Lecture 1 handout

Slide 1: Saint Matthew, Lindisfarne Gospels (British, 8c)

Slide 2: Christ in Majesty (Roman mosaic, 4c)

Slide 3: Christ transmitting the text of Scripture (Roman mosaic, 4c)

Slide 4: Head of St Gregory being inspired (Tolentino, Italy, 14c)

Slide 5: Evangelists and doctors of the Church (Tolentino)

Slide 6: St Luke inspiring St Gregory (Tolentino)

Text 1: Bonaventure (1217-1274), Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard

Scribe, compiler, commentator, author

Response. To understand the above we must note that there are four ways of making a book. For someone writes out the words of other men without adding or changing anything, and he is called the scribe (scriptor) pure and simple. Someone else writes the words of other men, putting together material, but not his own, and he is called the compiler (compilator). Someone else writes the words of other men and also his own, but with those of other men comprising the principal part while his own are annexed merely to make clear the argument, and he is called the commentator (commentator), not the author. Someone else writes the words of other men and also of his own, but with his own forming the principal part and those of others being annexed merely by way of confirmation, and such a person should be called the author (auctor). The master falls into this [last] category, for he sets out his own opinions (sententiae) and buttresses them with the opinions of the holy Fathers. So, he ought to be called the author of this book [i.e. the Sentences].


Slide 7: Compilator (French, 14c)

Slide 7: Erasmus (Holbein, early 16c)
Text 2: Sir Orfeo (c. 1330)

The Brytans, as the boke seys,
Off diverse thingys thei made ther leys —
Som thei made of harpyngys,
And som of other diverse thyngys,
Som of werre and som off wo,
Som of myrthys and joy also,
Som of trechery and som off gyle,³
Som of happys that felle somwhyle, ⁴
And som be of rybaydry,⁶
And many ther ben off fary.⁶

Off all the venturys men here or se,
Most off luffe, forsoth, thei be,
That in the leys ben iwrought,
Fyrst fond and forth brought.
Off aventours that fell somdeys
The Bretonys therof made ther leys —
Off kynys that before us were;

Text 3: Chaucer, Book of the Duchess (c. 1369)

With that me thoughte that this kyng
Gan homwarde for to ryde
Unto a place, was there besyde,
Which was from us but a lyte —
A long castel with walls white,
Be Seynt Johan, on a ryche hil,
As me mette; but thus lyt fil.
Ryght thus me mette, as I yow telle,
That in the castell ther was a belle,
As lyt hadde snytyn houres twelve.
Therwyth I awooke myselfe
And fond me lyinge in my bed;

And the book that I hadde red,
Of Alcione and Seys the kyng,
And of the goddes of slepyng,
I fond hyt in myn bond ful even.
Thoghhe I, "Thys ys so queynyt a sweyen
That I wol, be procese of tym,
Fonde to put this sweyen in ryme
As I kan best, and that anoon."
This was my sweyen; now hit ys doon.

Text 5: Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde (c. 1385)

Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye,
Ther God thi makere yet, et that he dye,
So sende myght to make in som comedye!
But litel book, no makynge thow n'envie,
But subgit be zo alle poesye;
And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace
Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

Text 6: Julian of Norwich, Revelations, Shorter Version, Chapter 6

But God forbid that you should say or assume that I am a teacher, for that is not what I mean, nor did I ever mean it; for I am a woman, ignorant, weak and frail. But I know well that I have received what I say from him who is the supreme teacher. But in truth, I am moved to tell you of it by love, for I wish God to be known and my fellow Christians helped, as I wish to be helped myself, so that sin shall be more hated and God more loved. Just because I am a woman, must I therefore believe that I must not tell you about the goodness of God, when I saw at the same time both his goodness and his wish that it should be known? And you will see that clearly in the chapters which follow, if they are well and truly understood. Then you must quickly forget me, a paltry creature, you must not let me hinder you, but look directly at Jesus, who is teacher of all. I speak of those who will be saved, for at this time God showed me no others. But in all things I believe what Holy Church teaches, for in all things I saw this blessed showing of our Lord as one who is in the presence of God, and I never perceived anything in it that bewilders me or keeps me from the true teaching of Holy Church.