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HENRY RAMSDEN BRAMLEY: HIS LIFE AND EDITION OF RICHARD ROLLE'S *ENGLISH PSALTER*

INTRODUCTION

Richard Rolle's *English Psalter*, a verse-by-verse Middle English translation and commentary on the Psalms and Canticles, was arguably the most influential medieval vernacular psalter.[1] Rolle, a Yorkshire hermit, would have completed the work sometime before 1349, when it is thought he died from the plague.[2] During the later Middle Ages, the text circulated very widely and confirmed its author's reputation as an accomplished biblical scholar. Twenty-five manuscripts of Rolle's original version survive, only four of these extracts or fragments, in all the Middle English dialects. There are an additional 19 manuscripts that record three revised versions of the original, made during the early fifteenth century by anonymous revisers associated with the Wycliffite movement (Hanna, 2010, p. 230). Anne Hudson has edited the two most important revised versions (Hudson, 2012–2014).[3] As yet, however, no modern critical edition of Rolle's original text has appeared. So, except for those willing and able to examine all 25 manuscript copies directly, scholars who wish to study Rolle's original must use an edition of it published in 1884 by the Anglican priest and Oxford academic Henry Ramsden Bramley (Bramley,

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[1] I use *English Psalter* throughout as a short and convenient editorial title for Rolle's work, to distinguish this text from his Latin Psalter with commentary.

[2] The account of Rolle's biography in this essay derives from Kuczynski (2017). For two book-length biographical and critical accounts of Rolle and his work, see Allen (1927) and Watson (1991). Allen's work on Rolle's English writings has now been superseded by Hanna (2010).

[3] On some fragments of one of the revisions not included by Hudson, see Kuczynski (2016).

1884). Despite the importance of Bramley's edition, the nature of his interest in Rolle as well as his editorial aims and methods have gone uninvestigated. In this essay, I discuss Bramley's editing of the *English Psalter* in the context of his life as a pastor, university administrator, and scholar. While his edition has obvious limitations when evaluated according to modern standards of textual criticism, it is nevertheless still remarkably reliable. It exhibits Bramley's ability to wrangle the complex codicological history of Rolle's text, insofar as he knew it from about half of the surviving manuscript corpus, to clarify that text for modern readers, and in the process to rescue from obscurity Rolle's reputation as a religious personality and biblical exegete. On several different levels, H. R. Bramley proved to be an eminent Victorian editor of Rolle's *English Psalter.*

1. ROLLE AND BRAMLEY: A NECESSARY CONJUNCTION

Most of what we know about Richard Rolle derives from his voluminous Latin and Middle English writings and efforts by his medieval disciples to promote his canonization, an enterprise that failed. To this end, however, they drew up an *officium* or spiritual résumé of his life and miracles interspersed with prayers and hymns. Rolle himself wrote a candid Latin autobiography entitled *Incendium Amoris* (The Fire of Love), in which he discusses the nature of his violent conversion and his commitment to the contemplative life. In 1435, Richard Misyn, a Carmelite, translated the *Incendium* and *De Emendatione Vitae*, one of Rolle's best-known Latin works, into Middle English (Harvey, 1896). After Rolle's death, the location of his final hermitage, the village of Hampole in the West Riding of Yorkshire, became a popular site of pilgrimage.

Rolle's family lived at Thornton-le-Dale near the town of Pickering, close to the North York moors. Bramley's (1884) reference to him at the end of the introduction to his edition as "one of the Worthies of Yorkshire" makes clear that some of his interest in Rolle and his work was due to their shared local roots (xvii). In a woodcut portrait on the title page of the 1506 edition of *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God,* a text that the London printer Wynkyn de Worde erroneously attributed to Rolle, he has in one hand a set of prayer beads and in the other a pikestaff, for traversing rough ground (Figure 1) (De Worde, 1506; STC 21259). Quite coincidentally, one assumes, the young H. R. Bramley, with a shovel beard and wearing ecclesiastical garb, bears some resemblance to this fanciful portrait of the hermit (Figure 2).[4] Despite Rolle's rustic surroundings in the portrait, his patrons were well-to-do and he sometimes drew criticism for establishing his cell in their households. Presumably, this circumstance gave him access to libraries, including

[4] Bramley knew and examined at some point de Worde's edition (see Bramley, 1884, pp. x–xi).

such texts as the widely used *catena* on the Psalms assembled in the twelfth century by Peter Lombard (*Patrologia Latina*, 191, 35–1296), the primary source for the *English Psalter.*

As a young man, Rolle studied at Oxford—another important connection with Bramley. This opportunity was made possible by the patronage of Thomas de Neville, archdeacon of Durham. At the age of 19, dissatisfied with secular learning and anxious about the state of his soul, Rolle left university and returned to his father's house. There he underwent a violent spiritual awakening, fashioning two of his sister's skirts and his father's rain hood into a makeshift religious habit and escaping to the woods. In his writings, Rolle cites Old Testament verses from Job, the Psalms, and Jeremiah, as well as the New Testament example of John the Baptist, in support of his view that the contemplative life of solitude is superior to active life in the world. He also maintains that visionary experience, subjective as it is and thus unimpugnable, forms the very basis of the Church: without it, religion would not exist, let alone thrive.

