Vernacular Writings

in the

Medieval Libraries

of

Great Britain

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ABSTRACT

The thesis comprises four volumes: an introductory discussion; two volumes containing lists of religious and other institutions with information on the works in the vernacular languages which they are known to have owned; and a volume of indices and bibliographies. The information is obtained from the surviving books of the medieval period, here taken as extending to 1540, which are known to have belonged to the religious and other houses, and from their medieval catalogues, book-lists and other documents. With the help of the indices, one may find the information relevant to a particular house, to an Anglo-Saxon, French or English work, or to a given manuscript.

The introduction makes some general observations concerning the libraries and books of medieval institutions, lists the medieval catalogues and book-lists chronologically, and considers the various kinds of vernacular writings, with particular reference to their production and ownership by the religious houses. Finally, some areas for further research are indicated.

The present study thus brings together for the first time, for the benefit of students of medieval literature and social history, all the information at present available from primary and secondary sources regarding the vernacular writings known to have been available to the members of religious and similar communities in Great Britain throughout the whole of the Middle Ages.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

In the present study I have attempted to collate all the available information on the works, present in religious and other institutions of Great Britain during the Middle Ages, which were written in the vernacular languages of Europe. This means in effect chiefly Anglo-Saxon, French, mostly in the Anglo-Norman dialect, and Middle English, in which are included Early Middle English, Scottish and other dialects and later English as far as the early sixteenth century. Except for Welsh, which is represented by three collections, the other European languages occur scarcely at all in the medieval libraries discussed. Works are included in the study if they survive in book or other form in or known to be from religious and other institutions, if they were composed there, or if their former presence there is indicated by medieval library catalogues or other documents.

For this purpose, the limits of the Middle Ages are set on the one hand by the writing of the earliest Anglo-Saxon extant in written form, and on the other by the Dissolution which put an end to monastic libraries. Included in the study, however, are not only the libraries of those living under the rule of religion, but also those of cathedral, secular and academic colleges, parish churches and of a few other institutions such as the London Guildhall. Libraries of individuals, even of churchmen, are not included. The majority of the institutions, or houses, were in England, comparatively few in Wales and Scotland. In the Appendix, volume III, pp. 304--11, are to be found a small number of houses in Ireland, included because they owned works in Anglo-Norman or English of the same kind as those which were owned by English houses.

Much of the information presented in the study derives from secondary sources, that is, from descriptions of manuscripts and editions of medieval documents and works. I have personally examined nearly all of the unedited booklists and of the relevant manuscripts in the British Library, the Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian Library and college libraries at Oxford, and have verified the references to printed sources.

The material presented occupies four volumes. The first contains a brief discussion of certain aspects of medieval libraries and of the kinds of works written in the vernacular, and is designed to clarify and amplify the information set out in the next two volumes. In those, the

monasteries (volume II) and other houses of all kinds (volume III) are arranged alphabetically according to their religious order or type, and under each house is given the information available on its medieval library and vernacular works. The last volume is devoted to indices and bibliographies. The houses and the manuscript and early printed books included in the previous two volumes are listed, followed by separate indices of Anglo-Saxon, Middle English and French works and those in other languages. The works are arranged by author , if known, by title or by subject. Then follow a general bibliography of books and articles which discuss manuscripts, works or libraries or print medieval booklists, and lastly four bibliographies of the editions of works, corresponding to, and using the same arrangement as, the four indices.

By means of these lists, one may discover the provenance and contents of a given manuscript, observe the distribution of copies of a given work or works, or study the vernacular writings once owned by a house or group of houses. To obviate the necessity for constant reference to the indices when using volumes II and III, fairly full information is given on each work, with cross-references to other copies. Short titles are used in those volumes for the printed sources, as full details are supplied in the appropriate bibliographies in volume IV. A list of abbreviations may be found at the end of the present volume.

Having indicated the purpose and scope of this study and the sources, procedure and arrangement of material employed in it, I introduce in the following pages some observations on medieval libraries and on the vernacular works to be found in them. Notes and bibliographical references are given at the end of the relevant chapter.

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1 MEDIEVAL LIBRARIES OF GREAT BRITAIN

(i) Medieval libraries

The medieval monastic and institutional libraries of England and Wales cover a period of at least eight centuries, from the writing of the earliest extant monastic manuscripts,[1] such as Worcester's early eigth-century Latin copy of the Benedictine Rule, to 1540, when the Dissolution of the religious houses was practically complete.[2] For most of this period, they provided the intellectual nourishment for virtually all the scholars and teachers and for most of the writers and administrators of the nation, so that the evolving accumulations of books both reflected and in turn moulded the thinking of those who were making our history.

Scope and significance

We have two main sources of information on the size and composition of these libraries, and both have resulted from random events during the past four centuries. The sources are firstly the surviving manuscript and early printed books of known provenance,[3] and secondly the medieval library catalogues and booklists.

Sources

Some collections of books are well represented, since they remained undisturbed in a house which was not dissolved, such as Eton College, or which was secularised, such as Durham Cathedral. Other books attracted sixteenth-century and later collectors, and were thus preserved.[4] King Henry VIII indulged a taste for beautiful books and the works of English writers, Archbishop Parker specialised in Anglo-Saxon books. Former members of dissolved houses sometimes saved part of the library,[5] but the common books, especially disused service-books, and volumes from remoter areas were often burnt or used as scrap paper.[6]

Extant identified MSS

About six thousand medieval books have been traced to their former homes, but many thousands may remain for ever unidentified for lack of an ownership inscription or distinctive pressmark. A few may be traced by the opening words of the second folio if they appear in one of the the booklists which noted the 'secundo folio' references.[7] On the other hand, it is unlikely that any of the many hundreds of houses of various kinds which housed medieval communities[8] were without so much as half-a-dozen service-books, but less than half are now represented by even one identified surviving book, and the parish churches are much more poorly represented than that.

MSS without houses, houses without MSS

Booklists from defunct houses were even more liable to destruction than were books. Many of those which do survive are from libraries which are well recorded, but others reveal unknown libraries, such as that of the Premonstratensian abbey of St Radegund, Dover. Quite a few libraries from which few books seem to survive, such as those of Bermondsey, Meaux, Titchfield and York Austin friars and the brothers' library at Syon, are shown to better advantage by their medieval catalogues.

Medieval catalogues

By combining information from both sources, we may draw certain conclusions about the size of libraries of various orders during certain periods, whilst avoiding the assumption that a house from which we have few or no books and poor or no booklists necessarily owned a smaller library.

(ii) Monasteries

Most of the libraries known to have contained more than three hundred books were in the Benedictine abbeys and cathedral priories. Three of the Cathedrals, Canterbury (343),[9] Durham (592) and Worcester (375), have considerable deposits of books still in position.

Canterbury had 1,830 books in the early fourteenth century and Durham kept five hundred books in the Spendiment, or Treasury, and over four hundred in cloister cupboards at the end of the same century, apart from any books elsewhere. It seems probable that Worcester was as rich in this respect. Rochester (144) had over three hundred books, mostly library books too, by the early thirteenth century, and the pressmarks of the books of Norwich (122) and its two cells indicate a combined library of about two thousand volumes.

Benedictine Cathedrals

St Augustine's, Canterbury (266) had a library of over 1,800 books, as a late fifteenth-century catalogue testifies, but abbeys like Bury St Edmunds (257) and Glastonbury (40) may well have been at least as rich. The latter possessed over three hundred library books and numerous service-books in 1247, and abbots continued to add to the collection. By the sixteenth century, the Glastonbury library was rich enough to amaze Leland. Ramsey library (41), with six hundred library books and very many service-books by the end of the fourteenth century, may have grown to a similar size, as may those of Peterborough, St Albans, Evesham and Westminster, the surviving records of which show rapid growth. Books were also written at Reading

Benedictine abbeys

(127) which by the end of the twelfth century already had up to twenty copies of each of the ordinary service-books and over 150 library books, of which 115 were kept at Leominster, Reading's rich and important cell.

