts, or ... prepare the way for philosophy."\(^{63}\) Hugh considers "all the songs of the poets" to be appendages and recommends that the arts proper be studied first; however, he does not forbid the reading of secular works, but only suggests that they be given second place.\(^{64}\)

Hugh's directions for the exposition of a secular text—which are identical to those for the exposition of Scripture—\(^{65}\) also indicate his belief in the instructional value of literature:

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\(^{61}\) The \textit{Didascalicon}, trans. Jerome Taylor, "Preface," p. 44. Subsequent references to the \textit{Didascalicon} are to book and chapter; references to the "Introduction" and notes will be made under the name of the translator.

\(^{62}\) \textit{Didascalicon}, III.iv.

\(^{63}\) \textit{Loc. cit.}

\(^{64}\) \textit{Loc. cit.}

\(^{65}\) \textit{Tbid.}, VI.viii.
Exposition includes three things: the letter, the sense, and the inner meaning. The letter is the fit arrangement of words, which we also call construction; the sense is a certain ready and obvious meaning which the letter presents on the surface; the inner meaning is the deeper understanding which can be found only through interpretation and commentary. Among these, the order of inquiry is first the letter, then the sense, and finally the inner meaning. And when this is done, the exposition is complete.66

One scholar has pointed out that Hugh's "inner meaning" of a secular text is no more than the theme or thesis of the complete work, and that allegorical or moral meanings are not implied.67 However, complete understanding of the literal meaning alone is not the final stage in Hugh's outline of studies, because he explains that after the exposition of a secular text comes meditation, which "takes its start from reading," and is the "consummation" of learning. Hugh's three types of meditation are "a consideration of morals," "a scrutiny of the commandments," and "an investigation of the divine works."68 Hugh's editor points out that the definition of meditation unites all of the secular arts that are considered in the Didascalicon (I-III) with the Scriptures into a system in which all knowledge is directed toward man's salvation.69

66Tbid., III.viii.
68Didascalicon, III.x.
69Jerome Taylor, p. 214, fn. 56.
Thus, when the purpose of study is to lead the student to a knowledge of God, a pursuit of the secular arts becomes nearly identical with religion.\textsuperscript{70} Hugh's own words, concluding his discussion of secular studies, provide the best summation of his views:

\ldots hold no learning in contempt, for all learning is good. \ldots there is, in my opinion, no book which does not set forth something worth looking for, if that book is taken up at the right place and time.\ldots \textsuperscript{71}

In contrast, John of Salisbury (c. 1110-1180) recommends the study of classical literature as a necessary appendage to the arts.\textsuperscript{72} Throughout his writings, he complains about the latter twelfth-century decadent state of classical studies and the predominance of logic and dialectic which had begun with the work of Abelard.\textsuperscript{73} Salisbury recognizes the value of logical training, and defends dialectic in his \textit{Metalogicon}; however, prior to his defense of dialectic, he points out the need for a foundation in grammar (in its wider sense) and rhetoric.\textsuperscript{74} He also defends classical literature in his \textit{Polycraticus}, a political treatise in which Horace and Juvenal

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., pp. 13-15; 192, fn. 69.
\textsuperscript{71}Didascalicon, III.xiii.
\textsuperscript{72}H. O. Taylor, \textit{The Mediaeval Mind}, II, 140, fn. 1.
\textsuperscript{73}Hastings Rashdall, \textit{The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages}, I, 69; L. J. Daly, \textit{The Medieval University}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{74}Daly, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 14.
are quoted as moralists, and Vergil's fables are seen as
disguised philosophic truths. In general, Salisbury's view
is the traditional one: classical literature should be studied
for the truths concealed under the poetic fictions.

Other twelfth-century attitudes further illustrate
that classical literature is being used for moral-didactic
purposes. Bernard Silvestrius, arguing that poetry and phi-
losophy are united, allegorically interprets the Aeneid as
the story of man's life. In Silvestrius' division of knowl-
edge, poetry is an introduction to philosophy, since the study
of poetry leads to "eloquence," and then to "wisdom" or "phi-
losophy" in a graded series. Silvestrius considers Vergil
to be both a philosopher and a poet, and believes that the
reader gains moral value from the Aeneid. Thus, since Vergil
instructs as a model for writing and by furnishing examples of
correct action, Silvestrius repeats the classical dictum that
poetry should both instruct and entertain.

75 Maurico Elin, A History of Medieval Latin Literature,
76 Curtius, op. cit., p. 206, fn. 9.
77 Richard McKeon, "Poetry and Philosophy in the Twelfth
Century: The Renaissance of Rhetoric," Critics and Criticism,
pp. 303-304.
78 Ibid., p. 304.
79 R. E. Green, "Alan of Lille's De Planctu Naturae."
Speculum, XXI (1956), 659.
80 McKeon, op. cit., p. 305.
Several other twelfth-century writers followed Silvestrius' view, one going so far as to recommend that a fourfold method of interpretation be applied to pagan authors; one level of meaning is moral.81 Also, many twelfth-century florilegia, or collections of "sentences," pick passages with a moral lesson from classical authors.82 An early thirteenth-century treatise on teaching discusses the educational value of various classical authors in which several are considered useful for moral instruction.83

Dante's defense of the vernacular in the Convivio near the beginning of the fourteenth century is significant to a discussion of attitudes affecting classical literature, since it is both the culmination of a debate over poetry and a refutation of attacks made upon it. Classical studies were declining in the time of John of Salisbury;84 the reception of the remaining works of Aristotle leads to further neglect in the thirteenth century.85 The main intellectual concerns become logic and dialectic; the most favored professions are

81 Ibid., pp. 310, 316.
82 Born, op. cit., p. 371.
83 Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 409-410. The work also praised Dares, one of the originators of the medieval version of the Troy-story, for his "veracity."
84 Supra, p. 20.
85 Bashdall, op. cit., p. 70.
the practical ones of law and medicine. More importantly, in the rise of Scholastic philosophy, logic is applied to the problems of theology; the use of dialectic and disputation, which began with Abelard, becomes the method by which truth in philosophical and theological matters is reached. With logic serving its new function, a sharp distinction is drawn between the "arts" and theology, with the latter denying discussion of "philosophical" matters to the former. Formerly, of course, philosophy was associated with the study of classical literature, but, in the thirteenth century, dialectic, for all practical purposes, becomes the whole of the arts course at the universities. Theology is still the end of education, but only the study of dialectic and "philosophy" (meaning the logical and metaphysical works of Aristotle) precede it. The result, of course, is a general decline in the study of Latin grammar and literature. Even in the elementary schools, the student receives training only in Latin grammar per se and composition. In the universities, the situation is even

87 Daly, op. cit., p. 11; Rashdall, op. cit., p. 65.
89 Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought, p. 168.
90 Ibid., pp. 169-170.
91 Paul Abelson, The Seven Liberal Arts, pp. 33-34; Knowles, op. cit., p. 225.
worse; in some cases, the classics are not studied at all. 92

The rise of Scholastic philosophy, therefore, means the decline and neglect of classical studies; more importantly, however, the use of logic and dialectic in theology and philosophy leads to the Scholastic denial that poetry can convey philosophic truth. 93 For instance, Aquinas (who should serve as an example of the Scholastic view) maintains that secular poetry can be read only on the literal level and denies that it has an allegorical or moral meaning. 94 Thus, since one of Dante's reasons for writing in the vernacular is that a work in the vulgar tongue will be useful to more men (since more can read the vernacular than Latin), Dante's defense of his native language becomes a defense—or justification—of vernacular poetry itself. 95 Of course, the argument may be extended to include imaginative literature in general and becomes a refutation of the Scholastic denial of didactic powers. 96 While one need not cover Dante's defense of his

92 Rashdall, op. cit., p. 72. Of course, the classics were not totally neglected and were even defended by such men as John of Garland, Henri d'Andeli, and Alexander Neckam (Poetics, op. cit., pp. 17-18, 19, 31-32). In general, however, classical studies were neglected, and the moral-didactic powers of secular poetry were denied.


94 W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History, p. 149.

95 "Dante Alighieri," The Great Critics, p. 13.

96 loc. cit.
native tongue completely, he should emphasize the main points of the argument, particularly Dante's exposition of the four levels of meaning, since his didactic intention is implicit throughout.

To explain his method, Dante states that he will present the matter of his work in the Canzoni, each of which will be explained allegorically in a following commentary. Dante first reveals his didactic purpose in the Convivio when, noting that self-praise always turns into blame upon examination, he explains why he speaks of himself in the work. Citing the example of Augustine's Confessions, he points out that a justification for his speaking of himself is that of wishing to help others, as he intends to do in the Convivio; he wishes to demonstrate how his allegorical explications of the Canzoni may be used to understand other writings.

The "three causes" which move him to use the vernacular in the Convivio are "precaution against unseemly disorder," "whole-heartedness of liberality," and "natural affection" for his native language. His explanations of his "causes" clearly reveal that his main concern is with the potential

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97 Dante's Convivio, trans. W. W. Jackson, I.i. Subsequent references to the Convivio are to Tractate and its subdivision under the abbreviation Conv.; reference to the introductory material will be made under the name of the editor.
98 Ibid., I.ii.
99 Ibid., v.
usefulness of his work. In explaining the cause of "protection against unseemly disorder," he points out that his commentaries are intended to explain the Canzoni, which are written in the vernacular; therefore, if they are to serve their purpose, they must be submissive, must "play the part of a servant to the Canzoni," and Latin would not have served. Latin "would not have been subject but sovereign" because of its "nobility, and on account of its goodness and of its beauty." The pains taken by Dante to insure that his work be understood are obvious.