Bramley was a Tractarian and shared the movement's taste for ecclesial order, pomp, and circumstance. Nevertheless, he found himself attracted to Rolle's view of the relationship between mysticism and organized religion. Despite a growing infatuation with Roman Catholicism in nineteenth-century Oxford, Rolle's argument concerning the inner wellspring of religion was making inroads among intellectuals because of a new interest in the psychology of religion. In Bramley's lifetime, this interest was crystallized by the American pragmatist philosopher William James, in his Gifford Lectures on *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* published in 1902. James took the spiritual autobiographies of mystics seriously from a scientific point of view and concluded, based on a comparative analysis of them, that "Personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical states of consciousness" (James, 1902, p. 286). In his work on Rolle, Bramley anticipated this conclusion. In the *English Psalter* edition, he resists the urge to dismiss Rolle's eremitic idiosyncrasies as odd. As a result, despite the often outlandish facts of the hermit's biography, which Bramley reports, Rolle emerges as not very eccentric at all. Instead, Bramley presents him by way of his introduction and text as a sound teacher of the faithful: rarely esoteric and never heterodox.

Bramley's view of Rolle was shaped in response to the embryonic portrait of him given by another Anglican cleric, George G. Perry, in his edition of some of Rolle's works for the Early English Text Society (Perry, 1886). Bramley cites Perry's work in the introduction to his *English Psalter* edition. Oxford-educated like Bramley, Perry's claim to fame was his discovery of the Thornton Manuscript, Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91, a fifteenth-century miscellany containing, in its third booklet, numerous texts by Rolle (Hanna, 2010, pp. 68–72). In his own introduction, Perry lays out the difficulties of assembling biographical information about the hermit, whom most scholars to that point had mistakenly identified as an Augustinian canon. Perry describes Rolle as "an

enigma and a puzzle," someone who was compelling but "irregular" in his religion. He characterizes Rolle's works in the Thornton manuscript as exhibiting a "devout ardour" and, at times, the "wildest extravagances of mysticism." He also encourages a frankly psychological approach to Rolle, asking if we "Can discover any personality for the author of these numerous works?" (Perry, 1866, pp. x–xii). Such an effort to understand Rolle's mind must be grounded, according to Perry, in the recovery of additional copies of his writings. Twice in his edition, the second time on behalf of the Early English Text Society, Perry calls for a search for more manuscripts, so that a "perfect list" of Rolle's English writings, with incipits and explicits, can be established (Perry, 1866, pp. viii and xxxiii). Perry's correspondence with Bodley's then librarian, H. O. Coxe, dating from 1864, two years before publication of his edition of the Thornton manuscript, concerns his own effort to trace additional copies of Rolle's English works (Bodleian Library Records, 1864, fols. 81–84).

Bramley answered Perry's call for more research and interpretation with forthrightness, promoting in the end a more temperate view of Rolle than Perry's. Regarding his focus on the *English Psalter*, Bramley surely was stimulated by Perry's reference to its importance in the first volume of his *History of the English Church*, a popular textbook during Bramley's student days at Oxford (Perry, 1860, p. 441). Bramley noticed, for example, that Rolle's manner of living was profoundly influenced by the Psalter. In chapel one day, the hermit sat in the place reserved for the wife of the man who would become his first patron in religion, the esquire John Dalton. Then, on his own impulse, he donned a surplice, sang psalms and hymns with the clerics, and at the invitation of the priest, entered the pulpit to deliver an impromptu sermon that, Rolle himself reports, moved the congregation to tears. Unlike Perry, Bramley always delivers his account of Rolle's provocative behaviors in a neutral tone intended to disable both praise and blame: "His devotion seems to have been spontaneous, and his rule of life unsanctioned by external authority" (Bramley, 1884, pp. vi–vii). When he does qualify his accounts of Rolle's enthusiasm, he does so deliberately but never sharply. For example, of Rolle's report that a woman who tempted him at night was none other than the Devil in disguise, Bramley remarks: "nothing in the story … may not be explained from ordinary causes" (Bramley, 1884, p. vii). He also emphasizes Rolle's moderation. So that Rolle's anticlerical comments in the *English Psalter* will not be misconstrued as heresy, Bramley presents them as sane and balanced: "it is said of priests that many fail and few are holy, yet is it also asserted that 'oft sithe [many a time] prestis opyns til other men the 3ate [gate] of heuen'," by way of the sacraments and sound moral instruction (Bramley, 1884, p. xii).

On the orthodoxy of Rolle's commentary itself, a vexed issue that Perry had raised in his edition (Perry, 1866, pp. vii and xiv), Bramley is evenhanded—toward both Rolle and his Wycliffite revisers: "he is free from the abnormal doctrines and political extravagances

which vitiated the teaching of the Lollards," assembling in his commentary a text that appeals to "persons of very different ways of thinking" (Bramley, 1884, p. xi). Some of these persons Bramley specifies variously: certain eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dominican scholars and, most notably, Adam Clarke, the famous Methodist theologian who used the *English Psalter* in writing his popular early nineteenth-century commentary on the entire Bible (Clarke, 1810–1826). Clarke knew Rolle's text from an especially authoritative source that he once owned: a very early Northern manuscript now known as the Rosebery Rolle, copied around 1380.[5] Unfortunately, Bramley's knowledge of the surviving manuscript corpus of the *English Psalter* did not extend to this copy.

2. BRAMLEY'S BIOGRAPHY

Henry Ramsden Bramley was born on 4 June 1833 at Addingham, to a prominent Yorkshire family; he died at Lincoln on 28 January 1917, following long service to Oxford University and the Anglican Church. Unlike Rolle, Bramley flourished at Oxford and became a fixture there—an Oxford "character." He first matriculated at Oriel College; transferred on his own initiative, after a year, to University College, where he took both his BA and MA; and then was admitted to a fellowship at Magdalen College, where he became tutor for all but three years between 1858 and 1883.[6] During this time, the winds of change were blowing through the university. According to his obituary in the London *Times,* however, Bramley was "a link with old Oxford," when religious tests were mandatory (non-Anglicans were prohibited from holding fellowships until 1871) and dons had to be celibate (fellows could not marry until 1877). A lifelong bachelor, Bramley once asserted, in his stubborn Yorkshire way, that he was in favour of progress, "but progress backward" ("Rev. H. R. Bramley," 1917, January 30).[7] Like many Victorian medievalists, he preferred living in the past. In 1884, the year in which he published his *English Psalter* edition, Bramley served as vice-president of Magdalen. The next year, possibly on the strength of the edition, he became Dean of Divinity for the college and then Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Lincoln, in which capacity he was expected to scrutinize candidates for ordination.