The books kept at a cell usually remained the property of the mother-house. Dover (24), which was a cell of Canterbury but also an ancient and important house in its own right, had a library of over 450 books at the end of the fourteenth century. Most cells were by no means so well supplied. Durham's cells at *Coldingham,[10] the *Farne Islands, Jarrow, *Monkwearmouth and Lindisfarne had only about fifty books at most, practically all service-books, and the number of books steadily declined. Such cells, however, might comprise only two or three monks at a time, so one would not expect large libraries.[11] Benedictine cells

Comparison of library catalogues of more or less the same date shows variations in size. At the end of the twelfth century, when Durham had nearly four hundred books and Rochester probably about three hundred, catalogues of the abbeys of Burton (16) and *Whitby (1) show less than eighty books. Even if we add to the library of ninety-five books at Crowland (19) at the beginning of the fourteenth century the twenty-two kept at its cell at *Deeping (1), the total is still less than a fifteenth of the number of books catalogued at the same period at Canterbury by Prior Eastry, who himself had eighty books. Smaller Benedictine libraries

There is little information available about the libraries of other orders of monks, but as the imperfect catalogue, 1310--28, of the Cluniac house at Bermondsey (6) includes over two hundred books in the section from gradus xiv to gradus xxiv, the catalogue from gradus i would perhaps have yielded four to five hundred books. This is the size of library owned by the Cistercians of Meaux (5) in the early fifteenth century. Another house of the same order, Rievaulx (20), had at least 225 volumes in the thirteenth century. As Fountains (40) was a large and very rich Cistercian abbey, it may be presumed to have had a considerable library too, and in any case would need many scores of service-books if over thirty monks were to perform their religious duties. It seems that the Charterhouses had at least adequate libraries, as several of them were at various times in a position to send groups of books to their sister-houses, the London house (29) being particularly active in this respect. Cluniac Cistercian Carthusian

(iii) Houses of canons and other orders

The Austin, or Augustinian, house of Leicester (15), the only house of the order from which we have a complete late-medieval library catalogue, possessed over 1,200 books in the library and elsewhere. As this was an unusually large abbey and maintained a school for boys, it was probably one of the richest houses of the order in books. However, Lanthony (at least 136) had not far from five hundred books in its five book cupboards by the late fourteenth century. A further two Austin houses, Bridlington (9) and Waltham (27), both quite wealthy houses, owned nearly 130 books each in the early thirteenth century, and the canons of Welbeck (3) of the order founded from Prémontré had a similar number of library books, 112, soon after their foundation in the middle of the previous century. One library which has now completely disappeared, that of the canons at St Radegund's, Bradsole, Dover, numbered over two hundred volumes by the end of the thirteenth century, and a century later the fifteen canons of Titchfield (9) owned 224 library books and over a hundred service-books. The larger and richer abbies at *Croxton (4) and *Torre (0) presumably had greater numbers of both kinds of books.

Austin canons

Premonstratensian canons

Syon (96), of the Birgittine or Bridgettine Order, one of the largest and wealthiest houses in the late medieval period, was very rich in books. The brothers' library of over 1,420 volumes might seem excessive for twelve priests, but in fact it acted as a lending library for others outside the house. The sixty sisters of the double monastery also owned many books, some of which had been written, translated, copied or printed especially for them. The nuns of Barking (12) appear to have had quite a few books in their possession, but at Easebourne (0) in 1450 there seem to have been only a couple of dozen service-books. The figures for nuns awarded pensions and for net incomes of houses at the time of the Dissolution fully explain such wide variations: Easebourne, eight sisters, £29; Barking, thirty-one sisters, £862; Syon, fifty-two nuns and four lay-sisters, £1,731.

Syon

Nunneries

The libraries of friaries are poorly represented by identified books and there are scarcely any booklists from them. One catalogue, of the Austin friars of York (8), lists 646 books by the fifteenth century, a third of which had been given by one prior. The Hereford Franciscans (29) apparently also owned several hundred books, to judge from the pressmarks of those which survive. Some quite large donations of books were made to friaries, such as those made to the

Friaries

Ipswich Franciscans (2) about 1300 and to the Crutched friars of London (7) in 1496. The latter may have been a contribution to the rebuilding of a library which had suffered in the recent fire.

The majority of members of hospitals and almshouses were usually unlearned, and a small library would probably suffice. At Ewelme (0), for example, there were thirteen ordinary brothers and only two priests, one of whom had the task of teaching grammar to local boys, so the fifteen service-books and six library books brought to the hospital in 1466 would be just about sufficient for the religious and teaching duties.[12] The largest recorded library of a hospital is that of *Elsyng Spital, Cripplegate, London (2), where there were sixty-three volumes in 1448. The Master of a hospital would probably have books of his own.[13] At least one member of St Bartholomew's hospital (1) was a scribe, and this was one of the accepted activities for a recluse. John Dygoun, fifth recluse of Sheen, copied some books and owned others, and Thomas Scrope copied several books whilst in retirement in a hermitage at the Norwich Carmelite convent.

Hospitals

Recluses

(iv) Secular clergy

Although all secular colleges provided for more than one man in holy orders to perform divine services, they differed greatly in other respects. Most had no more than a dozen priests and deacons, chaplains, canons or prebendaries. The founder was expected to provide service-books, as Sir Reginald Cobham did for *Lingfield (0), and there might also be a small library of other books, as there was at Derby (0), where ten books were chained in the lady chapel, according to the inventory of 1527. Other inventories show twenty-seven books at *Cobham (0) at the end of the fourteenth century, about fifty books at *Bishop Auckland (0) in 1499, thirty-eight service-books at the royal collegiate chapel of *Stirling (1) in 1505 and eighty-two service-books at *Pleshey (2) in 1527.

Secular colleges

Many colleges maintained song-schools and grammar-schools, but the number of library books was usually small, as far as we can now discern. In 1384--5, the large college of St George at Windsor (80) had about seventy service-books, but only twenty-two volumes in the book-cupboard and seventeen chained in the church. Arundel (1) had very similar numbers of service-books and other books in 1517, and at the same period *St Stephen's, Westminster (3) had forty-one service-books. The

inventories of St Mary's College, Warwick (1), show only service-books, nearly a hundred in 1464, but there must surely have been a few books kept for use in the school which it had taken over in 1123 from All Saints' collegiate church in the Castle. This was the case with King's College, Aberdeen (up to 34), a late foundation by Bishop William Elphinstone, which had forty service-books in 1542. Some of its library books survive, including one, a copy of Boethius, bearing the name of the 'regens grammaticorum.'

In some cases, the provision of large numbers of books is recorded. Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, when he founded the college at *Ottery St Mary (3) in the mid. fourteenth century, arranged for masters of grammar and song, and drew up regulations for the care of the service-books which he provided. Another benefactor of the same college a century later gave 136 books, many in his own hand, to be chained in the library. *Rotherham (0), the foundation of Archbishop Rotherham, was given by him a full library of a hundred books, including volumes of theology, saints' lives, law and the classics for the use of the fellows, who ran three schools. The schools in the colleges of Our Lady at Winchester (7) and Eton (64) grew to a considerable size, with scores of scholars. In the fifteenth century, the former owned over 140 library books and nearly a hundred service-books. Eton had fewer library books at that time, but the library later grew considerably, acquiring books from dissolved monasteries.

College school libraries

The University and college libraries at Oxford and Cambridge grew continuously, normally from fairly small donations by fellows and well-wishers. There were some really outstanding gifts and bequests. Bishop Rede of Chichester left hundreds of books to Oxford colleges, and Duke Humphrey of Gloucester gave and left about 275 books to *Oxford University. A similar number of books was given to Cambridge University Library by Archbishop Rotherham, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, owed seventy-six books to one fellow's bequest.