After defining the terms, "nobility," "goodness," and "beauty," as he utilizes them, Dante explains that he did not use Latin in the commentaries, because it would not have been "intimate" with the Canzoni, since Latin only "knows" the vulgar tongue in a "general" way, and not individually. Thus, if Latin is not "intimate" with the vulgar tongue, it cannot be intimate with the "friends" of that language. Also, he notes that perfect intimacy is impossible without "converse and familiarity," and that fewer people know Latin than know the vernacular; thus, he concludes that Latin converses only

100 loc. cit.
101 loc. cit.
102 ibid., vi.
103 loc. cit.
Dante's wish that his work be intelligible to as wide an audience as possible is as obvious as his earlier desire to be perfectly understood.

To show that Latin commentaries would not have been "obedient" to the vernacular Canzoni, Dante states the three qualities of obedience—"sweet not bitter," "wholly prescribed, and not self-chosen," and "within measure and not unmeasured"—and, then, shows that Latin commentaries would have lacked these qualities. Since "everything that proceeds in inverted order is laboured, and therefore is not sweet but bitter," the relations between vernacular Canzoní and Latin commentaries could not have been "sweet." Furthermore, had the commentaries been in Latin, a part of their exposition of the Canzoní would have been "spontaneous," not "wholly prescribed," because of the nature of the Latin language. Finally, Latin commentaries would have exceeded and have fallen short of their command to expound the Canzoní, and, hence, would not have been obedient. The Canzoní wish

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104 Loc. cit.
105 Ibid., vii.
106 Loc. cit.
107 Loc. cit. Dante has earlier remarked (Conv. I.v) that Latin is "better" than the vernacular because it can "make manifest" many things which Italian cannot.
108 Loc. cit.
to be "... expounded to all those to whom their meaning may be brought home," and Latin commentaries would have been intelligible only to the lettered; also, Latin would have expounded the Canzoni to "people of other languages," and, thus, would have exceeded their command, since the Canzoni would not want to be expounded "in quarters to which their beauty could not be conveyed as well."\(^{109}\) Again, Dante's wish is clearly that the instruction within his work be intelligible to those who can best understand it.

Dante's explanation of the "whole-hearted liberality" which made him choose the vernacular over the Italian may stand by itself. Quite simply, he chose the vernacular because it possesses the three qualities of that liberality: it gives to many, it gives useful things, and it gives without being asked.\(^{110}\) He argues that Latin would not have served many, since it could not have been used by "scholars outside the pale of the Italian language"; it would not have given as useful a gift, because it would not have been used as much; and Latin would not have given its gift without being asked, as will the vernacular.\(^{111}\)

Dante, then, in defending his use of the vernacular, defends the composition of secular poetry in the vernacular.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., cit.
\(^{110}\) Ibid., viii.
\(^{111}\) Ibid., viii-ix.
also, since he claims that his work contains instruction, his defense of the vulgar tongue becomes a refutation of the Scholastic denial that poetry could convey philosophic truth. \(^{112}\)

However, Dante's claims for the instructional value of secular (and, by implication, classical) literature hardly have to be deduced from his defense of the vernacular. In the second Tractate of the Convivio, Dante sets forth the familiar fourfold method of expounding the text:

I say that, as is affirmed in the first chapter, it is meet for this exposition to be both literal and allegorical. And to make this intelligible, it should be known that writings can be understood chiefly in four senses. The first is called literal, and this is that sense which does not go beyond the strict limits of the letter; the second is called allegorical, and this is disguised under the cloak of such stories, and is a truth hidden under a beautiful fiction. Thus Ovid says that Orpheus with his lyre made beasts tame, and trees and stones move toward himself; that is to say that the wise man by the instrument of his voice makes cruel hearts grow mild and humble, and those who have not the life of Science and of Art move to his will, while they who have no rational life are as it were like stones. And wherefore this disguise was invented by the wise will be shown in the last Tractate but one. Theologians indeed do not apprehend this sense in the same fashion as poets; but, inasmuch as my intention is to follow here the custom of poets, I will take the allegorical sense after the manner which poets use. \(^{113}\)

\(^{112}\) Jackson points out (p. 9) that the Convivio was intended to be "... a comprehensive summary of the truth of Philosophy, or the highest knowledge, in their application to life." By "Philosophy" is meant the seven liberal arts, the Moral, Physical, and Metaphysical Sciences, and Theology, to which all the others were directed. Dante, quite obviously, opposed the Scholastic view that poetry could not convey philosophic truths.

\(^{113}\) Conv., II.i.
Dante, next, explains the moral and anagogic senses, citing Scripture to illustrate the two higher levels of meaning. However, he has already made his most important point: he has distinguished the allegory of poets—which is "truth hidden under a beautiful fiction"—from the allegory of theologians, which is truth under the literal, historical level of Scripture. Thus, although Dante claims that his work contains moral and philosophic truths, he admits that it is fictional on the literal level, and does not equate it with Scripture. He does so, however, at least seemingly, in the letter to Can Grande in which he explains the method for interpreting the Comedy:

... be it known that the sense of this work is not simple, but on the contrary it may be called polysemous, that is to say, "of more senses than one"; for it is one sense which we get through the letter, and another which we get through the thing the letter signifies; and the first is called literal, but the second allegorical or mystic. And this mode of treatment, for its better manifestation, may be considered in this verse: "When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech, Judea became his sanctification, Israel his power." For if we inspect the letter alone the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is presented to us; if the allegory, our redemption wrought by Christ; if the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin to the state of grace is presented to us; if the anagogical, the departure of the holy soul from slavery of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory is presented to us. And although these mystic senses have each their

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For an extended discussion of this point, the reader is directed to the appendix of Charles S. Singleton's *Commedia: Elements of Structure* (*L'inte Studies*, 1), pp. 85-94.
special denominations, they may all in general be called allegorical, since they differ from the literal and historical. . . .115

Thus, Dante not only applies the Scriptural method of exegesis to his own work, but, as he did in the Convivio, claims that his poem can convey philosophic truth—which function Scholasticism had denied to poetry in general. As one critic summarizes Dante's argument, "My work affords poetry, but at the same time philosophy too."116 Of Dante's method—"Scriptural method put to the explication and vindication of religious poetry written by natural inspiration"—it has been said that ". . . with more difficulty the same thing could be done for fully secular and even for pagan poetry."117 Of course, the method was applied before Dante's time, for purposes of reconciliation; but, throughout the fourteenth century, pagan poetry is used for moral instruction and defended on moral grounds.

Richard de Bury in his Philobiblon (The Love of Books), from the middle of the century, defends classical fable with, basically, an argument of utility. De Bury opens his chapter entitled, "Why We have not Wholly Neglected the Fables of the Poets," with a clear statement of his view:

115"Dante Alighieri," The Great Critics, pp. 145-146.
117Wimsatt and Brooks, op. cit., p. 148.
In De Bury's view, poetic fables are the means by which learning is made attractive, "a device by which the wanton disposition of man might be captured, as it were, by a pious snare, and the dainty Minerva be concealed behind the mask of pleasure."\(^{119}\)

The utility of the poetic disguise constitutes De Bury's "defense" of the poets; he, then, proceeds to show that the study itself of the fables is beneficial. His first point, as one might expect, is that, since

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\ldots\text{the sayings of the saints often refer to the inventions of the poets, it must needs happen that, if the poem under discussion be not known, the whole intent of the author is totally obscured.}\(^{120}\)
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In short, one must know the works of the poets to understand patristic writings. Also, since De Bury is referring to (among others) the writings of Jerome and Augustine, he is, obviously, arguing that one must know the works of the pagan poets.\(^{121}\) De Bury also quotes a passage from Bede which

\(^{118}\)Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon*, p. 73.
\(^{119}\)Ibid. cit.
\(^{120}\)Ibid. p. 74.
\(^{121}\)Ibid. p. 75.
praises those who read pagan literature so that "... they may thoroughly detest the errors of the heathen and apply the useful things they discover to the purpose of holy and devout edification."\textsuperscript{122} He concludes simply by saying that one "... may make a study acceptable unto God" in any subject if one will only "regard the conditions of virtue."\textsuperscript{123}

Allegorical interpretation of pagan poetry continues throughout the fourteenth century, and was common even during the thirteenth-century decline and neglect of classical studies. In spite of opposition, Ovid's works grow in popularity during the latter twelfth and thirteenth centuries; they are made "acceptable" by the same methods which had earlier been applied to Vergil.\textsuperscript{124} Soon, interpretations are written which show that Ovid was a Christian poet with moral teachings in his works; some stories are compared to Biblical tales, but most are given a moral interpretation.\textsuperscript{125} John of Garland interprets the \textit{Metamorphoses}, making many passages acceptable, in his \textit{Intermenta}, a work popular and important in its own day.\textsuperscript{126}

In France, the \textit{Metamorphoses} are transformed into the \textit{Ovide

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., cit.
\textsuperscript{123}Ibid., cit.
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 363-364.
\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., pp. 364-365.
\textsuperscript{126}Ibid., p. 373.
moralized near the end of the thirteenth century. Philip
de Vitri translates and moralizes the *Metamorphoses* in the
early fourteenth century; Giovanni del Vergilio, a contemporary
of Dante, provides a complete allegorical interpretation of
Ovid's major work. Near the middle of the century, Petrus
Berchorius (Peter Bersuire) allegorically interprets pagan
divinities, the *Metamorphoses*, and several Biblical stories in
the fifteenth and sixteenth books of his encyclopedic
*Reductorium morale*. Bersuire's sole interest is using
poetry; thus, his work, which was popular in England, explains
Ovid's allegorical and moral meaning.