One of Bramley's most significant posts at Magdalen was as Senior Dean of Arts between 1871 and 1882, in which role he disciplined, among other students, a wayward

[5] The manuscript is now in the collection of the Museum of the Bible, Washington, DC.

[6] For a summary of Bramley's Oxford appointments and a list of his publications, see Macray (1909, pp. 163–165).

[7] On this backward-glancing mentality, see Bramley (1864). Among his other scholarly habits, Bramley was a fervent controversialist.

undergraduate named Oscar Wilde. In a letter of 1875 written from the Hotel St. George in Corfu, Wilde had explained to Bramley that he would, regrettably, have to miss the first 10 days of Michaelmas term because he has followed his old Irish tutor, Mr. Mahaffy, from Italy to Greece, Mahaffy being "such a clever man that it is quite as good as going to lectures to be in his society" (Holland & Hart-Davis, 2000, p. 45).[8] Attempting to appeal to Bramley's high church sensibilities, Wilde describes some of the "magnificent mosaics" of Madonnas that he has already seen, adding however that he has also learned, from reading a book that Bramley lent him, how "the Roman Catholics do certainly seem to confuse together Catholic doctrines which we may all hold and the supremacy of the Pope which we need not hold." On Wilde's tardy return to Oxford, Bramley had him fined £47 and "rusticated" or sent down for a time. Ultimately, Wilde graduated in 1878 with a double-first (Stratford, 1995, pp. 17–19). It is tempting to imagine that the final line of Wilde's very beautiful lyric, "Magdalen Walks," is a backhanded tribute to Bramley's fabled supervisory acuity in college: "The kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air!" (Fong & Beckson, 2019, p. 55).

Bramley was so influential at Magdalen that many expected him to succeed his close friend, the college president Frederick Bulley, when he died in 1885. At this point, with the Rolle edition out and enjoying good health at age 52, Bramley's star was in the ascendent. Others, however, dismissed him as a figure of fun. In a caricature published around 1881, Bramley appears across from Magdalen Tower (it seems to be on fire) digging in St. Clement's churchyard, a twelfth-century cemetery that once occupied the site of the current traffic roundabout at Magdalen Bridge (Figure 3) (Shrimpton, 1868–1901, fol. 770).[9] Juxtaposed to Bramley's ghoulish behavior and countenance, which mirrors that of the two skulls in the lower righthand corner of the drawing, is a short parody of a Christmas carol. This is a direct hit at Bramley's most successful publication—not the *English Psalter* edition, but *Christmas Carols, New and Old*, first published in 1867 and reissued in many expanded editions into the early twentieth century (Bramley & Stainer, 1867). Bramley collaborated on the book with Magdalen's organist and choirmaster, John Stainer, Bramley being responsible for the texts of the carols, some of these edited and translated from medieval manuscript originals, and Stainer for the music.

The cartoon's carol, with its concluding allusion to Ezekiel 37:3, suggests something morbidly Gothic in Bramley and his medievalism:

[8] Wilde's traveling companion was John Pentland Mahaffy, a classical scholar at Trinity College, Dublin and his former tutor. I am grateful to my colleague Veronica O'Mara for identifying him.

[9] The volume also contains a caricature dated ca.1879 of Bramley riding to hounds, his top hat blown off (Shrimpton, 1868–1901, fol. 608).

An Ancient Carolle.
Now carol forth your joyous lays
Ye happy souls each Xmas day
And ask as ye your greetings give
If ever these dry bones shall live?

The great Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt also caricatured Bramley, albeit in more plush aesthetic circumstances. He depicts him in his 1890 painting "May Morning on Magdalen Tower, Oxford," singing with the choir, while squeezed between a mustachioed Stainer and John Bloxam, the Magdalen historian who had revived the college tradition of proclaiming the *Hymnus Eucharisticus* from Magdalen tower at sunrise on the first of May. Of posing for his likeness, Bramley complained, "I had to stand for hours on a plank, with my mouth wide open!" (Bronkhurst, 2006, pp. 265–69).

Bramley was fervently religious. He was ordained deacon of the Church of England in 1856 and priest in 1858. From the late fifteenth century and into the 1950s, Magdalen had appointed the vicar of St. Giles's Church in Horspath, a village three miles from Oxford. Bramley served there regularly between 1861 and 1869 and occasionally for many years thereafter: although it was a lifetime appointment with no expectation of prolonged service, his signature appears in the parish registers through 1888. He was also a generous benefactor of the church, giving it a stained glass window, a chancel screen, and a treble bell bearing his name and the rhyming inscription "Deus Laudo, Dignis Plaudo," an apt slogan for an editor of the Psalms.[10] In 1885, his formal duties at Oxford ended, Bramley served as Canon and Precentor of Lincoln Cathedral through 1905. Thereafter he lived for the remainder of his life with his widowed sister, Anne, at Nettleham Hall, a venerable pile just north of Lincoln that was destroyed by fire in 1935. The siblings were frugal, so that on his death Bramley was worth approximately £33,513 10s. 2d., in excess of £2,000,000 today (National Archives, London, 1917, p. 315).