Academic colleges

The extant library catalogues from secular Cathedrals show adequate libraries of several hundred books, comparable with those of the Benedictine abbeys of the same periods, but not rivalling the richest libraries of the Benedictine cathedral priories. This may be because the secular canons spent in priestly duties the hours which their monastic brothers devoted to the copying of manuscripts. One might, however, expect that the secular Cathedral would have kept their medieval libraries more or less intact, as they were not

Secular cathedrals

involved in the Dissolution of regular houses, but actually the distribution of extant identified manuscripts among them is similar to that among the Benedictine cathedral priories, that is to say, some, such as Salisbury (218) and Hereford (123), kept large groups of medieval books until the present day, some, such as Exeter (142) and Lincoln (101), are represented by a number of medieval books still in place and by a larger number which are now elsewhere,[14] whilst a third group, including Lichfield (7), Wells (6) and Aberdeen (3), can claim very few extant identified books.[15]

Size of secular cathedral libraries.

Exeter, an ancient and wealthy but not unusually large community, was probably fairly typical of secular Cathedrals. There the main library grew from 250 in 1327 to nearly 380 in 1506, and there were also some neglected old books and very many service-books. Lichfield and Aberdeen had smaller but not inconsiderable libraries. The latter had 138 library books and sixty-seven service-books in 1436, and the former owned eighty-seven books in 1345 and still had seventy-nine in 1622. Leland noted forty-six books at Wells, but a better indication of the size of the library is the provision of a book-room by 1297 and of a specially-constructed library building by Bishop Bubwith in 1424. The library buildings over the cloisters at Lincoln and at St Paul's, London, built at the same period, housed respectively 109 books in 1450, and 160 books in 1458.[16] As Wells maintained schools in song, grammar and theology, the library there was probably at least as large as at the other two houses.

Private books of priests

The books of bishops formed separate and private collections. Lesser clergy also owned their own books. The rector of Tichmarsh left a library of twenty-six books, not all religious, in his study in 1395. A few books passed from priest to priest in succession, as did the Wycliffite New Testament at St John's church, Newcastle, but usually a priest disposed of his books as he chose, giving or leaving them to his own church or another,[17] to a religious house or other institution, or to friends and relatives.[18]

Service-books in churches

All churches would need a small number of service-books. The founder of the chantry in Ashbourne church provided service-books and other church-goods for it, and a benefactor of Rushall church, in 1444, 'both preeste and place and bokes leest ordeyn at his gret cost,' and at least one of the books was to be chained in place. Among eleven works still chained in *Hodnet parish church of St Luke are a Bible and a Book of Hours, both of the fifteenth century, which presumably formed part of the medieval collection.[19]

A number of parish churches had library books as well as service-books. St Margaret's church, New Fish Gate, London, had over a dozen chained religious books, as well as forty-seven service-books. To the 'libraria' which was at *Boston church were left a Polychronicon and a Dieta Salutis in 1457, and a book of common law in 1469.[20] After the Reformation, these parochial public libraries[21] seem to have declined. In any case, not many medieval books would be found acceptable by the commissioners of Henry VIII, Queen Mary and Edward VI in turn. Very few medieval churches now own any of the pre-Reformation books, and even fewer retained unbroken possession of them.

Parish libraries

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NOTES

1 The information concerning the earlier monastic libraries is not sufficient to indicate their size and contents.

2 This does not apply to Scottish houses.

3 Listed by N. R. Ker, Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books, 2nd edn, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, 3 (London, 1964). The same book also provides much information on the medieval catalogues and booklists.

4 Ker, Medieval Libraries, pp. x--xv traces the descent of some groups of books.

5 The prior and subprior of Monk Bretton took charge of many books from the library of the house. At least one canon, formerly monk, of Winchester collected some of its books.

6 It was noted that in 1609 'a great number of Popish books' and other 'Popish trash' were removed from the lodgings of Abbot Brown of the Cistercian house at Sweetheart. Some of the goods were publicly burnt, see D. McRoberts, Catalogue of Scottish Medieval Liturgical Books and Fragments (Glasgow, 1953); MS no. 30. Bale had also noted that books of the Norwich religious houses were used as wrapping paper by shopkeepers.

7 By this means I have assigned Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 364 to Cambridge University Library.

8 Listed by D. Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses. England and Wales, 2nd edn (London, 1971).

9 In this chapter, numbers in brackets are of extant identified medieval books.

10 Throughout this volume, houses marked thus are introduced for the sake of comparison, but they do not appear in volumes II, III and IV as they are not known to have owned any vernacular works.

11 Cells were provided with books from the library of the mother-house, for example, *Hertford from St Albans and *Stamford from Durham. More books were supplied to the Benedictine cells at Oxford, Canterbury College and *Durham College.

12 As the hospital was founded in 1437, it presumably had some books before 1466. Another hospital, at *Gateshead, which had a master, three priests and some boys, owned fifteen service-books in 1325.

13 William Place, priest, Master of the *Hospital of St John, outside the South Gate, Bury St Edmunds left to the abbey 'my book of the dowte of Holy Scriptur, to ly and remayn in the cloyster of the seid mon(astery) as long as yt wyll ther indure,' and to Sir Ralph Stanton, priest, 'my book of the exposicions of holy Scryptur,' in his will of 1504, S. Tymms, Wills and Inventories from the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury, Camden Society, 49 (London, 1850): pp. 105--6.

14 A group of eighty-four books from the medieval library of Exeter Cathedral found their way into the Bodley collection of manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

15 Another Cathedral, St Paul's, London (26), was robbed of many books by Protector Somerset, who also destroyed the library building and the cloister with the Dance of Death mural. Other books were probably lost in the Great Fire of London, 1666.

16 Hereford had a library building over the West cloister in the fourteenth century, where the books were chained to long reading desks.

17 A Norwich chaplain gave books to his own church and two others in the town. The rector of *Knook gave five books to his church in 1226, and the incumbent of St James' church, *Colchester, in 1491 left several books to be chained in position, see C. Wordsworth and H. Littlehales, The Old Service-Books of the English Church, The Antiquary's Books (London, 1904). The same source gives evidence of books at many other parish churches, such as those at *St Edmund's church, Salisbury in the late fifteenth century, pp. 134--5, 275.

18 The nunnery at Swine was left eleven books by a local vicar, and other priests appear as donors of books in medieval catalogues. Not all the books they gave were of a religious nature: copies of Juvenal and Virgil appear in the late twelfth-century catalogue of Reading among the 'Libri quos dedit Radulfus presbiter de Withir.' John Adeson, the wealthy curate of *Caldbeck, Cumberland, left in his will, 1540, six books to the parish priest of Highborough, others to individuals, and the remainder to the scholars at Cambridge, see J. W. Clay, North Country Wills, being abstracts of wills relating to the Counties of York, Nottingham, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland at Somerset House and Lambeth Palace 1383 to 1558, Surtees Society, 116 (Durham, 1908): no. 127, pp. 173--4.

19 See Catalogue of Books from Parochial Libraries in Shropshire, Shropshire County Library (London, 1971), p. ix. The other nine books are in print.

20 N. R. Ker, The parochial libraries of the Church of England, Committee Report to the Central Council for the Care of Churches (London, 1959): p. 14.

21 Another chained library open to the public was built in the middle of the fifteenth century by the *Guild of the Kalendars of Bristol, see L. T. Smith, The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar by Robert Ricart, Camden Society, 2nd series, 5 (London, 1872), p. vi.