Pagan poetry and classical fable are also defended
throughout the fourteenth century. For example, Albertino
Mussato (1261-1329) defends poetry in general, claiming that
it springs from a divine impulse and maintaining that pagan
myths tell the same truths as the Scriptures. Mussato goes

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127 *Bush*, op. cit., p. 17.
129 J. M. Steadman, "Perseus upon Pegasus and Ovid
Moralized," *RSc*, n. s. IX (November, 1958), 407, fn. 5; E. H.
Wilkins, "Descriptions of Pagan Divinities from Petrarch to
130 R. H. Green, "Classical Fable and English Poetry in
the Fourteenth Century," *Critical Approaches to Medieval
Literature*, 122. Several other fourteenth-century interpreta-
tions of Ovid are cited by Born, op. cit., pp. 376-377.
131 Curtius, op. cit., p. 215.
so far as to call the pagan authors prophets and their poetry a type of theology. 132 Collucio Salutati allegorically interprets the Herculean myths, and, in defending pagan poetry, restates the classical idea of instruction and entertainment:

No one should suppose that the sacred poets . . . left us their fables of gods and men with the intention that their stories should be believed or imitated. . . . Something wholly different was hidden (and is still hidden) beneath the surface of the fables which they artfully composed, so that, although they may deceive the ignorant with a certain pleasure, they offer to wiser readers the fragrant odor and sweet taste of inner meaning. 133

However, the work of Mussato and Salutati is minor in comparison to Boccaccio's elaborate interpretation and defense of classical fable in his Genealogia Deorum Gentilium near the end of the century.

In his preface, Boccaccio explains his purpose in collecting and interpreting the pagan fables:

... these interpretations will enable you to see not only the art of the ancient poets, and the consanguinity and relations of the false gods, but certain natural truths, hidden with an art that will surprise you, together with deeds and moral civilization of the Ancients that are not a matter of every-day information. 134

132 Ibid., p. 216.
133 Quoted in Green, "Fable," p. 119.
134 Charles G. Osgood, "Preface," Boccaccio on Poetry, p. 12. Subsequent references to Boccaccio's Genealogia Deorum Gentilium will be made by book and chapter under the abbreviation GDG; references to the "Introduction" or notes will be made under the name of the editor.
In theory, Boccaccio uses the traditional fourfold method of interpretation in his work; however, he seldom applies all four levels of meaning, but usually stops with a "moral" or the simpler "allegorical" interpretation. Boccaccio also makes use of two other systems of interpretation, blending them with the traditional method; thus, in the final analysis, any specific myth may be euhemeristic—that is, history which was recast by the poets; "moral" or "allegorical" in a narrow sense, meaning that the poet, through his story, is veiling some truth of nature; or the myth may be a foreshadowing of some Christian truth or a commentary upon it.

In his preface, Boccaccio explains that the final two books of his work will be, first, a reply to those who attack pagan poetry and, second, an attempt to excuse any criticism which might be directed at the work itself. While there is no need for a complete examination of Boccaccio's work, portions of it deserve attention for the light that they will throw upon Boccaccio's attitude toward the ancient poets; his firm belief that the fables of the poets are essentially instructive is also revealed in this defense of poetry.

Boccaccio does not even deign to answer some of the critics of classical fable; however, he does answer the

135Osgood, p. xviii.
136Ibid., p. xix.
criticisms of the lawyers, and his reply reveals much about
his view of the pagan fables. He notes that lawyers attack
poetry because their only criterion is money and consider all
to be fools who do not attempt to make as much of it as
possible. Boccaccio admits that poets do not pursue material
gain, but he is far from being apologetic:

... Poetry devotes herself to something greater; for
while she dwells in heaven, and mingles with the divine
counsels, she moves the minds of a few men from on high
to a yearning for the eternal, lifting them by her love-
liness to high revery, drawing them away into the
discovery of strange wonders, and pouring forth most
exquisite discourse from her exalted mind. 138

Since, in Boccaccio's view, "Poetry ... dwells in heaven,"
his definition of poetry itself comes as no surprise:

... a sort of fervid and exquisite invention, with
fervid expression, in speech or writing, of that which
the mind has invented. It proceeds from the bosom of
God, ... it veils truth in a fair and fitting garment
of fiction. 139

In answering those critics who call the poets liars, Boccaccio
grants that the poets tell stories, but he does not consider
this practice to be either evil or a waste of time. He points
out that "... fiction is a form of discourse, which, under
guise of invention, illustrates or proves an idea." 140 He
insists that the "superficial aspect" must be removed; then,

138 GDC, XIV.iv.
139 Ibid., vii.
140 Ibid., ix.
"If sense is revealed from under the veil of fiction, the composition of fiction is not idle nonsense." 141 Boccaccio, also, points out that even Christ used a fictional form of discourse when he spoke in parables. 142 He further explains that one purpose of the veil of fiction is to attract, and gives an example of a boy who was stimulated to study by fables; thus, he repeats the classical dictum that literature should both instruct and entertain. 143

Boccaccio has no patience with those critics who insist that the poets conceal no meaning beneath their eloquence. After citing examples from the "philosophical poets" (Vergil, Dante, and Petrarch), Boccaccio concludes his argument with the point that "there was never a musing old woman," sitting up at night spinning stories with no real basis, who did not "... feel beneath the surface of her tale ... at least some meaning." 144

Boccaccio answers those critics who claim that the poets are obscure by pointing out, first, that even the philosophers and the Scriptures are difficult to understand. 145

141 loc. cit.
142 loc. cit.
143 loc. cit.
144 ibid., x.
145 ibid., xii.
In any case, the poet's function is not to reveal his meaning, but to conceal it, so that (1) the truth under the fiction will not become cheapened through exposure; (2) the reader will be spurred to "strong intellectual effort"; and (3) the truth will be more precious when it is finally discovered.\textsuperscript{146}

Boccaccio most clearly reveals his belief in the instructional value of classical literature when he explains Vergil's purposes in telling the fiction of Aeneas and Dido. He is convinced that other than re-telling an earlier story and glorifying Rome, Vergil's intention in the story was "... to show with what passions human frailty is infested, and the strength with which a steady man subdues them."\textsuperscript{147}

Thus, Vergil "... represents in Dido the attracting power of the passion of love ... and in Aeneas one who is readily disposed in that way and at length overcome."\textsuperscript{148} Mercury, who rebukes Aeneas and sends him on his way again, is interpreted by Boccaccio to represent "... either remorse, or the reproof of some outspoken friend, either of which rouses us from slumber in the mire of turpitude, and calls us back into the fair and even path to glory."\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{146} loc. cit.; Osgood, p. 170, fn. 12.  
\textsuperscript{147} GDC, XIV.xiii.  
\textsuperscript{148} loc. cit.  
\textsuperscript{149} loc. cit.
Boccaccio defends his collection of myths in the final book of his work. While he is ready to argue that one merit of the _Decameron_ is simply the beauty of its stories, he also repeats his point that the myths, when interpreted and understood, are instructive:

But there remains [the book's] usefulness, public and private, in which its greater value resides. Some men have thought that the learned poet merely invents shallow tales, and is therefore not only useless, but a positive harm. ... Now this work of mine removes the veil from these inventions, shows that poets were really men of wisdom, and renders their compositions full of profit and pleasure to the reader.\(^150\)

In the remainder of his last book, Boccaccio, while admitting that heathen beliefs are to be found in the fables of the poets, argues that much of the "old theology" foreshadows Christian truths, and repeats his praise of the poets as men of genius.\(^151\) However, he has already made his most important point: i.e., the great poets are teachers, and their work is similar to the Biblical presentation of truth.\(^152\) His view is the common one held in the later Middle Ages. A belief in the moral-didactic possibilities of the classical stories is so widespread that it is usual for medieval redactors of the classical themes to present their translations as instruction, not narrative, and to point out the moral of the story to their readers. One

\(^{150}\)Ibid., XV.1. The italics are those of the present author.

\(^{151}\)Ibid., viii. xiv.

