facts and fictions,' Reed Newsletter, 1 (1979) 24-6, retorts that there is no conclusive evidence that any permanent structures, such as game-houses, tenements or permanent scaffolds, existed on these sites.


16 On the demise of the Noah see Mill 505. As I suggested earlier there is little evidence to suggest that Hull inhabitants were attached to spectacular displays of piety or to traditional ritual ceremony and celebration. All pre-Reformation guild ordinances, be they of the craft or the religious guilds, do include the customary references to lights, obits etc. but evidence of processional activity is relatively scant. While the Guild of St John the Baptist made provisions for a procession at which all members were required to be present, as did the Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Guild of the Holy Trinity, the Corpus Christi Guild ordinances as well as those pertaining to the Merchants' Guild of St George record no entries related to such activity. See Lambert 111-31, 156-61.

Minstrels and minstrelsy: household retainers or instrumentalists?

Few technical terms in the study of early English drama and music have such wide public recognition as 'minstrel.' From Sir Walter Scott to Monty Python and the Holy Grail, a popular picture has emerged of the wandering minstrel with a lute slung over his shoulder, singing soulfully in his master's hall or on the greensward with Robin Hood. Scholars, while deprecating the romantic mediaevalism of the last century, often concentrate on minstrels as musicians and some extend their investigation to the minstrel as jongleur, as reciter, or as poet. Some scholars use 'minstrel' and 'minstrelsy' interchangeably with 11
musician’ and ‘music.’ But are we justified in assuming that all mediaeval minstrels are entertainers or that music and minstrelsy are indissolubly connected in the Middle Ages?

This question is not so foolish as it might appear. Even among records gathered for REED collections, the occurrences of ministrallus and related words collected for dictionaries of mediaeval Latin, French, and English offer a wider range of meaning. The clearest example of a problem entry in REED records comes from the material collected by the late Alice Hamilton for her collection of Leicestershire records: ‘In donis datis ad castellum quando mutate fuerint Comiti .cc. libre. scilicet .iij. Ministrallis Thesaurii .xiiij. d….’1 In gifts given at the castle when £200 were loaned to the earl (of Leicester), that is, 12d (given) to two ‘minstralli’ of the exchequer. Who could these ministralli be? What were they doing? Images of soft music played as an accompaniment to financial dealings can, I think, be safely rejected as anachronistic and unlikely. In the rest of this article, I would like to explore possible answers to those questions by looking as broadly as possible at the range of potential meanings represented by the Latin ministrallus.2 For clarity, I will restrict the use of E ‘minstrel’ hereafter to refer to persons called ministralli in primary sources.

In a previous article in REED, ‘Plays and Players’,3 I demonstrated that by the end of the fourteenth century ministrallus was used by many town clerks or accountants synonymously with histrio and minus as a generic term to describe an entertainer, probably (but not exclusively) musical and often in the service of a patron (or sometimes in the employ of a town). However, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the picture is less clear than indicated there. Furthermore, I was mistaken in the etymology (drawn from E.K. Chambers) which I proposed at that time, a mistake which had consequences for my understanding of the term.

In re-examining the term, I would like to look first at the etymology of ministrallus and the various senses recorded in dictionaries for it and related terms to try to get a clearer picture of its derivation and probable semantic range. Then I will test this picture against the actual usage found in some primary sources. Finally I want to say something about what remains to be done and the implications for REED and related research.

It appears that ministrallus is one of a group of words which re-enter Mediaeval Latin, especially the Latin of mediaeval France and England, from Late Latin via Old French. Examination of the articles in Godefroy and Tebler-Lommatzsch4 shows that the principal occurrences are menestrel, menesterel, and menestrier (on the basis of Tebler-Lommatzsch), with a rich series of variants (listed in Godefroy). All three may refer to an entertainer, but the primary senses are ‘servant’ or ‘workman, craftsman.’ In these senses, the earliest occurrence is given by Godefroy, who groups ‘artisan,’ ‘ouvrier,’ and ‘serviteur’ together as a single sense, as in the eleventh century.