Theological writing was a vital part of Bramley's identity as a pastor, as it was of course for Richard Rolle. Some of his publications are indirectly relevant to his work on the *English Psalter*, because they display disciplined linguistic analysis of early texts and sympathy with Rolle's aims as a masterful translator of Scripture and biblical commentary and a strikingly original author of works of religious instruction. Bramley's first major publication appeared in 1874, the year he also began to contemplate editing Rolle. It is a close translation of Gregory the Great's sixth-century manual for bishops, known commonly as *The Pastoral Care* (Bramley, 1874). Bramley gives the Latin on facing pages with his translation. In his preface, he explains how, by assigning his book the unexpected title *The Pastoral* ***Charge*** (my emphasis), he defers to Pope Gregory himself, who actually

[10] On his pastoral theology, see Bramley (1886).

entitled his volume *Liber Regulae Pastoralis*—a book of rules for pastors—not *De Cura Pastorali* (Bramley, 1874, p. viii). Bramley's fastidiousness about the Latin permeates his translation, distinguishing it from King Alfred's famous version, which Bramley discusses as a "paraphrase" (Bramley, 1874, pp. i–ii). It likewise foreshadows his scrupulousness with the Latin in the *English Psalter* edition, Rolle's own aim having been to enable "thai that knawes noght latyn by the ynglis [to] com til mony latyn wordis" (Bramley, 1884, p. 4).[11]

During his career in Oxford, Bramley delivered many sermons and saw several of them into print. One is of special note in connection with the *English Psalter* edition. In 1867, on St. John the Baptist's feast day, he preached in Magdalen Chapel on the theme of "Religious Retirement" or solitude. The burden of his sermon is that the Baptist's life in the desert was not an eccentric pursuit at all, but a necessary prelude to his evangelism: "It was by the stern discipline of solitude," Bramley (1867) says,

> that he was strengthened for his work of preparing the way of the Lord. Far from the din of men, with no companions but the wild beasts, clothed in raiment of camel's hair, with a girdle of leather about his loins, fed upon locusts and wild honey, a hermit of the wilderness, his spirit was hardened to brave the scorn of men, to preach without wavering the coming Judgment, to denounce sin in high places without flinching, and to lay down his life rather than retract. (p. 5)

Not only was the Baptist's life *not* eccentric, according to Bramley, it is a model for everyone, since "Such intervals of retirement are most necessary for all who would wax strong in spirit":

> In the routine of business, or the whirl of pleasure, or the unbroken succession of trifling but continual occupations, the attention is engaged, the energies exhausted, the mind pre-occupied. The effort necessary to concentrate the thoughts on invisible realities is never made, or, if made, is so soon relaxed as to produce but little practical effect. (Bramley, 1867, pp. 7, 9–10)

In passages such as these, Bramley echoes Rolle's thoughts on the superiority of the contemplative over the active life—but also the hermit's belief that contemplation, as engaged by way of devout reading of the Psalms, can support actives as well in their daily spiritual struggles.[12]

Bramley also published works of religious devotion and polemic that reflect his engagement with Rolle's writings. In 1880, for example, he brought out semi-anonymously (using only his initials: H. R. B.), *Meditations and Prayers upon the Seven Words of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the Cross* (B[ramley], 1880). This Lenten booklet was printed privately

[11] Rolle's scrupulosity about the Latin, in turn, led to his extreme care with his Middle English translation. See Lis (2015) who analyzes Rolle's mixing of native and non-native English vocabulary to achieve accuracy.

[12] There is also a parallel with Perry's view of Rolle here (Perry, 1866, p. xi).

by a group called the Sisterhood of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, an Oxford-based Anglo-Catholic sodality for whom Bramley served as spiritual director (Williams, 1947).[13] Aside from the coincidental parallel between Bramley's supervision of the sodality and Rolle's spiritual direction of a group of nuns including Margaret Kirkeby, for whom he composed the *English Psalter*, the *Meditations* are significant for their heavy reliance on the Psalms and their ecumenical character. In the introduction to his *English Psalter* edition, Bramley praises the Christological emphasis of Rolle's exegesis: "In his comments … he sees Christ throughout" (Bramley, 1884, p. xii). It is unclear whether Bramley knows that much of this emphasis derives from Peter Lombard, since he fails to trace Rolle's extrabiblical sources in the edition. Bramley did know, however, that reading the Psalms as typological prophecies of Christ was standard medieval practice. Some of Bramley's meditations on the Psalms echo Rolle's commentaries and interweave his insights concerning the Psalms of the Passion with those of a Jesuit, Alonso Messia Bedoya, who published his own *Devotions of the Three Hours of the Agony of Jesus Christ* in 1687, following a devastating earthquake in Peru (*Devotions*, 1850). The commingling of Rolleian and Jesuit influence is bold. In other words, like the *English Psalter,* Bramley's *Meditations* may be recommended to "persons of very different ways of thinking."