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2 ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR BOOKS IN RELIGIOUS HOUSES

(i) Acquisition of books

Many of the medieval booklists were made to record the circumstances in which books entered the possession of the community and to give credit to those responsible. The founder and later patrons and members gave or bequeathed books, and officials of the house arranged for the provision of necessary books by purchase or by copying at the abbey or priory. Copying books was one of the approved activities for monks, but professional scribes were also employed. There are lists of donations and acquisitions to the Benedictine libraries of Durham, Peterborough and St Albans from the tenth or eleventh to the fourteenth century, and to Glastonbury from the late twelfth to the fourteenth century. The Evesham scriptorium, which included professional scribes, produced at least fifty books under Abbot Thomas of Marlborough (d. 1236), and others under Nicholas Hereford (d. 1392), and presumably also in the period between.

Donations and acquisition

There were probably active scriptoria at all the major abbeys and priories from before the conquest until the thirteenth century or later. Some, like Winchester, provided books for other houses. Probably the fourteen volumes given to King John by Reading abbey in 1208 were the product of the scriptorium. Under Prior Chillynden, 1390--1411, Canterbury gained thirty-four books, and Abbot Whethamstede of St Albans provided forty-one books during his first term of office, 1420--40, some being in his own hand or of his own compilation, other being financed by him. Abbots and priors authorised many books, but other were written 'ad instanciam' of the precentor, the subprior or other officials.

Scriptoria

Monastic scribes such as W. de Wicumbe of Leominster (or Reading) and John of Bruges of Coventry listed with pride the works which they had copied, and others put their names in the volumes, asking for the reader's indulgence and prayers. We know some monk-scribes through medieval catalogues only. Burton, in the early thirteenth century, had two copies of Abbot Geoffrey's Latin Life of St Modwenna, one 'quam Martinus scripsit et alia quam Briennus scripsit.' Copies of very common books, such as psalters, could be easily identified by the scribe' name, and the 'collectiones' or commonplace-books compiled by monks often over a period of years would be hard to summarise in any other way. Eadwin, an early twelfth-century scibe of Canterbury, wrote a Latin Bible, an extant tripartite psalter containing the Hebrew, Gallican and Roman versions, and

Scribes

probably also the 'Liber Edwini a(nglice)' of the catalogue. Similarly, a Durham catalogue of later in the century shows Psalterium Elfredi and Psalterium Paulini among the service-books, and farther on 'Elfledes Boc' and 'Liber Paulini Anglicus.'

Donations of books came to religious houses from their own members and those of other houses and orders, as well as from most classes of the laity. Early purchases of books for Bury St Edmunds cost at least £250. Hand-copying of books, having declined in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, revived and continued into the sixteenth century, but by that time more books were apparently being bought. Prior More of Worcester regularly bought books for the priory during his visits to London.

Donation and purchase

St Augustine's, Canterbury, had regulations concerning the books of a monk who died. All books in his keeping and all those 'de sua adquisicione' were to be added to the library. In the catalogue of the house, names of the donors sometimes form part of the title, where they could be mistaken for authors' names. Other names, perhaps of donors or of monks in temporary charge of the books, are written beside the entries. When several books had been acquired from the goods of a certain monk, they were given letters to distinguish them. This was the case with T. Arnold's collection, which included several French books. Catalogues of some houses list books by their donors instead of by class or by press, but this does not necessarily mean that they were also shelved in that order, as it would be natural to add to an existing catalogue thus. Two catalogues from Ramsey, a fragmentary late thirteenth-century one and another of the next century, and a fourteenth-century catalogue from Canterbury are of this kind.

Addition of books to the library

(ii) Distribution of books in the house

Booklists and catalogues were used for regular stocktaking, often being emended as books were added, moved or lost. Some houses (but not others, see Ker, Medieval Libraries, p. xvii) made a practice of adding to the ownership inscription an anathema on anyone who might remove or even alter the book without authority. An official of the house, very often the precentor, was appointed librarian and held personally responsible for the books in his charge, as even the smallest and commonest book was a valuable article, expensive and laborious to replace. According to the Worcester regulations,

Library stock-taking

the keeper of the library was to make a yearly inventory of the books, with their values, to enter any new books into the inventory and see that they were chained into place. If a book was lost through his negligence, his allowance was stopped until the book's value and a forty shilling fine had been paid. Other lists of library books which give their value, such as the 1327 inventory from Exeter, may imply similar regulations elsewhere. Many inventories were made by officials accounting for the books when handing over to a successor, as for example William of Appleby, the librarian at Durham, did in 1395. From Canterbury College, Oxford, we have a series of wardens' indentures covering the period 1443 to 1534.

In inventories of monastic and other churches, the service-books normally appear after the ornaments and vestments and before other goods. The 'textus' or gospel-books, however, were often counted among the jewels and plate. The justice of this can be seen from two inventories of Henry VIII's reign given by Dugdale. At York Cathedral three of the textus were plated in silver-gilt and set with sapphires and other gems, and others are described in decreasing order of value, including one on which oaths were taken, which had been 'de novo deauratus,' premably because constant handling had worn off the gilt. Winchester had one textus illuminated and even plated in gold, seven more plated in silver-gilt, another bound in velvet with silver-gilt bosses, and so forth. The gems and enamelled or embossed pictures on the covers are described in the inventories. At the Dissolution of the religious houses volumes such as these were of course the first to be removed along with the church plate.

Books as jewels

Service-books were normally kept in the choir of the church, where they were used, under the care of the precentor. St Albans had cupboards for them, some being listed as in the 'armariolo in choro,' and others being added, 1260--90, to the 'armariolo,' probably the same cupboard. A group of service-books provided by one eleventh-century abbot, 'qui in armariolis habentur,' were later to be found 'in cellario,' having made way for newer books. One abbot, Simon, 1167--83, provided a large number of books which were housed 'in armario picto' commissioned by him for that purpose, which stood in the church opposite the tomb of St Roger the Hermit. At Westminster, some service-books at least were kept in the vestry, and at Reading too, in the late fourteenth century, although most of the service-books were kept in the choir, there were others 'extra chorum,' including a breviary in the sacristy.

Service-books

The bursar at Lincoln Cathedral was responsible for the service-books, whilst the precentor was the official in charge of the song-books. In other houses, the chantor had charge of these, and they were usually also kept in the choir, but listed separately. Song-books The Rochester chantor was presumably the keeper of books, since one holder of the office, Alexander, 'ordinavit et scripsit' a group of books which appear as numbers 216--35 in the 1202 list. The noting of song-books was one of the skilled duties in the scriptorium, together with illuminating and book-binding.

Ancient and valuable books were accorded the place of honour on the high altar. Among those on the high altar at St Augustine's, Canterbury, was the ninth-century psalter. Dover also had an ancient psalter, and the community of St Cuthbert, which eventually found a home at Durham, carried the Lindisfarne Gospel-book with them as one of its treasured relics. Books were also kept at other altars and shrines in the church. At Exeter, for example, according to the 1506 inventory, numerous altars had their own service-books on lecterns. Chapels were used to store books or as small reference libraries, or even as lumber-rooms for old books no longer in use. At *Sheppey nunnery the King's Commissioners at the time of the Dissolution found service-books in the vestry and the church, and also 'an old presse ful of old boks of no valew' in a chapel in the churchyard. Some of the service-books, especially the Portiforia, were retained by the members of the community who used them. These are sometimes only mentioned in catalogues, and sometimes listed in full.

Books at altars

Books in chapels

The treasury held the charters of the house, originally kept loose in one or more chests but usually later copied out into book form as a chartulary, sometimes being translated at the same time. At Dover, the 'evidences' occupied four 'scrinea' or chests, the last of which had four compartments, as John Whytefelde recorded in the Latin register he compiled from them, in Lambeth Palace 241. At St Paul's Cathedral some books were also kept in the treasury. Durham Cathedral had a library of four hundred and thirteen books in 1391 in the common case in the Spendiment, or treasury, and further, perhaps more valuable, volumes in the inner library behind the security grill where the money was paid out.