Tbler-Lommatzsch derives the word ultimately from L. ministerium, ‘service’ via the TL noun ministerialis, one who serves, either a household servant or a civil servant (due to the Roman convention of viewing what we should now call the civil service as the emperor’s household). This sense of ‘servant’ is carried over into early mediaeval Latin and occurrences can be found in the early barbarian law codes, such as the Lex Burgundiae.5 The word in which we are chiefly interested, ministrallus itself, does not appear in the TL because it first occurs too late for that dictionary.

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The ME term *minstral* is borrowed from this OF term and so derives ultimately from the same LL root. According to the *MED*, both the sense of ‘servant’ and the sense of ‘entertainer’ are attested. In fact, as might be suspected from OF usage, ‘servant’ is attested earlier (early thirteenth century) than are the senses of ‘entertainer’. Over time, the latter senses predominate and of course the modern E word refers exclusively to an entertainer.

Turning now to *ministrallus*, we find various forms of that word and related terms in DuCange’s *Glossarium* and Latham’s *Word-list*. These are two very different works; the *Glossarium* is an essentially antiquarian and pre-scientific work while Latham prepared a working prolegomenon to the first modern dictionary of Anglo-Latin. However until that dictionary, *The Dictionary of Mediaeval Latin from British and Irish Sources*, is complete we must rely on a combination of these two works for information on AL vocabulary, at least for words beginning I–Z.

DuCange wished to present unusual or difficult non-classical vocabulary which he had encountered while using MSS in the BN; he listed words in whatever inflectional form they had occurred in his source and did not attempt to group related forms together; there is no analysis or synthesis. He noticed *minist(r)elli* (entertainers); *menetnalli*, *menestres* (craftsmen); *ministeriales*, *ministrales*, and *ministralli* (servants). The *Word-list*, drawing on the reading of many contributors (who sent in slips for words which fit the list’s selection criteria), attests a variety of forms. The entertainer sense appears before 1227, the servant sense in 1348 and 1439 (which seems surprisingly late based on the attestations given for related ME and OF words) and the craftsman sense from 1275.

Although DuCange and Latham each found at least one occurrence of *ministrallus* in the sense of ‘craftsman’, neither the *MED* or the *OED* give this sense for the ME term. This suggests that that sense may have been rare in AL usage. However, ME and OF usage suggest that we may find the sense of ‘servant’ to be earlier and more prevalent than the forms collected for the *Word-list* would indicate. In the entry from the Leicester civic records mentioned above, it seems far more likely that the *ministralli Thesaurii* who were present when a loan of £200 was made to Thomas of Lancaster were servants of the exchequer involved in the transport or transfer of funds than that they were musical entertainers.

On the basis of etymology, the sample surveyed for Young 1984, the examples collected for the *Glossarium* and the *Word-list*, and the meaning of OF and ME forms, a lexical entry for *ministrallus* would look something like this:

ministrallus, -i n m (from LL ministerialis, servant, civil servant) 1. servant; 2. craftsman, workman; 3. entertainer, apparently one whose performance involved some sort of music, whether vocal, instrumental, or dance; minstrel.

But this needs to be compared with actual usage in civic and household accounts. Let us turn first to the royal household material which has led Constance Bullock-Davies to such different conclusions.

In her 1978 study, *Menestrallorum Multitudo*, Bullock-Davies edited and glossed meticulously an Exchequer payroll for a feast held at Whitsun 1306 to honour the
knighting of Edward of Caenarvon, Prince of Wales, and several hundred others. It is
written on two sides and contains two lists, one in French (on what is now the dorse)
and the other mostly in Latin (on what is now the recto), written by different clerks.
The great interest of this payroll, now PRO: E 101/369/6, lies in the fact that the payees
are referred to collectively as minstrels (menestralii, menestraus). Bullock-Davies assumes
that they are therefore all musicians of some kind. The vast majority of them are explicitly
identified as such, either by an attributive (eg, Richard de Quitacre Citharista or
Guillotus le Taborer Comitis Warreici [MM, pp 2–3]) or an occupational surname (eg,
Adinet le Harpour or Henri le Gigour [MM, pp 2, 4]). But many others are not. They
fall into three categories:

1) those identified in the same way with another occupation, such as Iohannes le
Barbor or Iohannes Waffarius Commisses Lancastrie (MM, p 2); there are 25 such
people, according to Bullock-Davies’ count, of whom 3 (two fencers and an acrobat)
are arguably entertainers in some sense of the word, if not in any sense musicians;9
2) those simply identified as minstrels, such as the two minstrels of J. de Berwike
(MM, p 2), a very small number;
3) those simply named, such as Bolthed or Iohannes du Chat (MM, p 1), of whom
there are only a few in the Latin list, but many in the French; some of them who
were attached to the royal household may be identifiable with named musicians
from other accounts, but that is not always an easy task and questions remain.

