APPENDIX TWO

THE ANGLO-NORMAN

VOYAGE OF ST BRENDAN

(Translation based on Waters’ edition)

Prologue

Lady Adeliza the queen, 1
Through whom divine law will be put into effect
Through whom terrestrial law will grow stronger 2
For the military power
On account of Henry the king
Through the prudence that will be in you
Greets you a thousand thousand times
From the apostolic Lord Benedeit 3
As you commanded, this at the beginning.
He has put into words in accordance with the best of his ability
Into writing and the Romance tongue 4
As was your command
The story of St Brendan, the good abbot.
But you should preserve him [the author] from being derided
When he says what he knows and does what he can:
This servant must not be blamed
But he who is capable and does not wish to
It is right that he should suffer much. 5

1 Adeliza, wife to Henry I, and daughter of Duke Godfrey VII of Louvain. In ms C the name of the patroness is ‘Mahalt’.
2 ‘Lei de terre,’ for a discussion of the use of ‘terre’ in the Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan see Burgess, ‘Les fonctions des quatre éléments,’ p. 5.
5 The dedication is summarised in ms E as ‘Seignor oies que io dirai Dun saint home vos conterai Dyrlande estoit brandans ot non Molt ert de grant religion,’ Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal 3516, fo. 96 r°. For a discussion of the dedication see Sneddon, ‘Brendan the Navigator,’ pp. 224–25.
St Brendan

This saint of God was born of kings
20 Born of Ireland
Because he was of royal line
Because of this he devoted himself to a noble purpose.
He knew well what the scriptures say:
‘He who shuns the delights of this world,
25 Will have so many with God in heaven
That he could not ask for more.’
On this account, this royal Irishman abandoned
False honours for the true ones—
Monks habits—to be contemptible
30 In this worldly life as in exile.
He took both the orders and the habit
And then he was perforce chosen to be an abbot.
Because of his skill many came there
Who observed the orders well:
35 Brendan the holy had three thousand
Monks under him from different places,
All taking their example from him
Because of his virtue which was great.

His Desire To See The Other World

The abbot Brendan bethought himself,
40 Like a man who had much good sense,
Of good and sound counsel,
Like one who is very righteous in the sight of God
That he would make relentless prayers
For himself and all his lineage
45 Both for the living and the dead—
For he was a friend of everyone;
But there was one thing which he particularly desired

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6 Waters observes that, while the quotation does not correspond with any Biblical passage, the idea frequently occurs in the Gospels, for example, Matthew 6:19–21.
7 Short and Merrilees have ferait for Waters' faiseit, which seems more appropriate.