\(^{152}\)Vernon Hall, _A Short History of Literary Criticism_, p. 29.
in particular--John Lydgate, Monk of Bury--does so with freedom, not only presenting his story itself as an example, but interpreting specific incidents within the story in light of his overall moral purpose. His *Troy Book*, therefore, is in the center of the medieval tradition of utilizing "history" for the purpose of moral instruction.
CHAPTER III

JOHN LYDGATE'S TROY BOOK: THE UTILIZATION OF "HISTORY" FOR MORAL INSTRUCTION

Lydgate's Troy Book, composed during the years 1412-1420 at the request of Prince Henry (later Henry V), is only one of many medieval retellings of the Troy story. As his main source, Lydgate took Guido delle Colonne's Historia Destructionis Troiae (c. 1287), considered the authoritative version of the legend in the Middle Ages. Guido's Historia, in turn, was an abridged (and unacknowledged) translation of Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Roman de Troie, which had initiated the practice of recasting classical themes in medieval terms. Benoît emphasized the chivalric ideal, transformed the classical characters into medieval knights, and presented the Trojans as the heroes of the conflict, but his alterations of this story were not the first to be made. Benoît's work and those which followed it departed from the classical version of

154 Ibid., p. 107; W. F. Schirmer, John Lydgate, p. 43.
156 Loc. cit.; M. R. Scherer, The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature, p. xiii.
the legend because of a tradition which existed long before them; indeed, when one realizes that Homer was unknown in Western Europe until the late fourteenth century (except for a first-century Latin condensation of the Iliad), and that altered accounts of the story served as sources for the Middle Ages, the later medieval distortions of the legend are less mystifying.  

The ultimate sources for the medieval version of the Troy-story are the fourth- and sixth-century forgeries of Dares and Dictys, each, supposedly, written by an eyewitness to the war. Both works contain an elaborate introduction accounting for their survival and establishing their claim to authenticity; each gives much detail in support of its eyewitness claim, and, more importantly, eliminates ancient supernatural elements from the story. For instance, Dares' pro-Trojan work presents the episode of the Judgment of Paris as a dream. Moreover, other details are radically altered; Achilles is presented as treacherous, Ulysses is tricky and deceitful, and Aeneas is depicted as the traitor who betrays

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157 Loc. cit.
160 Ibid., p. 35; Scherer, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
Troy to the Greeks. The effect of this final alteration is evident in the opening lines of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight:

Sipen pe sege and pe assaut wat3 sesed at Troye,
De bor3 brittened and brent to bronde3 and aske3,
De tulk pat pe trammes of tresoun per wro3t
Wat3 tried for his tricherie, pe trewest on erthe:
Hit wat3 Ennias pe athel. ... 162
(1-5)

The eyewitness claims of Dares and Dictys were believed by later times; though unknown in the original, Homer was regarded as a late commentator on the war and prejudiced in favor of the Greeks. Dares' pro-Trojan work was the more popular of the two in the West, since several nations had adopted the legend of a Trojan origin; it was especially popular in England, where belief in Trojan ancestry was strong. The legend had gained currency through the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose Historia Regum Britanniae, with its attractive figure of King Arthur, was primarily responsible for the deep rooting of the Trojan legend in Britain.

161 Griffin, op. cit., p. 35.
162 The text of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight cited is the Tolkien and Gordon edition.
165 Ibid., pp. 256-257.
The pro-Trojan work of Dares served as the main source for Benoît's Roman, with the work of Dictys supplementing it when necessary; both accounts suit Benoît's purpose better than did the Aeneid, which was also available at the time. The details which had been added by Dares and Dictys to support their eyewitness claims were appropriate to Benoît's romanticized retelling of the story; both works had minimized or eliminated the supernatural elements which would have been unacceptable to Benoît's audience; and Dares' work had added a love interest that Benoît expanded into the Troilus-Briseïda story. Of course, Benoît considered Dares and Dictys to be reliable in their accounts, and also commented upon the untrustworthiness of Homer. Thus, since della Colonne's abridged translation was the main source for later poets, Benoît's work originated and influenced much of the later material which dealt with the legend of Troy. However, Guido altered the story by attempting to explain away the remaining elements of pagan religion in the narrative, since Benoît's Roman had contained a mixture of medieval and classical

166 Scherer, op. cit., p. xiii.
168 Ibid., p. xiii.
169 Schlauch, op. cit., p. 181; Panton, op. cit., p. ix.
materials. Lydgate, then, further altered the story by expanding Guido's work, turning it to moral-didactic purposes.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to review the general attitudes of medieval authors toward the legends and stories that they redacted. The anonymous "Gest Historiale" of the Destruction of Troy, from the latter fourteenth century, is a somewhat free redaction into English of Guido's Historia. In the prologue, the author complains that the great deeds and heroic feats of past days had been nearly forgotten—had been "... swolowet into swym by swiftenes of yeres," and that new books which told of more contemporary times could not be trusted: some were "tru for to traist, triet in be ende, / Sum feynit o fere & ay false ynder" (5-18). However, he points out that, since the old stories "may be solas" to those who did not witness the exploits of the past, the records of eye-witnesses to great deeds may satisfy those who wish "... token all the crafte how the case felle" (21-25). The author, then, states, "of Troy forto telle is myn entent euyn" (27), and explains that he will tell the story "alss wise men have writen the wordes before" (31), not as have many poets who "with fablis and falshed fayned pere spech" (34). One of these


kinds of poets was Homer, who "... feynet myche fals was neuer before wroght" (41), telling "how goddes fough in the filde, folke as þai were, / And other errours vnable þat after were knowne" (43-44). The author, then, declares that he will rely upon the work of Guido delle Colonne (54), who compiled his *Historia* from the works of two authors who "... bothe were in batell while the batell last, / And euper sawte & assemely see with pere een" (56-57). He is referring, of course, to Dares and Diotys; and thereafter, but briefly, he traces the descent of the correct version down to Guido's work (61-67), in which he vows "... shall faithfully be founden to the far ende, / All pe dedes by dene as þai done were" (78-79). Several attitudes are revealed in the introduction to this work. First--and, perhaps, most important--is the historical view taken toward the material. The story of Troy is accepted as true, although not in all versions, since some poets have falsified and distorted it. The judgments about the veracity of different sources both illustrate this historical view and imply a critical attitude toward the earlier versions, which attitude itself is further evidence to show that the story was regarded, at this time, as history. Also, the prologue to the *Gest* implies (though it does not clearly state) the moral usefulness of a record of past great deeds; and, obviously, the story was in demand, since one notes that there are those who wish "to ken all the crafte how the case felle."
The opening lines of the prologue to Barbour's *Bruce* (also from the latter fourteenth century) more clearly reveal the idea that the historical accounts of past heroes and their exploits should be useful. Indeed, these lines are, nearly, a restatement of the classical belief that instruction and entertainment should be joined, as follows:

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Storys to rede ar delitabill,
Suppos that thai be nocht bot fabill;
Than suld storys that suthfast wer,
And thai war said on gud maner,
Hawe doubill plesance in heryng.
The fyrst plesance is the carpyng,
And the tothir the suthfastnes,
That schawys the thing rycht as it wes;
And suth thyngis that ar likand
Tyll mannys heryng, ar plesand.172
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(1-10)

The meaning, here, is clear: even fables are pleasant to read, but a true story, well-told, is of double value. While the author of the *Bruce* does not openly claim that his story will be directly instructive, he obviously considers its veracity (which "schawys the thing rycht as it wes") to be valuable in itself. However, Lydgate not only considers his narrative as history, but (in the prologue and informal epilogue) clearly states that it is instructive, and is meant to be used.

 Appropriately, Lydgate opens his prologue to the *Troy Book* with an invocation to Mars, appealing for help in composing

172 The text of The *Bruce* cited is the edition by W. W. Skeat.
the work (1-45). He first indicates his belief in his story as history when he asks Mars, "maketh Clyo for to ben my muse" (40)—Clio, of course, being the Muse of history. He, then, explains that he undertakes this work at the request of Prince Henry, who

He also notes that Henry enjoys reading stories of antiquity in order to imitate the examples of "vertu" displayed therein and to "... eschew / The cursyd vice of sloute and ydelenesse" (80-83). After flattering his patron, Lydgate explains that Henry has requested that an English translation of the Troy Book be made so that

Thus, he reveals that this Troy-story is not only true, but valuable as an example of past deeds worthy of imitation.