Can we assume with Bullock-Davies that all the persons named in this roll are being
paid for musical performance or indeed for any kind of performance? The evidence
gathered for the lexica used above suggests that the use of ‘menestralus’ alone is not
decisive, because there was still too broad a range of meanings in common use. The sit-
uation is not much clarified by other late thirteenth and early fourteenth-century royal
household records referring to minstrels.10

The picture which emerges when such Exchequer rolls, including Bullock-Davies’
E 101/369/6, are examined without preconceptions, is a very fluid one. ‘Minstrel’ seems
to describe any of a wide group of functionaries in the household, including those
described as heralds, valets, waffers, grooms and messengers (nuncii), and boys or lads
(garciones) in addition to those described as trumpeters, harpers, and performers on
other musical instruments. Such ministralii could apparently occupy several levels of
rank or status in the household, such as squire, sejeant, master, and even ‘king’ (rex or
roi, a rank which otherwise seems confined to heralds and to be the precursor of the
modern ‘king of arms’).

The whole question of what a minstrel does is connected with the problem of occupa-
tional names: if a person is ‘surnamed’ le harper or le waferer, to what extent are we
justified in concluding that his principal task or function was harping or wafer-making?
As we have seen in the case of the Whitsun 1306 payroll, the only evidence for the
occupations of some minstrels consists in the title ‘menestralus’ and a surname appar-
ently derived from the name of a musical instrument or from an occupation. While it
does seems a safe assumption that these men were called by what they did, it remains an assumption, not a certainty, and one which should be applied even-handedly: there is no more, and no less, reason to assume that Matheus le Harpour played the harp than that Iohannes le Barbor was a barber.

Other early fourteenth-century minstrels have a confusing abundance of 'surnames': what did they do? For example, Bullock-Davies identifies Le Roy Robert (MMT, p 3) with Robertus Parus, Robert king of heralds, Robert king of minstrels, King Robert, King Robert le trumpeteer, and King Robert le taborer, all named in various household accounts of the period. But are all these the same man? Are there two men, Robert Little (or is he little Robert?), a herald who rose to the rank of king, and another Robert, a 'menestrallus' who also rose to the rank of king and played both the trumpet and the tabor? Or is it more reasonable to assume that the same man, a 'menestrallus,' rose to the rank of king, and acted at various times as a herald, a trumpeter, and a taborer?

It seems quite likely that, at one period in the royal household, all its member-servants were loosely referred to by the affectionate (or disparaging?) diminutive ministrallus, irrespective of their 'job' within the household. It seems equally likely that such minstrels were the go-fers or executive assistants of the fourteenth century, expected to act as heralds at one time, as messengers at another. But it also seems likely that some of the household tasks required the retaining of a sufficiently skilled specialist. Wafer-making, for instance, or musical performance, seems to fall into that category. In such a situation, a variety of functional terms could easily be used to describe the same person at different times and even a wafer-maker or a musician might find himself carrying important messages for the king when the times demanded it.

It would appear that the minstrels of the 1306 payroll and other royal household documents were part of a broad and still somewhat undifferentiated body of household servants called 'menestralli,' whose name came to be associated peculiarly with performers as the century progressed. But what about the world outside the household? Can this sense be found used in other contexts?