Documents and books in the treasury

Durham also had at the same period a library of nearly four hundred books for study and copying kept in presses against the church wall in the northern walk of the cloisters, just a few feet away from the senior monks when they sat at their daily work in the carrels assigned to them. These individual study booths,

Cloister library at Durham

three to each archway, were divided by wooden partitions and provided with desks and with glazed windows onto the cloister garth. The arrangements at Durham are well documented, but many other monasteries must have had similar facilities for study and writing,[1] and there is evidence of cloister libraries at a number of houses. Pressmarks, or cloister-press inscriptions, occur on some of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century books from Abingdon, Bury St Edmunds, St Augustine's, Canterbury, Ely and Worcester, and do not occur on other books of the same date or earlier which were probably in the book-room or presses elsewhere. Only a small proportion (from 12 per cent to less than 4 per cent) of the extant books from these five houses have the inscriptions or pressmarks, but these suggest in some cases collections of hundreds of books. One of Abingdon's thirty-six extant books was 'liber lxxxviij in inventario armarioli claustri,' which gives us a minimum number. A thirtieth of Worcester's extant books have pressmarks from the presses A to K (and six of the eight letters between), with numbers up to 57, so that in those ten presses there might easily be five or six hundred books. These were presumably the same cupboards which stood in the cloister against the church wall from the eleventh to the early sixteenth century. Less than one eighth of the surviving books from St Albans have pressmarks from the four cupboards A to D, which may have stood in the cloister. If we assume only twelve books to each shelf shown by the pressmarks to have existed, over five hundred and fifty books are indicated. Similarly, five of Ely's forty-eight surviving books bear pressmarks with letters as far as, or at least including, the letter M, and with numbers as high as 60. The Ely book-presses may have stood in the cloisters. Bury St Edmunds certainly had a cloister library, as six of its two hundred and fifty-seven books are marked 'De claustro' or 'De armario claustri.'

Other cloister libraries

The school at Durham was held at the North end of the West walk of the cloisters, and a couple of dozen books were kept there for the use of the novices. At St Paul's also there was a separate collection of schoolbooks.

School-books

At the beginning of Lent every year, according to the Benedictine and Austin Rules, the brothers were to come together to choose a book from the common collection. This was kept apart from the reference library, where the books were sometimes chained in position. At Winchester, 1432--3, there were some books left over from the distribution, and these were put back 'in cista in libr(aria).' Another fragmentary distribution list survives from St Albans. Thorney had about fifty books for the distributions of 1324 to 1330,

Book distributio

when there were about twenty-five monks each year. The abbot kept the Decreta every year, a certain Adam chose the Ecclesiastical History for two years and then the Scholastic History for the next two years. Thomas II retained the Life of St Thomas for the last three distribution, perhaps out of special devotion to his namesake, or perhaps out of illiteracy.

The books chosen by the monks were in their custody for the year. They might also 'per licentiam' be allowed to acquire books by purchase or as gifts or bequests, and also to give, bequeath or even sell them in their turn. The books were supposed actually to belong to the community, and to revert to it on the 'owner's' death, but the rule was not very stringently applied, especially in the case of senior monks and nuns and those of good family. Monk-authors such as Matthew Paris of St Albans and John Lydgate of Bury had private studies and were allowed to accept commissions for works and manuscripts from officials of other houses or from lay patrons. Students going up to Oxford and Cambridge were permitted to take books for study which were 'liberated' into their charge.

Custody and ownership of books

Groups of books were kept at various places convenient for use. Some were kept in or near the refectory for reading during meals. There is an extant list of books to be read at meal-times at Bury, and three of the surviving books are 'De refectorio.' At Durham, the seventeen books for refectory reading were kept in a press in the South walk of the cloister by the entrance to the dormitory where the reader could collect the appointed book on his way into dinner. A list of works to be read aloud at Reading states that they are to be kept in a public place inside the dormitory convenient for the reader. Campsey nunnery had a book of saints' lives in French compiled for reading during meals, and *Sheppey kept 'a boke of saynts lyfes' in the parlour, perhaps for the same purpose.

Refectory books

At Norwich in 1377 there were eighty-four books chained in the dormitory chapel, apparently for use at the night services. One of St Albans' surviving books is 'de infirmatorio,' reminding us that sick and elderly monks and those recovering from the regular bloodletting were not expected to neglect religious duties. The scribe John of Bruges at Coventry wrote some books for the use of sick monks, which were probably put in the infirmatory. John also wrote some books for the use of Prior Roger, and abbots and priors of other houses had service-books in their chapels. Included in the books of Reading abbey in the late twelfth century were four in Abbot Joseph's chapel and four more from the chapel of the abbot of Hyde. Service-books were kept in the prior's

Other collections

chapel at Durham, and Prior More of Worcester provided one service-book and had another repaired for his chapel. The abbot's study at St Albans contained a library of books, with its own catalogue listing the books and their donors.

One of the earliest booklists, an early eleventh-century list from Bury St Edmunds, includes thirty books kept at a manor of the abbey.[2] This is about the same number of books as was kept in small cells. Reading also kept books at Biri, Scorby and seven other places, and also one 'in hostilaria.' Only a small number of service-books would be needed as granges, manors and most cells, as only two or three monks were usually there.

Granges and cells

(iii) Loans and losses of books

The lending of books between libraries helped to enlarge their stock and was the means of dissemination of new works. Even small houses, such as Lindisfarne and *Coldingham, both cell of Durham, could help each other in this way. The 1367 inventory of the former includes a book of Sentences which belonged to Coldingham, and a later list, of 1401, records that a book of homilies from Lindisfarne was in the hands of the prior of Coldingham. A book passed between the small and ancient abbeys of Athelney and Muchelney in Somerset, apparently taken by the abbot of the former when he took the same office in the latter. There seems also to have been some traffic of books between another pair of small and ancient Benedictine abbeys only twelve miles apart, Abbotsbury and Cerne in Dorset. One fourteenth-century book, partly in French, shows signs of having been at both houses, and each also had a thirteenth-century manuscript into which was copied a French treatise on chess, which suggests that the intercourse between the houses may have extended as far as chess games. Two houses which did have considerable contact were the Charterhouse of Sheen and the Birgittine house of Syon, and the Charterhouses lent books to each other regularly.

Loans to other libraries

Religious houses often 'accomodated' bishops, secular clergy and lay persons with the loan of books (see Ker, Medieval Libraries, p. 326). Often a 'cautio' or 'memoriale,' that is, a sum of money as a security, was asked, and occasionally another book was pledged (expositus) instead. When Malmesbury lent a book to Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, he duly returned it ten months later, but this was not the invariable custom of medieval borrowers. One of seventeen books absent

Loans to individuals

from Aberdeen Cathedral in 1436 was 'ablat. per episcopum Glasguensem.' It would be charitable to assume that the book was borrowed, but 'auferre' usually implies deliberate theft. Durham had a regulation, passed in 1235, 'ut nullus Liber accomadetur alicui per Librarium, vel per alium, nisi receperit memoriale æquipollens; nisi fuerit ad instanciam Domini Episcopi,' but had no rules to advise the prior when he had to take his own bishop to law before the latter would return even some of the books he had borrowed (Raine, Cat. Vet. Dunelm., pp. 121--2). In that case, the terms of the loan were apparently agreed orally, which allowed the later disagreement to arise. Often bonds or indentures were drawn up between the parties to avoid such problems (see Raine, pp. 122--3, 127). Even so, some books were lost through being lent. The danger was probably greater when book were loaned for life. In the *Hulne inventory of 1443, for example, there was one book, given by the prior of the day, which 'habet Dominus de Percy ad terminum vitae.' It is to be hoped that his executors returned it. Books which were bequeathed did not always reach those for whom they were intended. The books of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, caused a bitter dispute after his death.