Among Bramley's polemical pieces, one stands out as relevant to his *English Psalter* project: a pamphlet that he published in 1879 concerning controversies over the Greek phrase *touto poeite*—"this do [in remembrance of me]"—in New Testament accounts of the Last Supper (e.g. at Luke 22:19) (Bramley, 1879). The particulars of Bramley's views concerning the Eucharist are less important here than what he describes to his Modernist opponents as a commonsense method for arguing about the meanings of words and phrases in ancient texts. His principle of interpreting New Testament Greek, Bramley explains, is as follows: "The same words in the same context, that is, either recurring in one and the same passage, or repeated in the same connection in several passages, are, as a rule, to be taken in the same sense" (Bramley, 1879, p. 6). This is exactly the principle that he applies in emending Rolle's text, when conflicting variants present themselves in different manuscripts, and in assembling the Glossarial Index to his edition, for which the formidable Middle English editor, Walter W. Skeat, wrote a long headnote on Northern dialect (Bramley, 1884, pp. 527–29). In the glossary entries, Bramley regularly gives Latin etymons from the Gallican Psalter and, where appropriate, Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, Old French, and Welsh ones. Also, he avoids giving a connotative range of contextual meanings, preferring instead to report only the basic denotative senses of words. He cites parallel uses of words in contemporaneous Middle English texts: Chaucer's works, presumably because

[13] See http://www.stsepulchres.org.uk/burials/hughes_marian.html on Bramley's role as spiritual director of the sodality.

of his unique authority as a Middle English writer; and the *Prick of Conscience*, presumably because Bramley, like others at the time, assigned its authorship to Richard Rolle. This plain, even involuted method of glossing trusts the language of the text to explain the text, abstracting lexical questions from more subtle theological concerns that might arise from the themes and ideas developed in this or that passage of Rolle's exegesis. The approach further allows Bramley to present Rolle to his readers as an uncontroversial figure—a writer whose works are of interest for linguistic and devotional rather than polemical reasons.

3. EDITING THE *ENGLISH PSALTER*

In the introduction to his edition, Bramley uses evidence internal to the *English Psalter*—for example, references to the disastrous reign of Edward II—to argue that Rolle completed his text between 1326 and 1327. He also identifies the primary source for Rolle's Latin as the Gallican text of the Psalms and Canticles, Jerome's second version, the basis for the Vulgate and the text of the Psalms and Canticles in the breviary.[14] As I have said, however, he does not trace Rolle's extrabiblical sources. Nor does he explain fully, as a modern editor would, the process whereby he established his base text for the edition (but cf. Bramley, 1884, pp. xvi–xvii).

This process was complex rather than simple. Bramley's initial choice of his base was made on the authority of Daniel Waterland, the eighteenth-century English theologian and master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, who examined the Cambridge manuscripts of Rolle's *English Psalter* when he was preparing his *Critical History of the Athanasian Creed* (Waterland, 1724, p. 39). The creed, according to its opening words, *Quicunque vult* ("Whosoever wishes"), was regularly grouped among the Canticles in medieval psalters and recited from the breviary at Prime as part of the Divine Office (Cross and Livingstone, 2005, p. 120). Rolle himself so groups it, and Waterland sought to distinguish the hermit's translation and commentary of *Quicunque vult* from any revisions made by the Wycliffites, whose ideas Waterland despised. He accurately evaluated Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College MS 89 (hereafter simply **S**) to be a copy of Rolle's original, "antique and very probably coeval with the Author," hence Bramley's initial choice of it as his base.[15]

[14] Rolle's Latin text also contains a few readings derived from other versions of the Psalms, collectively known to scholars as the *vetus Latina* or Old Latin Psalter. He might have encountered these in the Lombard, who reproduces and sometimes adjudicates them in passages that cite *Augustine's Enarrationes* in Psalmos.

[15] The shelfmark Bramley gives is the old one, Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College MS Δ.5.3. Bramley notes that Waterland's remarks on the front flyleaf are not in his hand (Bramley, 1884, p. xxi). For a complete account of the manuscript, see Hanna (2010, pp. 13–14).

The librarian at Sidney Sussex permitted Bramley to borrow the manuscript and, early in 1882, he began the labor of transcription. In May of that year, he sent a sample of his transcript to Oxford University Press by way of Bartholomew Price, Professor of Mathematics and then Secretary to the Delegates—"a little over twenty columns of the MS" as he describes it in a cover letter (five folios, recto and verso), of **S**. Bramley explains that his use of punctuation is eclectic, a feature of his transcript that would carry over into the published book: he uses a colon and *punctus elevatus* in imitation of the scribe's system, but mixes with this a modern use of commas and periods in order to clarify the sense. His letter suggests that while he felt the impulse to produce a diplomatic version of **S**, he resisted because such a practice "would greatly increase the difficulty of readers in understanding the treatise" (Oxford University Press Archives, 1882–1883, unfoliated). Bramley expands all abbreviations in his transcript, including the runic letter thorn (*þ*) to *th*. These expansions the printers give in italics. Bramley also numbers the psalm verses rather than lineating the text throughout, a practice likewise carried over by the printers.

The form of Rolle's original text is layered: for each verse of every psalm and selected canticles, he presents first Latin; next, a grammatically scrupulous Middle English translation of it; and finally a commentary, derived from Lombard. The published edition gives Latin in bold Roman typeface and the literal translation and commentary in non-bold Roman. It sets off the translation from Latin and the commentary from the translation by the use of pilcrows or paragraph markers, also in bold. These distinctions on the page duplicate a feature of the *mise en page* of most *English Psalter* manuscripts: a hierarchy of presentation whereby God's word, in Latin, appears in a more elegant or larger hand; man's translation in a less distinguished one, sometimes underlined for emphasis; and the human commentary or exegesis in the plainest form. This hierarchy is especially apparent in a trial proof sheet from the edition preserved in the archives of the Oxford University Press (Figure 4). Here, the verses of the Latin Vulgate appear in blackletter, as they might in an older, eighteenth-century edition of a medieval work. Additionally, the psalm verses are left entirely unnumbered, a feature that adds to the mystery of the sacred text.