173 Numbers in parentheses indicate lines in Lydgate's Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen.

174 Later, in the Troy Book (II.178), Lydgate deprecates his talents as a poet, complaining that "Clyo" came to him late in life.
He, next, considers the importance of writers and their works (147-194), explaining that the Troy-story has been compiled over the centuries by honest writers who told only the truth (149-153) so that later ages would not be "... begyled / Of negligence thoru3 for3etilnesse" (153-154). He explains that, without these old writings, "Dethe with his swerde" would have obscured the "gret[e] prowes" of past heroes and "dirked eke the bri3tnes of her fame, / That schyneth 3et by report of her name" (171-176). He is confident, as well, that the old books which tell of past deeds may be trusted, because they "... represent / With-out[e] feynynges" the lives of the heroes (177-179). He, then, warns his reader of a writer's power:

Ageyn the trouthe who so euere stryue,  
Or counterplete or make any debate,  
The sothe is rad of hi3e or lowe estate,  
With-oute fauour, who so list take hede;  
For after deth clerkis lityl drede  
After desert for to bere witnesse,  
Nor of a tyraunt the trouthe to expresse,  
As men disserue, with-oute excepc1oun.  
(180-187)

Of course, these lines are, also, additional evidence with which to show that Lydgate considered his own story to be true. Lydgate continues in praise of past writers, noting how they

175 Judging from this statement, one would expect Lydgate to make a greater effort to present various characters as exemplars of behavior; however, while he praises some (e.g., Hector and Troilus), he does not recommend that they be imitated. Schirmer, op. cit., p. 47, may be correct in his statement that Lydgate did not share his patron's view of the story.
were honored in ancient days (195-197), and how they have preserved the stories of antiquity, which, otherwise, would have been lost (198-225). After mentioning the story of Thebes and its historian (226-244), he discusses the story of Troy and those of the past who have recorded it (245-384), revealing attitudes similar to those found in the prologue to the 
Gest Historiale. He observes that the "dillygence of crony-c[u]leris" has preserved the truth of the story, which their art has kept new and fresh and so well-told that neither "deth nor age" will ever extinguish the truth (245-259). However, he admits that some authors have falsified the story, transforming it in their poetry

Thoru3 veyne[e] fables, whiche of entenc1oun
They han contreved by false transumpcioun
To hyde trouthe falsely vnder cloude.

(263-265)

He agrees that Homer is one ancient who departed from the truth, pretending that the gods helped the Greeks against the Trojans and fought among them like men (267-275). Neither does he think Ovid is to be trusted, because he "... poetycally hath closyd / Falshed with trouthe," tricking the reader with his "mysty speche" (299-303). He claims that Vergil, also, distorted the story, in part because he followed Homer (304-308). However, he is convinced that Dares and Dictys are to be trusted, because they were present during the war and each tells the story so accurately that there is no discrepancy to be found between their works (310-316).
In the remainder of his prologue, Lydgate briefly traces the descent of the true story of Troy to Guido's work and admits that he will follow the Historia (317-375). Then, after asking his readers to correct him whenever he errs, he concludes the introduction (376-384).

One sees that Lydgate regards his material as history and follows his patron in believing the "noble story" to be useful. It is evident from his words that Prince Henry considered the deeds recorded in the legend to be examples worthy of emulation. On the other hand, that Lydgate believes the story of Troy to be instructive in a different way is made clear in his epilogue. After miscellaneous remarks on the statistics related to the siege, in praise of his patron, and in a brief review of his reasons for translating the Troy Book, Lydgate points to the lesson contained in his work:

... who-so liste to se variaunce
Or worldly ping wro3t be daies olde,
In pis boke he may ful wel beholde
Chaunge of Fortune, in hir cours mutable,
Selde or nat feithful ouper stable.
(3544-3548)

After a long parenthetical catalog of examples of Fortune's mutability to be found in the Troy Book, Lydgate again emphasizes that the lesson of Fortune's caprices is intended

To declare, pat in al worldly lust,
Who loke ari3t, is but litel trust.

176 Lydgate's epilogue is an informal one, and has been separated from the body of the text by the editor.
As in bis boke exaumple je shal fynde, 
3if bat je list emprente it in joun mynde--
How al passeth & halt here no solour,
Wastyng a-way as doth a somer flour.
Riche & pore, of every maner age:
For oure lyf here is but a pilgrymage,
Meynt with labour & with moche wo,
-Dat 3if men wolde taken hede ber-to-
And to forn prudently aduerte,
Litel Iole pei shuld han in her herte
To sette her trust in any worldly
-For ber is nooper prince, lord, nor kyng,
Be exaumple of Troye, like as je may se,
-Dat in bis lif may haue ful surete,
(3563-3578)

His lesson concerned with the mutability of Fortune and the
total uncertainty of all worldly things then leads him to the
logical conclusion that one should trust in Christ, Who can
grant victory in battle, make princes strong, cast down
tyrants--Who has the power, in short, "... eche man taquite
liche as he disserueth" (3579-3592). Lydgate's moral is clear.
Since Fortune is totally capricious and cannot be trusted, all
things in this world are completely uncertain and transitory.
No man, regardless of rank, may consider his station secure.
"... be exaumple of Troye, like as je may se."177 Obviously,
he considers the entire legend (as he presents it) to be an
example of his moral; in his own words, the Troy Book is the
story of

Lorodes, princes from her royalte
Sodeinly broujt in aduersite.

177Schirmer, op. cit., pp. 47-48, notes Lydgate's "theme
of transitoriness" and his digressions on Fortune, but men-
tions them separately, whereas, the two are joined in Lydgate's
argument.
And kynges eke plounged in pouert,
And for drede darynge in desert,—
Vnwar slau3ter compassed of envie,
Mordre execut by conspirasie,
Await[e] liggyng falsheede and tresoun,
And of kyangdammys sodeyn euersioun,—
Rauysshyng of wommen for delyt,
Rote of pe werre & of mortal despit,
Fals mayntenaunce of avout[e]rye,
Many worthi causyng for to dye,
Synne ay concludynge, who-so taketh hede,
Vengaunce vnwar for his final mede.

Conceivably, then, his entire narrative could stand unassisted as an example of his moral; however, he is not content with so simple a method. Within his narrative, he repeatedly "interprets" incidents, drawing from them the lesson of Fortune's capriciousness, and, thus, uses specific examples to illustrate his dominant moral. Usually, his method is obvious. He will, for instance, narrate the story of a character's downfall and, then, digress, pointing out that Fortune brought this character to this fate. Occasionally, he will simply warn his reader that Fortune has turned against a character and ordained his fate; afterwards, he will relate the story, exhorting his readers to "take hede" of the example thus presented them.

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178 It is obvious from Lydgate's summary of his story that he considers the entire narrative to be an example of his main moral, and, as stated above, the entire story could (with some difficulty) be read as such an example. However, the present study is concerned with Lydgate's utilization of his material—that is, with his actual practice of drawing a moral from specific incidents within the narrative.
The caprices of Fortune and the uncertainty of all worldly things are Lydgate's most important teachings in the *Troy Book*, but they are not his only lessons. For example, he often illustrates other concepts—e.g., that murder will be repaid in its own coin, or that God will punish those who commit sacrilege. Nor are all of the lessons moral, because he occasionally digresses from the narrative to establish a personal point or to offer practical advice, such as his admonition that common people cannot be trusted, or the observation that morning is the best time in which to choose a wife. These latter practices, while secondary to his main purpose, are, of course, relevant to his didactic aim in the *Troy Book* and should be considered. First, however, his purpose and the practices themselves must be comprehended.

Lydgate's method of instruction is direct to the point of bluntness. He never hesitates to interrupt his narrative to discuss the vagaries of Fortune, to digress upon the consequences of certain actions, or to warn his readers to take heed of the example presented them. For this method, in addition to the fact that he is far from being economical with words, Lydgate has often been criticized. For example, Bennett complains that, at any mention of the "stock subjects" of the Middle Ages, Lydgate takes the opportunity to pour out his knowledge or indulge in "... trite and dreary moralizing with
a seemingly unending series of examples."\(^{179}\) Lewis refers to Lydgate's unbounded "fatal garrulity" whenever writing in couplets.\(^{180}\) In his discussion of the *Troy Book*, Schirmer notes that Lydgate takes every opportunity to present the moral of his story, but complains that he does so "even at the cost of the narrative."\(^{181}\) However, another critic, in a discussion of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*, points out that such criticisms of the poet's method are valid only if one assumes that Lydgate's main concern is the story and his primary purpose is to narrate.\(^{182}\) Since Lydgate's intention in the *Troy Book* is to instruct, his "digressions from the narrative" should hardly be designated as such, much less criticized; indeed, at times it seems that he regards his story as little more than a vehicle affording him a chance to instruct and providing him a stock of historical examples with which to illustrate his lessons. Lydgate writes with an overall moral purpose in the *Troy Book*, and illustrates it with specific examples within the narrative. Furthermore, he draws various other "morals" from incidents of story and offers practical

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\(^{179}\) H. S. Bennett, *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, p. 145.


\(^{181}\) Schirmer, *op. cit.* p. 47.

\(^{182}\) R. W. Ayers, "Medieval History, Moral Purpose, and the Structure of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*," *PMLA*, LXXIII (1958), 463. The present author is indebted throughout this paragraph to Ayers.
advice. An examination of his didactic practices—all of which may be described as the utilization of his material—clearly reveals his relation to the long-established tradition of interpreting and moralizing classical stories for purposes of instruction. However, a first aspect of the Troy Book that must be examined does not concern didactic purpose, but is of primary importance to an understanding of his work.

Few characteristics in the Troy Book are as revealing of Lydgate’s view of his material and his relation to the tradition behind him as the absence from the narrative of certain supernatural elements and his attitude toward several that are present. For instance, he follows his source in presenting the entire episode of the Judgment of Paris (II.2369-2792) as a dream instead of as a visitation of the goddesses. Another example is his account of the death of Achilles, who (in ambush) is killed by a spear and several sword wounds; no mention is made of his invulnerability or of his unprotected heel at any point in the text. Thus, Lydgate reveals the effects of the earlier tradition of rationalizing the pagan

183 Lydgate’s Troy Book, Part IV, ed. Henry Bergen. Subsequent references to this section (the notes to Lydgate’s and delle Colonne’s works) will be noted under the name of the editor.

