

The priorities of Huscher's edition were largely philological. Much of his effort was directed towards a dialectal analysis of the text and manuscripts, and what that revealed about the state of written Middle English in the early fifteenth century. He was especially interested in metre, and his editorial procedure was more interventionist in regularizing scansion than this edition (for reasons expanded below). Furthermore, he considered several of E's metrical irregularities as scribal interpolations, expansions and glosses (HH, pp. 65–66). In all probability that is what many of them are, although some arguably represent superior readings. He emended many lines on this basis where this edition retains and defends E's readings. However, the scribe of E was clearly careless and mechanical, often omitting necessary parts of speech for no clear reason; several mistakes in E are made apparent by the agreement of the other manuscripts on a better reading. Huscher more often preserved E's readings in these instances, whereas this edition emends them.

All references to Huscher cite his original edition in German, and include English translations from an unpublished translation commissioned from Wendy Smith (2013), whose assistance is very gratefully acknowledged.

The text has received very little textual or literary criticism. It is well-known to historians of the Hundred Years War, but their treatment is largely restricted to the historical information it offers, and it is rarely discussed in great detail or for its own sake. It is not at all well known among literary critics: the only extended recent discussion is that of Tamar S. Drukker.⁵ The Bibliography lists all the criticism that this text has received to my knowledge.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There are several excellent accounts of the siege of Rouen and its significance to Henry's second campaign: the synopsis below is particularly indebted to Allmand 1989 and 1992, Hutchison 1967 and Seward 1978 and 1987.

If Agincourt, the unexpectedly triumphant culmination of the 1415 campaign, had brought Henry V glory and fame, it brought him very little territorial advantage. It was the slow grind of the second campaign from 1417–19 (the years between Agincourt and the Treaty of Troyes) that secured his hold on northern France, and finally his short-lived title to the French crown.

Most of Normandy was secured between March and August 1418 with the fall of Caen and Cherbourg, but the River Seine proved a key obstacle impeding the English army's progress east. Henry's ally, John I of Portugal, stationed a fleet at the mouth of the Seine estuary to keep the route open to the English. On 20 July 1418, after a siege of three weeks, they captured the fortified town of

⁵ Drukker 2005: 251–73.