Less conspicuous is the fact that the text given here in proof, from Psalm 36:2–5, agrees with **S** rather than with the edition as published: Bramley changed the base text for his edition within a year of publication, to Oxford, University College MS 64 (hereafter **U**). The reason for this nearly last minute decision he lays out in another letter to Price seeking the approval of the Delegates, dated 24 June 1883 (Oxford University Press Archives, 1882–1883, unfoliated). He explains that he has completed his transcript of **S**. In the meanwhile, however, he has learned about and examined **U**, and on his own initiative "submitted two specimens of each to Professor Skeat; and his opinion is decidedly in favor of the latter MS." He quotes a letter from Skeat of September 25, 1882, nine months prior

to his writing to the Delegates, that expresses a clear preference for **U** on the basis of dialect: "I should not hesitate a minute (to make U the basis of the text) if the thing can be conveniently done" (the parentheses are Bramley's). Bramley writes to the Delegates:

> I cannot say that the change in plan is very convenient: as I find it necessary to copy out the whole again. But I am prepared to do so, rather than produce an inferior text: and have already completed 26 Psalms. What I want is the authority of the Delegates for this change of purpose. I should be glad if they would consent to some such proposition as this: "That Mr. Bramley be authorized to make No. LXIV of the Univ. Coll: MSS. the basis of his text of Hampole's Psalter: and generally to act upon the advice and directions which he may receive from Professor Skeat." (Oxford University Press Archive, 1882–1883, unfoliated)

Bramley adds, in what must have provoked a sigh of relief by the Delegates, that in the autumn he visited the British Museum to see if they had any relevant manuscripts of Rolle's text, where he was assisted in his search by Mr. Maunde Thompson, the Keeper of Manuscripts—"but none could be found, I think."

Bramley shifted his base to **U** because of Skeat's analysis of its dialect: the language, among the 13 copies of the *English Psalter* that Bramley knew, is purely Northern, rather than Northern overlaid with Central Midlands or Southern scribal forms. Nevertheless, the choice was daring—and not only because the Delegates need not have supported it. **U** is a manuscript that has suffered extensive textual losses, most but not all of these made up by a late sixteenth-century hand. Anne Hudson details the codicology of the book in an important appendix to the first volume of her Early English Text Society edition of the Wycliffite Revisions to Rolle (Hudson, 2012–2014, pp. xcix–cci). Losses occur across the manuscript, in quires 4 through 13. Much of their complexity eluded Bramley as it does modern scholars, none of whom has ventured fully to collate the surviving manuscripts of Rolle's original.

When Bramley encountered **U**, he must have been both puzzled and intrigued by its challenges. Because he was an undergraduate at University College and the manuscript was in the college library since the seventeenth century (although transferred to Bodley around 1880), his claim that he only learned about it in 1883 sounds somewhat disingenuous. Be that as it may, just as earlier he had to place his trust in Daniel Waterland, a dead controversialist, now he had to trust Skeat, the preeminent Middle English scholar of the day, since he lacked training in Middle English dialectology. Once he sided with Skeat, his engagement with **U** became avid and at times insightfully experimental.

Bramley was a consummate Latinist. Having transcribed **S** straight through, he knew of the superiority of its Latin text to that in **U**, so he prints the Latin throughout his edition from **S** and the translation and commentary from **U**, thereby making up the Latin losses to **U** from a thoroughly reliable witness. Where vernacular losses occur in **U**, on

the leaves supplied by a much later hand, Bramley supplies these from a manuscript he learned about from Perry's edition, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 286 (hereafter **L**). **L** itself contains a conflate text of the *English Psalter*. It presents, through Psalm 17:53, a Wycliffite revision of Rolle (in Hudson's edition RV1) and thereafter Rolle's original. Fortunately, none of the vernacular losses at the start of **U**—these begin at Psalm 24:20—coincide with the Wycliffite revisers' work in **L**. (Whether Bramley knew that **L** was a conflate text or not is unclear but immaterial.) Moreover, **L** opens with the unique fifteenth-century metrical preface distinguishing Rolle's efforts from those of his insidious Lollard interpolators, who, in the anonymous poet's words, have grafted heresy onto an otherwise orthodox exegetical work. Printing the metrical preface at the head of his edition was a bold gesture by Bramley, a full disclosure-style declaration concerning the complex circumstances of the medieval circulation and adaptation of Rolle's work.

Like an insightful modern editor, Bramley chose the problematic **U** as his base, because he reckoned with Skeat's help that its language was closest to Rolle's. He did not, as someone preparing a full critical edition would, collate all 13 copies of the text he knew. He does collate **U** and **L**, when he uses it, against his full transcript of **S**. He also prints parallel extracts from the 13 manuscripts in his introduction, to demonstrate similarities and differences between their language. He knew the value of systemic collation to resolving questions of authorship and authorial intention. For example, on 16 July 1880, Bramley wrote to H. A. Wilson, who asked about a copy of part of the *Imitatio Christi* in Magdalen Library. Bramley critiques H. O. Coxe's catalogue entry on the manuscript and offers to check it against others, reviving along the way a seventeenth-century dispute concerning Thomas Kempis's authorship of the text (Magdalen College, Oxford Archives, 1880). He also notes in his introduction to the *English Psalter* edition that another promising Northern copy of Rolle's original, Newcastle Public Library 1678, came to his attention too late for use. Like **U**, he explains, Newcastle has significant losses: water damage to both ends and passages of text occluded by chemicals used to scrub its leaves by an early curator, after he found its gatherings disbound in a drawer at Newcastle Cathedral Library (Bramley, 1884, p. xvii). Bramley's collations for the *English Psalter* edition bore fruit: in 143 cases, **S** provides readings omitted by **U**, and Bramley registers all of these at the foot of the page. He also records carefully doublets that occur in **S** but not in **U**—for example, in Psalm 34 (*Iudica Domine*), at verse 6, two different words for "temptation": "eggynge [from Old Norse] or entisynge [from Old French]" (Bramley, 1884, p. 122). This material is useful to scholars of Rolle's theory and practice of translation. On occasion, Bramley also gives at the foot of the page short glosses that occur in the manuscripts he consulted, in one case concerning a reference to false prophets in Rolle's exegesis of Psalm 10 (*In Domino confido*), a marginal annotation found only in **S**: "hereticos, seudiprophetas & lollardos" (Bramley, 1884, p. 42).