184 Dares’ presentation of the Judgment of Paris as a dream has already been mentioned (supra, p. 43).

185 Bergen, op. cit., p. 172, notes that Lydgate also follows Guido in his account of Achilles’ death.
supernatural elements in classical stories. His attitude toward several other incidents further illustrates his part in this tradition; for instance, his accusation, in the prologue, that Ovid mixes "falshede with trouthes" (300) is used to explain a number of supernatural elements. For example, at the opening of Book I, he relates the story of the Myrmidons, a people "... of whom Ovyde feyneth in his sawes, / Methamorphoseos" (10-11). Supposedly, after its destruction by the gods, this race was recreated by Jupiter's transformation of ants into men (12-59), but Lydgate has his own explanation in which he shows that the Myrmidons were a race of "... strenthe and gret[e] hardynes," wisdom and prudence, "besy labour and wilful dilligence, / ... for-seynge and discrecioun" (74-86). Thus, he not only points out that Ovid "feyneth" the entire story, but finds a rational explanation for the fable itself. Thus, one suspects him of speaking with tongue-in-cheek when he returns to the narrative: "But in this mater I holde no sermoun, / I wil no longer make disgres-sioun ..." (87-88).

Lydgate also relies upon the tradition of Ovid's untrustworthiness to explain Medea's reputation as a sorceress. After describing her abilities—which include a wide knowledge of the sciences (I.1623-1639) and powers over nature and the planets (1643-1687)—he claims that Ovid has ascribed such powers to Medea only "tencrease hir name vp-on every syde"
(1708); thus, he asserts that no "wy3t or lyvyng creature" has powers over nature (1716-1722). He explains that God has fixed the planets in a system which cannot be altered (1723-1733), and that only He may change this plan or "restreyne" the course of the elements (1766-1776). Concluding his digression, he reiterates that Ovid wrote, thus, of Medea to exalt her name and, therefore, fell short of the truth (1793-1796). He grants, however, that Medea was "a passyng sorceresse, / And ferpest named of any chanteresse" (1797-1798). When Lydgate mentions a Trojan in whom the soul of Pythagoras was "transmewed," he notes, again, that Ovid "feyneth" the story in the Metamorphoses (II.3154-3158). In two other cases, however, he uses his own good sense to deprecate a supernatural story. For example, after narrating a fable of enchanted birds that can distinguish between Greeks and Latins and avoid the latter (I.872-903), he confesses that the story is "swiche a wonder" to him that he cannot discover the cause of the sorcery (904-906), adding that he well knows that the "rote of al was fals enchauntement," and that all Christians should "defye / Swiche apparencis" which are only illusions "of pe fende" (907-911). In Book V, he faithfully relates a supernatural story from his source (2882-2907), but concludes that he can neither judge the story nor believe it, since it "transcendeth" his reason (2908-2911). Thus, Lydgate's relation to earlier practices is revealed in two obvious ways:
in the absence of some supernatural elements (which had been removed from earlier works) and in his own rational attitude toward other "fables" in the story. However, while the similarity of his method to the earlier practice of making the pagan stories "acceptable" is clear, it would be an easy matter to overlook the concern for the truth implicit in Lydgate's attitude, because, although he faithfully follows his source in relating incidents, he is always careful to note that the story is only a fable.

Much of his instruction not concerned with stressing the moral about Fortune is somewhat difficult to define or classify. It is more than simple information, but is not always moral teaching per se. Occasionally, Lydgate makes a point in an almost-proverbial statement, or offers advice or a warning; at times, he introduces "teaching" obviously derived from his own personal feelings. While many of his lessons are undoubtedly unique, he makes several remarks about the inconstancy of women, in addition to offering his usual advice. He comments twice upon the untrustworthiness of the common people. He repeatedly warns his audience of the dangers of covetousness. He consistently points out the consequences and punishments of various kinds of behavior. Of course, such lessons and advice are secondary to his main interest in teaching, but they are further evidence of his didactic purpose in the Troy Book. Moreover, they often illustrate his method in drawing a moral from his story.
Lydgate first digresses upon the inconstancy of women, when King Cethes, during a feast in honor of Jason and Hercules, bids Medea, his daughter, to sit next to the important guest (I.1820-1823). Here, Lydgate laments Cethes' imprudence in failing to take note of "pe vnwar chaunge pat is in wommanhed" (1843), observing that women cannot be trusted, since they are by nature allied with "doubilnes" and "variaunce" (1854). He argues that women are patrons of "Inconstaunce" (1868) and that they cannot be satisfied with one man, but always pursue many (1879-1893). He observes that they hide their nature, pretending to be stable, but are truly inconstant (1894-1904). Then, he repeats his lament for Cethes' imprudence and concludes his digression with an account of the troubles caused when Medea betrayed her father.

Lydgate even more clearly reveals his intentions in two other digressions on the subject of the inconstancy of women and their ability to feign (I.2072-2096, III.4264-4342). In each case, he translates from his source, follows his digression with an apologia (claiming that he only repeats the words of his author), and attacks Guido for that author's derogatory comments. Although Lydgate's sincerity is doubtful, his purpose is always clear, since he expands or strengthens Guido's remarks in both cases. 186 While Cressid toys with

186 Ibid., pp. 105, 160.
Diomedee, keeping him "ful vnsur betweene hope & dispeire" (III. 4843), Lydgate takes this opportunity to digress and remark that this practice is a common tendency of women (4849-4863). Later, when she forsakes Troilus and yields to Diomedee (IV. 2146-2147), Lydgate uses Cressid as a further example of woman's inconstancy, remarking that one could not make change "in Lombard Strete of crowne nor doket" as rapidly as did Cressid change her affections (2154-2155). Regardless of his claims that he only follows his source, Lydgate deliberately alters his material in order to warn his readers of the inconstancy of women. In addition, he offers some practical advice. For instance, in lines that are his own interpolation, 187 he warns his reader that, since cosmetics make a woman more attractive than she really is (II.2681-2690), one should make a choice of a wife early in the morning "whan every drogge & pot is set a-syde," so as not to be deceived, "for now-a-dayes swiche craft is ful rife" (2695-2699).

In the same book, he uses Helen's meeting with Paris to illustrate the fact that a woman should always stay in her chamber (3609). Observing that no ship would ever sink or be wrecked if it never left its harbor (3610-3614), he points that, if Helen had not left her room to meet Paris, the tragic war would never have occurred (3622-3631).

187 Ibid., p. 126.
Lydgate twice attacks the common people, warning that they cannot be trusted. In each case, the digression is his own. He makes one warning only in passing, simply observing that, since the common people frequently change their opinions, whoever trusts in them will find them "ful unstable" (I.3506-3512). Later (IV.4951-4995), his account of Priam's secret plans leads him to point out that such matters cannot be kept private, because people cannot hold their tongues (4951-4975). He repeats, then, his earlier view that the common people cannot be trusted because of their unstable natures (4987-4995).

Several times, he warns his reader of the dangers of covetousness (I.237-249, 356-357), but the digression in which he uses the death of Hector as an example is particularly effective as a good illustration of his customary method of extracting a moral from his story. In the midst of battle, Hector meets and kills a Greek king who is wearing a suit of richly-jewelled armor and carries him away "to spoillen hym of his riche array" (III.5332-5353). Here, Lydgate digresses upon the dangers of covetousness, which

Hath cause ben and rote of pe ruyne
Of many worpi--who-so liste take hede--
Like as 3e may now of Hector rede,
Dat sodeinly was broujt to his endynge
Only for spoilynge of pis riche kyng.

(5368-5372)

188 Ibid., pp. 112, 179.
Having prepared his readers and having warned them to "take hede," he relates the death of Hector, who having "cast his shelde at his bak be-hynde" for ease in removing the jewelled armor, and thus exposed, was stabbed by Achilles (5373-5399).

Lydgate also clearly reveals his moral-didactic purpose in his repeated comments upon the consequences and punishments of a variety of actions and crimes. Almost all of these remarks are his own interpolations unless they occur in a section which he has expanded from his source. For instance, he uses Medea's failure to foresee the unfortunate outcome of her flight to Greece with Jason (I.3599-3622) to illustrate his point that those who will not consider the consequences of their actions invariably will end in adversity (3623-3654). Thus, he amplifies his source in the passage containing his "lesson." ¹⁸⁹ The account of Achilles' death and the mistreatment of his body (IV.3184-3209) permits Lydgate to point out that treachery is always repaid by death, "as 3e may se of bis Achilles" (3210-3219), again, expanding a short passage from his source. ¹⁹⁰ In the same book, in the episode in which Priam conspires against the traitorous Aeneas and Antenor, he notes that "shameful deth" is the "final mede" for treason (4915-4917).