Conditions of loan

Some books were actually stolen from monastic libraries. Reading had a manuscript, now Laud. Misc. 79, stolen about 1490. A monk of the house, William Wargrave, while staying at Leominster, where Reading had a cell, recognised the book and bought it back from a certain gentleman. Books were also pledged or pawned. Prior More redeemed a small portiforium belonging to Worcester and 'lying to plegg in teames strete in London' for 53s 4d in 1518. This was clearly a valuable book, perhaps illuminated, as in the same year he bought a mass-book and a dictionary for only 3s 4d and 12d respectively.

Theft

Pawning of books

Books which had been issued to a member of a religious house might be mislaid if the brother died, especially if this occurred at one of the house's dependencies. The books missing from the library of Canterbury Cathedral by 1337 'ad quos mortui monachi sunt in nota' had reached the number of ninety-three. Lindisfarne, on the other hand, was deprived of four book taken away in mistake by the bursar, Roger de Maynesford, along with Robert Claxton's books. Presumably all the books were taken to Durham, but Lindisfarne's four volumes had not been returned by 1416, seven years later.

Mislaid books

Medieval libraries were subject to violent disruptions, and not only during the period of the Viking raids. The ancient monastic Cathedral of Hexham already had a considerable library when it was destroyed in 875. The Austin priory on the same site was plundered and burnt by the Scots in 1269, and raided again in 1346. Canterbury Cathedral's library suffered in the fire of 1067, Hyde abbey, Winchester, was burnt during the Civil War in 1141, and Norwich Cathedral was badly burnt and the library damaged in local riots of 1272. A small cell of St Albans at *Redbourn was raided and plundered by the French in 1217, and some houses were subjected to floods or even submerged by the sea.

Destruction of libraries

Most losses from libraries were more gradual and less dramatic. In time all the books, especially the service-books in constant use and the unbound quires, would need repair. Canterbury had as many as three hundred and six volumes repaired or awaiting repair in 1508. Eventually books became 'vetustate consumpti,' as were many at Exeter in 1327, 'qui non appreciantur, que nullius valoris reputantur.' Many Anglo-Saxon books must have been totally unintelligible, as well as falling to pieces, but the inbuilt conservatism of monastic libraries acted in their favour. A book was unlikely to be thrown away, regardless of whether it was, or could be, read, 'Whille ani leefe may goodeli hange with oder,' as the inscription runs in the book given to Rushall church. The Exeter Book is an excellent example of the benefits of such inertia. The groups of medieval books which still remain in their cathedral homes probably owe that fact largely to benign neglect.

Worn-out books

Inertia of libraries

(iv) Libraries

By the thirteenth century, the larger monastic libraries needed a room set aside to house them, and were organised into classes. The usual classes are: biblical works, major church fathers, other theological writings, sermons, canon and civil law, followed by groups such as medicine, literature and grammar. Vernacular books tend to occur, if at all, in the later classes, or sometimes as a separate group. The books normally stood in class order in presses or on blocks of shelves (distinctiones or demonstrationes). The pressmarks indicate the cupboard or shelf-section, the particular shelf, and sometimes also the position of the book on that shelf. Many libraries were no doubt arranged in the same way as that at Canterbury Cathedral,

Classes and pressmarks

with double-sided sets of shelves standing out at right angles from the two long sides of the rectangular room, with windows between. In non-monastic institutions such as secular and academic colleges and secular cathedrals, it was inadvisable to allow the books to leave the library, as they could so easily leave the house and be mislaid. The solution was the chained library to be used as a reference library, supplemented, especially in the university colleges, by a large 'circulating library' distributed to the fellows at the 'electiones.' In the chained library, the books, attatched to a metal bar, were used on the sloping tops of the stalls and stored lying flat on the shelves beneath. Many of the medieval library books which have no ownership inscriptions or pressmarks written in them may be from such libraries. Stalls

At Bury St Edmunds, when the books, including those from the cloister presses, were moved into the new library provided by Abbot Curteys (1429--46), an original but logical system of classmarks was introduced, and was carried out by the librarian, John Boston. The letter refers to the author or subject, and the number to the books, so that one would look for Bede and Boethius next to the biblical works, and the Prophets next to Peter Lombard, Peter Comestor and Prudentius. The system can still be seen in the group of Bury's books at Pembroke College, Cambridge (see Ker, Medieval Libraries, pp. 17--9). Bury's classmarks

Many other religious houses and institutions of other kinds acquired library buildings at the same period as Bury. Regular library catalogues must have been essential by that stage if not before, but only a few catalogues of the many thousands which must have been drawn up now survive. The list which follows shows catalogues and booklists concerning medieval libraries in approximately chronological order, omitting most wills and documents which deal with very small numbers of books. Catalogues

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NOTES

1 At the Premonstratensian abbey of *Dryburgh, the North walk of the cloister against the church wall was used for study and copying. The library room was at the junction of the North and East quadrants, but books lent out for use were kept in a press at the East end of the North walk.

2 A copy of the second part of the Wycliffite version of the Bible, prefaced by a calendar, was found in a cellar at *Bere Court, Pangbourne, a summer residence of the Abbot of Reading, to whom it may have belonged.

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Century or date	religious house, and kind of list	number of books, including library and service-books (l-b, s-b)
10th	Durham (1), gift by Athelstan	5
about 966	Peterborough (1), refounder's gift	21
11th	Sherborne, inventory	9 s-b
11th	Bury St Edmunds (1), list	20 s-b + 30
--1072	Exeter (1), gift and acquisitions	30 + 29
1077--93	St Albans (1), provisions	40+
late 11th	Worcester (1), list	11
about 1100	" (2), list	59
by 1096	Durham (2), founder's gift	50
by 1195	" (3), donation	72
beg. 12th	Peterborough (2), catalogue	67
early 12th	Canterbury (1), fragmentary catalogue	223
early 12th	Abingdon list	about 100
1144	Loch Leven, founder's gift	17
mid. 12th	Rochester (1), catalogue	100
	" (2), fragmentary catalogue	
12th	Welbeck, catalogue	128
12th	Lincoln (1), catalogue	126
1167--83	St Albans (1), provisions of a prior (cupboard full)	
about 1180	Whitby, catalogue	about 100 works
late 12th	Canterbury (2), list of s-b	
late 12th	Durham (4), catalogue	nearly 400
	" (5), fragmentary catalogue	35
end 12th	*Plympton, gift and bequest	
12th/13th	Bury St Edmunds (2), fragmentary catalogue	267
	" " " (3), works to be read aloud	17 works
	" " " (4), gifts	(many)
12th/13th	Burton, catalogue	78
end 12th/ beg. 13th	Leominster (2), scribe's list	20
12th/13th	Reading (1) + Leominster (1)	150 + s-b, + 114
1202	Rochester (3), catalogue	280 vols
early 13th	" (4), books added by precentor	about 30
	" (5), gifts	28
1202	*Felixstowe, books of prior	6

late 12th--early 14th	Glastonbury (2), books made and acquired	nearly 90
1208	Reading (3), books presented to King John	13
early 13th	Lincoln (3), books borrowed	14
early 13th	Flaxley, catalogue	79
early 13th	Bridlington, catalogue	over 60 l-b + over 60 s-b
--1236	Evesham (1), books written and acquired	at least 50
early 13th	Waltham (1), catalogue	about 128
1240	Coventry, scribe's list	33
1245	London St Paul's (1), inventory	over 35
	" " " (1a), inventory copy	" "
1247	Glastonbury (1), catalogue	over 300 l-b + over 100 s-b
13th	Worcester (3), fragmentary list	6
13th	Gloucester (1), gift	6
	" (2), probable gift	41
1246--8	*Newenham, first abbot's gift	12
13th	Rievaulx, catalogue	about 250
1267	*Exeter Franciscans, books assigned	14
late 13th	Ramsey (1), fragmentary catalogue	191
end 13th	Dover St Radegund's, catalogue	over 200
1295	London St Paul's (2), inventory	130
	" " " (2a), inventory copy	121 s-b + 18 l-b
1298	" " " (3), books kept in St Gregory's church	8 s-b
end 13th/beg. 14th	Crowland, catalogue	95 works
about 1300	Ipswich Franciscans, donation	over 50
1305	Bordesley, Beauchamp donation	27
1310, 1313, 1318	Jarrow, inventories	about 20 s-b
1313	London St Paul's (4), bequest	126
1310--28	Bermondsey, imperfect catalogue	over 206
1314	*Anglesey, distribution list	26
1315--1409	Durham (6a--f), lists of books sent to Durham College, Oxford, and of books purchased	
early 14th	Lanthony, see 1380	
1316	Canterbury (3), inventory	36 s-b + 19
1321	*Monkwearmouth, inventory	14 s-b