When H. R. Bramley first set out to edit Richard Rolle's *English Psalter*, he seems to have been motivated by concerns of piety: admiration for a fellow Yorkshireman and his pastoral-minded theology, rooted as it was in the Psalms. Once he took up the task, however, Bramley's interest in the precision of Rolle's gifts as a psalm translator and exegete deepened. He engaged principles of textual criticism—the selection of base texts, manuscript collation, and various modes of presenting text and variants on the printed page—that during the nineteenth century had just begun to be applied to Middle English. By way of his work on the 1884 *English Psalter* edition, a still standard text, Henry Ramsden Bramley distinguished himself as a scholar and demonstrated Richard Rolle's uniqueness as a spiritual and literary authority.

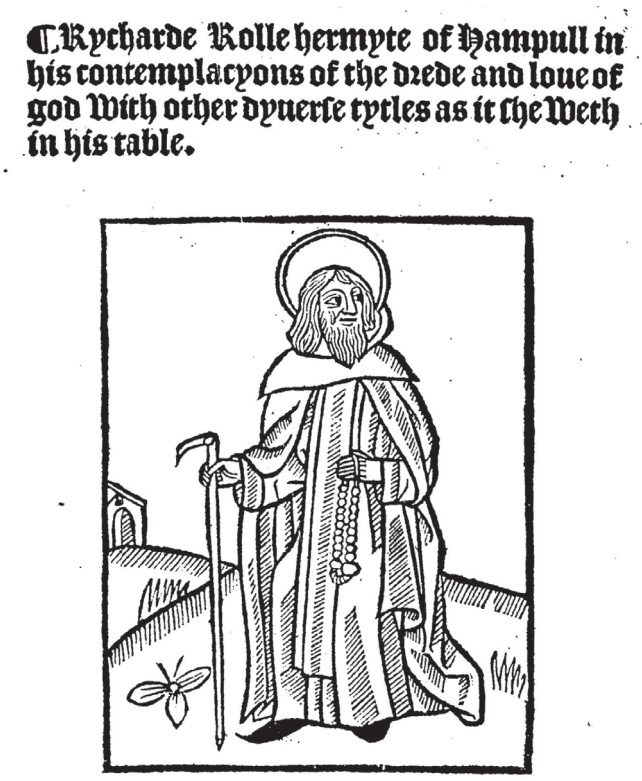
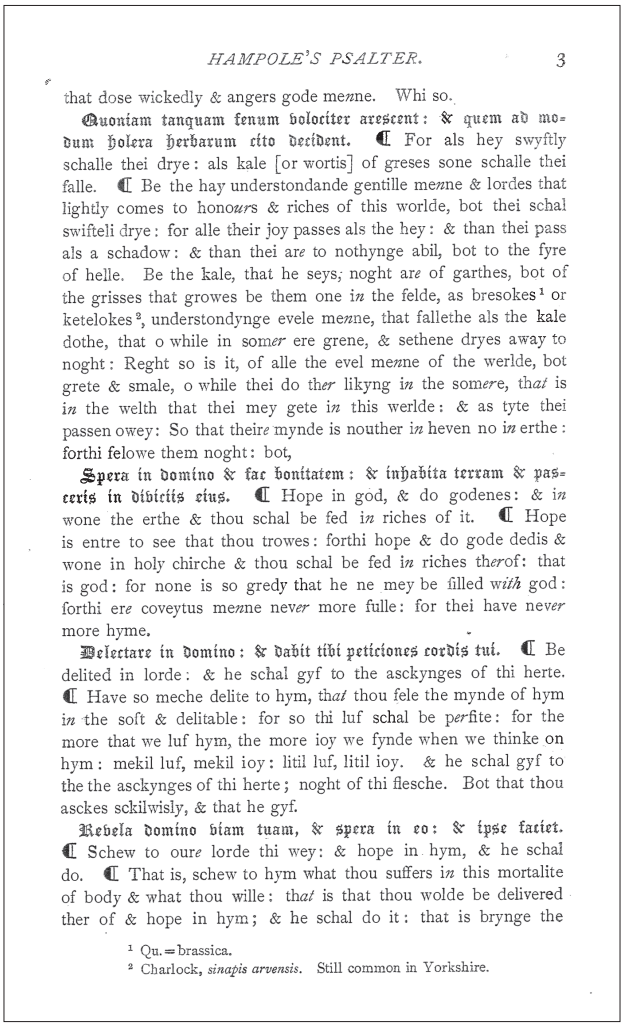


Figure 1. Richard Rolle, title-page woodcut portrait. *Rycharde Rolle hermyte of Hampull in his contemplacyons of the drede and loue of god with other dyuerse tytles as it sheweth in his table.* Wynkyn de Worde, 1506. Courtesy of the British Library, London

Figure 2. H. R. Bramley, photograph, aged 28.
Courtesy of the Magdalen College, Oxford Archives

Figure 3. H. R. Bramley, caricature, aged 48. Thomas Shrimpton, *Shrimpton's Oxford Caricatures*, vol. 5. Oxford, Bodleian Library, G. A. Oxon. 40 416, fol. 770.
Courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford



HAMPOLE'S PSALTER. 3

that dose wickedly & angers gode menne. Whi so.