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 113.
¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 172.
His comments on Bishop Calchas (III.6023-6039), the traitor who conceived the idea of the Trojan horse, include a warning similar to that which he earlier expresses about the power of the writer.\footnote{Supra, p. 50.} According to Lydgate, "clerkis" have put Calchas into their books "to exemplifie no man be vntrewe" (6028), inasmuch as the record of such actions will make them widely known in later years (6029-6037). His remarks on treachery are his own additions to the narrative.\footnote{Bergen, op. cit., p. 183.}

Lydgate's interesting and amusing lesson on the consequences of an action occurs early in Book V. When Oileus Ajax nearly drown in a storm that wrecks the Greek navy (640-669), Lydgate explains that Minerva is punishing Ajax for his seizure of Cassandra at the altar of the goddess (670-673).\footnote{Lydgate relates the incident in IV.6512-6513.} However, in his following digression on the peril of offending holy places (674-689), Lydgate warns that it is God Who will punish those who commit sacrilege (678-679, 684-685).

The murder of Agamemnon (V.1119-1120) affords him several opportunities to introduce his own comments on the consequences of adultery and murder.\footnote{Bergen, op. cit., pp. 191-192, 194.} In his first digression, he laments the death, points out that adultery has led to
murder by conspiracy, and warns that God will punish the guilty (1126-1147). In his second interpolation, he reminds his reader that, as required by God, murder by conspiracy must be punished by death, and notes that God has given Orestes the "power, grace & my3t" to avenge the death of his father (1467-1487). After the executions of Clytemnestra (1642) and Aegisthus (1652), he restates his earlier warnings, now as conclusions: "Lo, how mordre hap his guerdon wonnel / Lo, how falsched his maister can awake!" (1654-1655). Furthermore, one is told that death is also a just punishment for adultery, as Lydgate remarks after Orestes kills the man who had ravished his wife (v.2808-2813).195

Lydgate obviously wished to instruct his readers with his numerous comments on women, the common people, covetousness, and the consequences of various actions.196 However, the same statement could be made of the many other lessons which Lydgate introduces only once; again, most of them are his own additions. These minor lessons are too great in number to be considered in detail, but should, at least, be considered in passing. For example, Jason's betrayal of Medea leads

195 However, Lydgate elsewhere advises (II.5814-5819) that men should pay no great attention to their wives' adultery.

196 In two other cases (I.4372-4381, II.2812-2839), Lydgate points out the consequences of actions, but does not make a general statement or issue a warning which might apply to his readers.
Lydgate to remark that women might learn from this example how little men can be trusted (I.2918-2919). In his discussion of the recreations available in New Troy, he digresses upon the troubles caused by gambling (II.824-841). His discussion of Bacchus and the evils of drink (I.5736-5785) is, largely, his own interpolation. A long speech (II.6517-6719) which contains cautions against pride and presumption has been "greatly extended" by Lydgate. After a lengthy catalog of the Trojan forces (II.7621-7848), he asks his readers to "taketh . . . good hede" that "almost for nou3t was pis strif be-gonne" (7855), and that the only reward won by those who participated was death (7856-7863). When Cassandra is bound and confined because of her lament for the impending destruction of Troy (III.2289-2296), he digresses to comment that wisdom and prophecy "availeth nat" if they find no favor (2297-2316). When the Greek forces disagree in a choice of leaders, he reflects on the dangers of discord and envy (2342-2354). After the Greeks change leaders (IV.270-298), Lydgate points out that it illustrates that men delight in new things (299-309). Other "lessons" include a warning that the influence of Mars brings discord and disaster to a kingdom (IV.4440-4537) and a reminder that prudence is sometimes better

197 Bergen, op. cit., p. 140.
198 Ibid., p. 145.
than speaking out, even when one speaks truth (IV.5452-5476).
Also, Lydgate remarks on the power of gold and the love of
money (IV.5812-5820), attacks priests and their natural
covetousness (IV.5833-5899), and points out the dangers of
the old pagan faith (IV.6992-7031).

Lydgate's moral-didactic purpose in the Troy Book
should be evident from his minor morals and lessons alone.
However, one must remember that Lydgate views his entire work
as an illustration of his main point: that Fortune was totally
capricious and, thus, that all worldly things were transitory.
Throughout the Troy Book, Lydgate emphasizes this moral by
simple restatement, by ascribing the responsibility for the
war to Fortune's influence, and by "interpreting" incidents,
using characters and their individual fates to illustrate his
lesson.

Lydgate first remarks on Fortune's power early in Book
I, when Jason's forces, in their quest for the Golden Fleece,
land at a port near Troy (728-732). Lydgate points out that
the Greeks meant no harm to the Trojans, but only wished to
pause for a time during their journey (733-740); however, "be
ordre of Fortunys my3t" makes the Trojans believe that the
Greeks come as aggressors (750-758). The ultimate effect of
this misunderstanding is the subsequent war, as Lydgate explains:
". . . pe cause of pis suspicioun / Hath many brou3t vn-to
destruccioun" (759-760). After a brief description, he repeats
that Fortune caused the war to "schewen her myȝt and her
cruelte, / In vengaunce takynge vp-on pis cite" (776-778).
Clearly, he is convinced that the entire conflict resulted
only from Fortune's caprices. Also, his following warning
that small quarrels grow into large ones--"pouȝ pe gynnyng be
but casuyel, / De fret abydyng is passynge[ly] cruel" (801-802)--
foreshadows events which are soon to follow, for Lamedon,
King of Old Troy, prenptori1y orders the Greeks to leave his
land (977-1014). Jason replies to the king's messenger (1029-
1089) and points out that the Greeks intended no harm to the
Troyans (1038-1043) and warns that Lamedon's ill-treatment of
his guests will "on hym silfe rebounde" (1080), as it later
does. After the Quest is completed, Jason plans an expedi-
tion to punish Lamedon for his actions (I.3752-3906). With
no additional remarks on Fortune, Lydgate relates the destruc-
tion of Old Troy and the death of Lamedon in the remainder of
Book I (3907-4436).

He discusses Fortune and interprets the events he has
previously narrated in a long introduction to his second book
(1-202). Here, he explains that, because she is "blinde, fikel,
and vnstable" (5), Fortune gives men no peace in their daily
lives; she brings a man to destruction when he is at the
height of his powers and least expects it (7-11). Therefore,
he warns that no man may trust her, since she appears most
trustworthy when she is least so; she is totally capricious,
bringing honor to some and destruction to others according to her whim (12-68). He adds that Fortune will "ouercaste" whoever trusts her, regardless of his estate (69-72). Finally, he "interprets" the events he has earlier related:

Sethe here example of kyng Lamedoun,  
Whom sche hap brouȝt to confusioun  
For litel cause, and for a ping of nouȝt;  
Hir cruelte he hap to dere a-bouȝt.  
Wherfore, I rede, euery man take hede  
To gynne a quarel where as is no nede.  

(73-78)

After restating his earlier point that small quarrels grow into large ones (79-82), he directly addresses his reader:

Derfor, je kynges and lordis euerychon,  
Make jow a merour of pis Lamedoun,  
And bep wel war to do no violence  
Vn-to straungers, whan þei do noon offence,  
Whan þei com fer in-to þoure regioun.  

(83-87)

Lydgate, next, reminds the reader that, while he may be secure in his place at present, his fortunes may change for the worse; then, he repeats his recommendation that strangers be treated with kindness and points out that the Trojans' offensive treatment of the Greeks ultimately caused the destruction of Old Troy and the subsequent war (91-118). He concludes by reiterating that the entire conflict and the deaths of those who participated "... wer meved first of smal occasioun" (119-142). The sequence of the argument and the transferred emphasis in the latter digression nearly obscure Lydgate's original point. He first uses Lamdeon's fate as an example of Fortune's caprices, maintaining that the king and his city are
destroyed only because of his minor error of misunderstanding the intentions of his visitors. However, still using his example of Lamedon, Lydgate advises his reader of the importance of giving strangers good treatment and emphasizes that the small quarrel over Lamedon's ill-treatment of his guests initiated the entire Trojan conflict. Earlier, though (1733-1804), he attributed the original misunderstanding to Fortune (750-760). Thus, in Lydgate's argument, Fortune is responsible for Lamedon's fate, the destruction of Old Troy, and, ultimately, the entire Trojan war. One should note, too, that the argument is Lydgate's, for nearly all of the comments upon Fortune are his own addition to the text. 199

When Priam decides to undertake a naval war against the Greeks (II.1786-1790), Lydgate sees an opportunity to amplify his source and reinforce the moral of his work. 200 For example, after rebuking Priam for lacking reason and prudence in his decision (1797-1856), Lydgate repeats his earlier warnings that Fortune is totally capricious and will betray those who trust her:

As je may se be example of Priamus,
Dat of foly is so desyrous
To wirke of hede & folwe his oune wille,
To trouble, allas, pe calm of his tranquille.  
(1879-1882)

199 Ibid., pp. 100, 116.
200 Ibid., p. 125.
Pointing out that Priam's fate, in addition, should be taken as an example of the foolishness of beginning a war, he again exhorts his reader to "late Priam alwey Jour meror ben" and returns to his narrative (1883-1902).

Lydgate also remarks upon Fortune's responsibility for the war after the failure of several attempts to dissuade Priam from his enterprise (II.2183-2304, 2908-2984, 3161-3211, 3267-3279). In his digression, here, he laments that Fortune has "turned hir whele vnstable" and enticed the Trojans into a conflict which will only destroy them (3280-3291). He explains that wise and prudent counsel was useless, for "Fortune wil haue hir cours alwey, / Whos purpos holt, who seyth 3e or nay" (3295-3308).