1324, 1327, 1329, 1330	Thorney, distribution lists	51
1325	*Gateshead Hospital of St Edmund, inventory	15 s-b
1325	Oxford, Merton College (1), distribution of philosophy books	85
1327--	Exeter (2), catalogue	245 + 55 s-b
	" (3), donations	nearly 50 s-b
1328	Guildhall (1), bequest	6
1328	London St Paul's, see (5), schoolbooks left	at least 20
1329	Salisbury, bequest	15
early 14th	Canterbury (4), Eastry's catalogue	1,831
1331	" (5), bequest of Eastry's books	80
1337	" (6), books missing and on loan	63 + 17
1337	*Totnes, inventory	7 s-b
1338	*Monkton Farleigh, inventory	130 l-b
1339	*London Dominicans, inventory	8
about 1340	Ottery St Mary, founder's gift	(many s-b)
1341--74	Glastonbury (3), donation by abbot	
1343	Hinton (1), books lent	20
1345--	Lichfield, inventory	87 s-b
1347	Chester, bequest	20
1348	Jarrow, inventory	17 s-b
1348--1553	Lindisfarne, inventories	40 declining to 26
mid. 14th	*Deeping, booklist	22
12th--14th	Peterborough (3), gifts by abbots	over 200
14th or 15th	Hagnaby receipt for books	5
1350	*Cambridge, Trinity Hall, founder's gift	84
1350--60	Oxford, Merton College (2), distribution of theology books	250
about 1352	Norwich (1), prior's books	31
1358	London St Paul's (5), bequest of schoolbooks	100 works in 44 vols
1360	Cambridge, Clare College (4), founder's gift	
1361	Lanthony (2), bequest	57
1362, 1371, 1372, 1446	*Coldingham, inventories of books in the church	24, later 19
about 1360	London Charterhouse (1), founder's gift	(many)
about 1365	*Hulne, imperfect catalogue	35
1368	Oxford, Merton College (4), bequest	24
1349--96	*St Mary de la Pré nunnery, gift from abbot of St Albans	6 or 7 s-b

1372--15th	York Austin friars, catalogue, see below	250, later 646
1341--74	Glastonbury (3), books given by an abbot	
1372	Oxford, Merton College (3A), distribution list	136
1375	" " " (3B), distribution list	141 + 13 left over
1375	*Oxford, Oriel College, catalogue	nearly 100
1376	Westminster (1), bequest	94
1376	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, catalogue	44 l-b + 11 s-b + 25 quires
1377	Norwich (2), books chained in dormitory chapel	84
1378	Oxford, Queen's College, books returned	24
early 14th + 1380	Lanthony (1), catalogue	486
14th--16th	*Oxford, New College, gifts	nearly 400
late 14th	Peterborough (4), incomplete catalogue	346
after 1370	London Charterhouse (1), founder's bequest	
late 14th	Ramsey (2), imperfect catalogue	over 600 + many s-b
	" (4), books out on loan	12
1381	*Aylesford, list in cartulary	about 75
1384--5	Windsor (1), inventory	35 l-b + 55 s-b
1385	Oxford, Merton College (5) bequest by Bishop Rede of Chichester	100
	" *New College	100
	" Exeter College	26
1385	Exeter (4), books liberated	11
1387	Hull (1), books of the founder	3
1377 or later	" (2), books brought from London Charterhouse (2)	25
1388	Westminster (2), inventory of vestry	29 s-b
1389	Dover, catalogue	over 450
1390--1400	*Oxford, Durham College/Durham (6b)	109
--1392	Evesham (2), books made and acquired	97
1394	York, Holy Trinity, bequest	5
1391	Durham (7a), Spendement catalogue	413
1395	" (8), cloister cupboards, reading books and schoolbooks	390 + 17 + 23
14th	" (9), two imperfect catalogues	at least 27
1395	Tichmarsh (2), will with inventory of books	26
1397	Norwich (3), bequest	(6 barrels)
end 14th	*Cobham collegiate church, inventory	27
1394, 1436, 1451, 1513/4	*Farne Island, inventories	up to 40, mostly s-b

14th/15th	Swine, gift by vicar	11
late 14th/ 15th	Peterborough (5), works transcribed	80 works
1400--5	Titchfield, catalogue	224 l-b + 102 s-b
early 15th	St Albans (4), fragmentary distribution list	
1405	Winchester College (2), catalogue roll	
1407	Warwick (1), catalogue	53 s-b + 7 l-b
1408--36	Oxford, Merton College (3D), documents and indentures for books	140
1409	Durham (13) books brought from Lindisfarne	13
1409--10	Windsor (2), inventory	14 l-b + 61 s-b
1410	Oxford, Merton College (3C), distribution list	185
1411	Canterbury (7), books acquired	34
early 15th	Meaux, catalogue	over 300 l-b + over 100 s-b
1414	York (1), bequest	37
1415	*Kings Langley, bequest by Bishop Rede	
1415/6	Windsor (4), gift	11 s-b
1391--1416	Durham (7b), Spendement catalogue, revised by John Fyshburne	nearly 430
1418--	Cambridge, Peterhouse (1), catalogue and later additions	439 + 19
1421	Durham (10), inventory of Chancery books	18
1421--2	Winchester College (2), catalogue roll	
1422	*Stamford (1), books sent from Durham (11)	9
	" (2), books lent	4
1422 + 1452--3	Norwich St Leonard's, inventories	nearly 50
1424	Cambridge University Library (1), catalogue	122
1431--2	Winchester College (2), catalogue roll	
1432	Glasgow, catalogue	at least 110 l-b + 47 s-b
1432--3	Winchester College (2), catalogue roll	chained library + 23 unchained
1434	Scarborough, inventory	59, mainly s-b
1436	Aberdeen (1), inventory	138 l-b + 67 s-b
about 1438	*Spalding, books taken to Oxford by a monk	12
--1440	Cambridge, Clare College (3), donations	55
1440	" " " (1), catalogue	86 l-b + 25 s-b
1439	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (2), bequest	76
1439--1517	(4), distribution lists	87