Quoniam tanquam fenum velociter arescent: & quem ad modum olera herbarum cito decident. ¶ For als hey swyftly schalle thei drye: als kale [or wortis] of greses sone schalle thei falle. ¶ Be the hay understondande gentille menne & lordes that lightly comes to honours & riches of this worlde, bot thei schal swifteli drye: for alle their joy passes als the hey: & than thei pass als a schadow: & than thei are to nothynge abil, bot to the fyre of helle. Be the kale, that he seys, noght are of garthes, bot of the grisses that growes be them one in the felde, as bresokes[1] or ketelokes[2], understondynge evele menne, that fallethe als the kale dothe, that o while in somer ere grene, & sethene dryes away to noght: Reght so is it, of alle the evel menne of the werlde, bot grete & smale, o while thei do ther likyng in the somere, that is in the welth that thei mey gete in this werlde: & as tyte thei passen owey: So that theire mynde is nouther in heven no in erthe: forthi felowe them noght: bot,

Spera in domino & fac bonitatem: & inhabita terram & pascaris in divitiis eius. ¶ Hope in god, & do godenes: & in wone the erthe & thou schal be fed in riches of it. ¶ Hope is entre to see that thou trowes: forthi hope & do gode dedis & wone in holy chirche & thou schal be fed in riches therof: that is god: for none is so gredy that he ne mey be filled with god: forthi ere coveytus menne never more fulle: for thei have never more hyme.

Delectare in domino: & dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui. ¶ Be delited in lorde: & he schal gyf to the asckynges of thi herte. ¶ Have so meche delite to hym, that thou fele the mynde of hym in the soft & delitable: for so thi luf schal be perfite: for the more that we luf hym, the more ioy we fynde when we thinke on hym: mekil luf, mekil ioy: litil luf, litil ioy. & he schal gyf to the the asckynges of thi herte; noght of thi flesche. Bot that thou asckes sckilwisly, & that he gyf.

Revela domino viam tuam, & spera in eo: & ipse faciet. ¶ Schew to oure lorde thi wey: & hope in hym, & he schal do. ¶ That is, schew to hym what thou suffers in this mortalite of body & what thou wille: that is that thou wolde be delivered ther of & hope in hym; & he schal do it: that is brynge the

[1] Qu. = brassica.
[2] Charlock, *sinapis arvensis*. Still common in Yorkshire.

Figure 4. Trial proof sheet, Richard Rolle's *English Psalter*, ed. H. R. Bramley. Archive of Oxford University Press. OUP Ref: LB495, unfoliated. Courtesy of the Oxford University Press Archive

Figure 5. Oxford, University College MS 64, fols. 74v–75r. Richard Rolle's *English Psalter,* original version, 15th century (fol. 74v) and late 16th century (fol. 75r). Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of University College, Oxford

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HENRY RAMSDEN BRAMLEY: HIS LIFE AND EDITION OF RICHARD ROLLE'S *ENGLISH PSALTER*

Summary

H. R. Bramley's 1884 edition of the *English Psalter* written by the Yorkshire hermit Richard Rolle (d. 1349), remains the standard edition of Rolle's influential Middle English translation and commentary. In this essay, I discuss Bramley's interest in Rolle and the making of his edition in light of Bramley's biography as an Anglican priest, Oxford University administrator, and scholar. Bramley admired Rolle as a fellow Yorkshireman and as a pastoral-minded contemplative, whose spirituality and teachings were based on the Psalms. Bramley's own theological writings are akin in certain respects to Rolle's and his edition of the *English Psalter* is innovative, despite limitations. Correspondence and other material preserved in the Oxford University Press Archive (https://global.oup.com/uk/archives/index.html) reveal that Bramley changed his base text within a year of publication, producing as a result a more textually adventurous and useful edition.

Keywords: Daniel Waterland; *English Psalter*; H. R. Bramley; Oxford University Press Archive; Richard Rolle; Sidney Sussex MS 89; University College MS 64; Walter W. Skeat

HENRY RAMSDEN BRAMLEY, JEGO ŻYCIE I EDYCJA *PSAŁTERZA ANGIELSKIEGO* RICHARDA ROLLE'A

Summary

Wydanie dzieła *English Psalter* [Psałterz angielski] Richarda Rolle'a (zm. 1349), pustelnika z okolic Yorkshire, w opracowaniu H. R. Bramleya z 1884 do dziś pozostaje standardową edycją ważnego tłumaczenia i komentarza do psalmów w języku średnioangielskim. W artykule analizuję zainteresowanie Bramleya Rollem oraz proces powstawania edycji jego dzieła w świetle biografii Bramleya jako księdza anglikańskiego, administratora Uniwersytetu Oxfordzkiego oraz badacza. Rolle budził podziw Bramleya jako pobratymiec z Yorkshire, zorientowany duszpastersko kontemplator, którego duchowość i nauczanie oparte były na psalmach. Teologiczne pisma Bramleya są w pewnych aspektach podobne do pism Rolle'a, a jego edycja *English Psalter* jest nowatorska pomimo swych ograniczeń. Zarówno korespondencja jak i inne materiały zachowane w archiwach Uniwersytetu Oksfordzkiego (https://global.oup.com/uk/archives/index.html) wskazują, że Bramley zmienił tekst bazowy w ciągu roku od publikacji, co doprowadziło do powstania ciekawszej tekstowo i bardziej użytecznej redakcji.

Słowa kluczowe: Daniel Waterland; *English Psalter*; H. R. Bramley; Oxford University Press Archive; Richard Rolle; Sidney Sussex MS 89; University College MS 64; Walter W. Skeat

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