After narrating the Trojan expedition that plunders the Temple of Venus and removes Helen to Troy (II.3819-3889) and the Trojans' celebration of their success (4097-4189), Lydgate evidently feels it necessary to remind his readers that this success was only temporary. In a short digression (4255-4269), he remarks that Fortune has only "falsly gan to smyle" upon the Trojans, and that, while she favors them at present, her stability is only temporary. He observes that the Trojans "litel wist" the fate which Fortune will ultimately bring to them. Of course, since Lydgate reminds his reader of the outcome of the war at a time when the Trojans are enjoying success, the digression is a restatement of his moral.
which he certainly intended; and, once more, these comments upon Fortune are his own addition to the narrative. 201

While Lydgate holds Fortune responsible for the entire conflict and the ultimate Trojan defeat, he also claims that she determines the outcome of specific events within the narrative. For instance, when the Trojans drive the Greeks from the field of battle, only to spoil them and return to Troy (III.1949-1958), he states that Fortune prevented the victory of the Trojan forces, arguing that they would have defeated the Greeks had Fortune not turned her wheel and blinded them, especially Hector, to the consequences of their withdrawal (1959-1996). Moreover, he complains of the Trojans' "lack of resoun and of hise prudence" in not pressing their advantage while Fortune favored them (1997-2009) and notes that she will desert those who once refuse her favors (2010-2026). He concludes his digression by repeating that the Trojans could have won, had they not "reffusid folly" to press their advantage (2027-2035). Following his digression by explaining that Hector, "enclyned / . . . of hasty wilfulness," withdrew the Trojan forces at the request of his Greek cousin (2125-2134), his preceding comments on Fortune's responsibility seem somewhat contrived; however, his desire to reëmphasize his moral becomes more obvious.

201 Ibid., p. 131.
When Achilles agrees to a scheme for killing Hector (III.2716-2718), Lydgate passingly remarks upon the dangers of trusting Fortune, noting that Achilles must now beware that Fortune does not "loke on hym with a froward chere" and cause him "... to falle hym silfe in be same dyche / Fat he for Hector compassid hap & shape" (2719-2729).

Lydgate twice refers to the story of Troilus and Cressid to illustrate his moral: in the first instance, he uses Troilus' sorrow over his separation from Cressid as a direct example of Fortune's mutability:

Alas! Fortune, gery and vnstable
And redy ay [for] to be chaungable:
Whan folk most triste in pi stormy face,
Liche her desire be fully to embrace:
Danne is pi Ioye aweye to turne & wrype,
Vp-on wrecchis pi power for to kibe--
Reoord on Troylus, pat fro pi whole so lowe
By fals envie pou hast ouer-browe,
Oute of pi Ioye which [pat] he was Inne,
From his lady to make him for to twynne
Whan he best wende for to haue be surid.

(4077-4087)

In this case, Lydgate's "interpretation" of his source material becomes especially obvious when one notes that this entire section is his own interpolation. He also holds Fortune directly responsible for the lovers' separation in his second use of the story (III.4186-4233). Referring, here, to Chaucer's account of the earlier stages of the affair, he argues that all went well with Troilus

Till Fortune gan vp-on hym frowne,
Dat she from hym mvst goon oute of towne
Al sodeynly, and neuer hym after se.
Lo! here be fyn of false felicite,
Lo! here be ende of worldly brotilnes,
Of fleshly lust, lo! here thunstabilnes,
Lo! here be double variacioun
Of wor[1]dly blisse and transmvtacioun:
Dis day in myrthe & in wo to-morwe!
For al be fyn, allas! of Ioie is sorwe.
(4221-4230)

One need hardly call attention to the fact that Lydgate not
only illustrates his lesson of Fortune's mutability, but also
draws from this incident his own conclusion about the transi­
toriness of all worldly things. As in his first application
of the Troilus-Cressid story, Lydgate's comments on Fortune
are, again, his own addition to the narrative. 203

He uses the death of Ajax in a minor illustration of
his lesson. 204 When Ajax is fighting at his best in the midst
of battle (IV.3486-3501), Lydgate digresses, remarking upon
the impossibility of escaping Fortune's decrees (3502-3505),
and repeats that she can

. . . bring a man vnwarly to meschaunce
When he best weneth to han assurance . . .
Lik as it fel of worpi Thelamoun
Dis same day. . . .
(3507-3511)

In one case, he illustrates his lesson of the transitoriness
of all worldly things without deducing from Fortune's

203 loc. cit.

204 Lydgate also comments upon Fortune in passing in II.
2416-2417, IV.2683-2686, and IV.4274-4276.
mutability. Describing the celebration in Troy as the horse is brought into the city (IV.6215-6221), he points out that woe and adversity always follow joy and that one is foolish to place his trust in present happiness (6222-6231):

> For worldly lust, pou3 it be now blowe
> With pompe and pride, & with bost and soun,
> Anon it passeth: record of Troie toun.

(6232-6234)

In two minor examples, Lydgate uses the complete triumph of the Greeks to restate his point that Fortune can easily turn against those who stand at the height of their powers. His interpolation 205 in which he comments upon Fortune's caprices and emphasizes the security of the Greeks in their victory (V.16-40) is immediately followed by an account of the envy caused among them by Ulysses' possession of a trophy from Troy (45-81). At one point in their journey home, the Greeks enjoy three days of perfect sailing weather (V.624-629) before a sudden storm wrecks the fleet (640-656); immediately preceding the account of this story, Lydgate comments upon Fortune's ability to change when least expected, in lines which are his own addition to the text (630-640). 206

Agamemnon's death is Lydgate's final illustration of his moral. In a long interpolation (V.1011-1072) 207 preceding

206 Ibid., p. 190.
207 Ibid., p. 191.
the account of Agamemnon's murder (1119-1120), he laments the "vnsur trust of al worldly glorie" and the "Ioie vnstable of veyn ambicioun" (1011-1013), emphasizing that fame, pomp, the honors of triumph—all are as transitory as shadows (1015-1018). He observes that Fortune, "fals and vnassured," is faithful to no one, because she will bring down a man when he sits highest on the "vnstable whele" (1019-1029). He points out, then, that she 'spares none in her mutability, but pulls down princes, dukes, great emperors, all those who "richest regne in her royal floures":

I take witnesse of Agamenoun,
Dat was so noble & my3ti in his lyve,
As sondry auctors his hije renoun discribe;
But sothfastly, for his excellence,
He my3t[\e] nat make no diffence, . . .
Beskus was noon pat he koude make! (1030-1043)

Lydgate, then, offers a variety of instruction in the Troy Book. The entire story, he claims, is an example of Fortune's mutability and the transitoriness of all worldly things; to illustrate his moral, Lydgate repeatedly interprets incidents as specific examples of his lesson. In addition, he draws a number of other morals from the incidents of his narrative and offers practical advice as well as an occasional warning to his readers. Even if one disregards Lydgate's own statements that his work is intended to instruct, his numerous and obvious efforts to point out the lessons of his story are sufficient evidence of his didactic purpose. In short,
Lydgate is not primarily concerned with his narrative; it is, so to speak, a vehicle which allows him to instruct and supplies him with a stock of "historical" examples with which to illustrate his lessons.

Several aspects of the *Troy Book* reveal its relation to the tradition which preceded it. When pagan literature was first interpreted and allegorized for purposes of reconciliation, the supernatural elements which were unacceptable to the beliefs of more sophisticated readers were either removed or "explained." The general absence of such elements from the *Troy Book* clearly illustrates the influence of the earlier practices. Lydgate's own skeptical and rational view of several other "fables" in his narrative is similar to the attitudes which first necessitated the rationalization and removal of supernatural elements. Of course, Lydgate's utilization of his material is not an innovation, since the classical stories had been used in education since antiquity. However, the widespread application of allegorical interpretation (given impetus by Biblical exegesis) in the later Middle Ages led to the belief that the classical stories concealed moral and philosophic truths under a veil of fiction. Subsequently, pagan literature was interpreted and turned to the ends of Christian education in the Church schools. Thus, Lydgate's direction of his story to didactic purposes places him in the center of the medieval tradition of utilizing "history" for moral instruction.
Obviously, then, Lydgate's work cannot be read simply as another medieval redaction and retelling of the familiar story of Troy. One must, first, take note of the early influence of allegorical interpretation and its application to pagan literature for purposes of reconciliation. Second, he must consider the domination of the Church in the Middle Ages and its effect upon the ends to which secular and classical literature were directed. Third, he must be aware of the widespread medieval belief in the didactic possibilities of secular and pagan literature. Finally, one must grant Lydgate his moral purpose and accept the Troy Book as an example of the medieval utilization of "history" for instruction; otherwise, of course, he will completely misunderstand the work. For instance, if one views the Troy Book as a narrative, it becomes a verbose, dry, and largely boring work filled with digressions which do little or nothing to advance the story. The correct view of the Troy Book does nothing to reduce the number of words, but it does add to one's understanding of the author, his work, and its place in the tradition of utilizing "history" for the purpose of moral instruction. Certainly, in light of Lydgate's didactic purpose in the Troy Book, other of his works could be reexamined with profit.
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