This is more difficult to discover. Very few extant Anglo-Latin civic accounts occur as early as the fourteenth century, which we have identified as the transitional period for the meaning of ministrallus. Further the context of most civic account entries is even less helpful than that of the royal household and wardrobe accounts used above. If we look, for example, at the three oldest sets of Latin civic accounts accounts in the published REED volumes, Exeter, Shrewsbury, and York, we find little of help. In Shrewsbury, the word does not even occur in Latin until a 1436–7 account. In Exeter, the Latin word was very seldom used in the fourteenth century accounts and when it appears it is without any context at all, eg, 'Item in dono Ministrall dotini Principis x s,' a payment from 1370–1. The closest we come to the kind of sense the word seems to bear in the household records discussed above is in an extended account arising from a royal visit in 1402–3. After payments to eight royal minstrels and their servants (seruientes), a royal herald, and several groups of minstrels in the service of magnates, the accountant continued 'Item in xxvi capicijs de panno rubio & nigro dativ predicir Ministralli & aliji officiarejs domini xxv s. iiiij d.' This does not in any way
impl that these minstrels either were or were not performers, but it does show them being considered a sub-variety of household officer, which is the exact situation one would have expected at the turn of the fifteenth century on the model of usage we have proposed.\textsuperscript{15}

In fourteenth-century York accounts, minstrel is a far more common word than it is in Exeter, but there is still little context given. Typical is the recurring annual payment made at St Leonard's Hospital, first found in 1370: 'Et ministrallus in festo Sancti leonardi iiij s. iiiij d.'\textsuperscript{16} This is somewhat more informative than the payments found in the Exeter accounts, for it is hard to imagine what these minstrels were being paid for during the patronal festival if not for contributing to the festivities as entertainers. But missing from the fourteenth-century accounts of both towns are the sort of payments found in the Whitsun feast payroll in which minstrels are explicitly linked with an unambiguous performance term.

It is still early to reach any but the most tenuous conclusions, but I think enough evidence can already be marshalled to show that at least in some genres of Anglo-Latin, most particularly in household accounts, the word *ministrallus* is capable of bearing more meanings than the musical one most familiar to users of *REED* volumes. Given this, are we justified in assuming, as most modern writers have done, that every person called a *ministrallus* is a minstrel in the usual modern sense, that is, that the appellation *ministrallus* is sufficient in the absence of other evidence to allow one to conclude that a person is a musical entertainer of some kind? I am reluctantly compelled to conclude that we are not, and that the earlier the instance the greater the ambiguity.

\section*{NOTES}

1 Leicester Record Office: BR/III/1/3 (civic accounts for 1307–8), mb 1d, under the account heading 'Dona & liberata'; expansions have not been indicated.

2 The noun 'ministrallus' occurs in a variety of forms: the first two syllables may appear with the vowels 'e' or 'i' or be syncopated into a single syllable with either of those vowels. The penultima varies between 'a' and 'e' and the 'll' sometimes appears as 'l'. I have chosen to use the form given above throughout this article for simplicity, except in quotations (which will use the orthography found in the source).


5 Examples can be found in the *Thesaurus linguae latinae editus auctoritate et consilio academiarum quinque germanicarum* (Leipzig, 1900–) [TLL].


7 Charles du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis auctore

8 Constance Bullock-Davies, Mmenstrallorum Multitude: Minstrels at a Royal Feast (Cardiff, 1978), hereafter cited as MM; the transcription of the payroll is on pp 1–6 and the description on pp 7–13. As I have not seen the original, I rely on these sections of MM for what follows.

9 See the table on p 10 of MM.


11 See MM, pp 159–62 and also the entry for Parvus, Robert in Register, pp 139–44.


13 John Wasson (ed), Devon, REED (Toronto, 1986), 72.

14 Wasson, Devon, p 78.

15 Usage in Exeter is complicated by the appearance in the early fifteenth century of the still very obscure compound form, administrallus, which seems to have been preferred locally to ministrallus. We have not yet met with it elsewhere.

16 Margaret Dorrell and Alexandra F. Johnston (eds), York, REED, (Toronto, 1979), 2.

N.W. Bawcutt

Sir Henry Herbert and William Sands the puppeteer: some corrections

One section in David George's recent article in the Newsletter deals with William Sands the puppeteer.1 Professor George quotes evidence from the office-book of Sir Henry Herbert as follows:

William Sandes was licensed on 27 August 1623 by Sir Henry Herbert to show "the Chaos of the World;" to show a motion called the Creation of the World". (p 17)

Unfortunately these are two distinct and separate entries, and the date of 27 August