	St Albans (1), books given and acquired	
--1440	" " (2), books acquired under Abbot Whethamstede	41
	" " (3), fragmentary list	
	" " (4), fragmentary distribution list	
1441/2	*Michelham, books missing at visitation	7
1442	Guildhall (2), bequest	
1439, 1441, 1444	*Oxford University, Duke Humphrey's gifts	about 275
1443	*Hulne, inventory	59 l-b + 20 s-b
1443	Oxford, Canterbury College (1A), warden's indenture	102 + 8 s-b
1444	Rushall, founder's gift	(several)
about 1442 + later	Oxford, All Souls' College (1), founder's gift	27
	(2), catalogue of chained library and circulating books	380 + 199
1438--1575	(4) and (5), gifts	
1445	London St Pauls (6), list	18 s-b
1445	Eton (1), inventory	47 s-b
before 1445	Ottery St Mary (2), books taken to London	11
1445	(3), bequest	136
1446 + 1483	Derby, inventory	23 s-b
1446	*Coldingham, inventory	19
1448	*Elsyng Spital, London, inventory	63
	York, (3a) and (3c), wills	42 + 12+
1450	Easebourne (1), inventory	24 s-b
about 1440 --50	Worcester (4), list of books	30
about 1450	Lincoln (2), catalogue	109
1452	Cambridge, King's College, inventory	175
15th	Witham (1), Blacman's gift	68
	" (2), books bought by Blacman	44
15th	Winchester (1), catalogue	141 l-b + 94 s-b
15th	Reading (2), books in dormitory for reader	15 works in 22 vols
15th	Ramsey, catalogue	about 50 + loose quires
(1372--)15th	York Austin friars, catalogue	646
1455	*Bristol, St Ewen's church	31 s-b + 6
1458	London St Pauls (7), catalogue of the new library	160 l-b
1458	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (3), Tyteshale bequest	12

1456--96	*St Andrew's University, gifts	
1459	Oxford, Canterbury College (1B), warden's indenture	132
1463	London, St Bartholomew's Hospital, Master's gift	(several)
1464	Aberdeen (2), inventory	138 l-b
1464	Warwick (2), inventory	98, mainly s-b
1465	Eton (2), inventory	42 l-b + 87 s-b
1466	Ewelme, inventory	6 l-b + 15 s-b
1469	*Lytham, gift of books to be chained	
1472--	*Cambridge, Queen's College, catalogue	
1472	London, St Margaret's church, inventory	59, mainly s-b
1473	*Arbroath, books left at the abbey	34
1473	Cambridge University Library (2), catalogue	330
1415--1528	" " " (3) and (4) gifts	
1474	Oxford, Lincoln College (2), catalogue	135
mid. 14th--late 15th	Cambridge, Pembroke Hall (1), 25 donations	158
15th	" " " (2) books bought	46
1475, 1483	*Glasgow University, gifts	10 + 13
1475	Cambridge University Library (5), Rotherham donation and bequest	over 200 + more
1475	Cambridge, St Catherine's Hall, catalogue	127
1476	Oxford, Lincoln College (3), distribution list	37
1477	Norwich, St Stephen's church, chaplain's will	several s-b + 2 l-b
1480	Jarrow, inventory	13 s-b
1483	Oxford, Merton College (6a), indenture	68
1486	London St Pauls (8), catalogue of treasury	52, mainly s-b
1490	*Helborne, inventory	7 s-b + 6 l-b
1491	Jarrow, inventory	13 s-b
late 15th	St Albans (5), books sent from *Hertford	16
late 15th	Canterbury St Augustine's (1), catalogue	1,837
1496	Cambridge, Clare College (2), old and unbound books	90
1496	London Crutched friars, donation	over 31
1495--1502	Oxford, Canterbury College (2b), books liberated from Canterbury	15 + 17 + 6
1496	" " " (2d), warden's books	17
1498	*Aberdeen, St Nicholas, inventory	3
1499	*Bishop Auckland, list	about 50
late 15th/early 16th	*St Andrews, collegiate church of St Salvator, inventory	over 60 s-b + 3 l-b

end 15th/ beg. 16th	Leicester, catalogue	over 1,200
15th/16th	Wimborne, gift	5
1500	*Rotherham, Jesus College, founder's gift	about 100
1500	London Charterhouse (3), books sent to Coventry Charterhouse	14
early 16th	London Charterhouse (5), books sent to Hinton (2)	9
1501	Oxford, Canterbury College (1C), warden's indenture	336
1501	" " " (1D), catalogue	209 + 20 s-b
1505	*Stirling, royal collegiate chapel, inventory	38 s-b
1506	Exeter (5), inventory	over 600
1506	*Richmond Franciscans, bequest	12
1507	Oxford, Merton College (6b), receipt for books	73
1507	*Scarning, bequest	9
1508	Oxford, Canterbury College (2c), books in the warden's charge	77
1508	Canterbury (8), books repaired or due for repair	306
1508	Oxford, Merton College (6c), distribution list	
early 16th	York (2), inventory	13 s-b
early 16th	Aberdeen, King's College, founder's gift and donation	9 + 8
1510	Oxford, Canterbury College (1E), warden's indenture	218
	" " " (3) books owned by monk-students	
1513--4	*Farne Island, inventory	
1513	Oxford, Merton College (6d), distribution list	
1516	Ashbourne, founder's gift	several s-b
1517	Arundel, inventory	43 + 77 s-b
1519	London Charterhouse (4), books sent to Mount Grace (1)	15
1519	Oxford, Merton College (6e), distribution list	460
1521	Oxford, Canterbury College (1F), warden's indenture	323
1524	" " " (1G), warden's indenture	292
1526	Lincoln (4), bequest	12
early 16th	Syon, catalogue of men's library	over 1,421
1527	*Pleshey College, inventory	82
1527	Derby, books given, chained in Lady chapel	10
1528	Cambridge University Library (3), donations	
	" " " (4), Tunstall's donation	50 s-b

1529	Long Melford, inventory	50 s-b
1531/2	Eton (3), inventory	about 100 s-b
1518--33	Worcester (5), books bought by Prior More	about 80
1533	Lindisfarne, inventory	24
1534	Oxford, Canterbury College (1H), warden's indenture	284
1511--35	Hereford donation	24
1536	Lincoln (5), inventory of revestry	10 s-b
1536(--48)	*Bristol, Holy Trinity church, inventory	at least 18 s-b
1540	Westminster (3), inventory	26 s-b
	Westminster, *St Stephen's church	41 s-b
Dissolution	Kilburn, inventory	2 l-b + 8 s-b + 2 chests s-b
Dissolution	Waltham (2), inventory	
Dissolution	*Sheppey, inventory	at least 15 s-b + one l-b + press full of s-b
1542	Aberdeen, King's College, inventory	39 s-b + 3 l-b
1544	*Perth, St John's church, inventory	3 s-b
1547	Long Melford, inventory	27 s-b
about 1550	*Crail, inventory	32 s-b
1552	Guildhall, 3 cartloads of books removed	
1553	Long Melford, medieval books restored	41 s-b
1556/7	Cambridge, King's College, inventory for Ed. VI's commissioners	113
1557	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, inventory for commissioners	135
	*Lingfield, returns to commissioners listing founder's gift in 1431	15 s-b + 2 l-b
1558	Monkbretton, books left from medieval library	145

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NOTES

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*Farne Island: inventories pr. J. Raine, The History and Antiquities of North Durham, as subdivided into the shires of Norham, Island and Bedlington (London, 1852): pp. 347--57.

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*Glasgow University: C. Innes, Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis. Recc of the University of Glasgow from its foundation till 1724, Maitland Club 4 vols (Glasgow, 1854): 3, pp. 403--6.

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*Monkton Farleigh, Cluniac: inventory mentioning 130 unnamed books in the library, noted R. Bressie, 'MS Sloane 3548, Folio 158,' MLN, 54 (1939), pp. 246--56: p. 250.

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4 RELIGIOUS WORKS IN THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGES

(i) Service-books, the Bible and theology

Latin, the language of services, was naturally that of service-books too. Rubrics in the reader's own language were sometimes added to help him, or more usually her, to follow the proper procedure. Syon, for example, had several service-books and prayer books with English directions. It is very rare to find service-books actually written in any language but Latin, but the nuns of Easebourne apparently had two ordinals and a gradual or grail in French. Service-books

At the end of the Middle Ages, the Syon Martyrology was translated into English by a priest of the house. The previous translation of the Martyrology had been into Anglo-Saxon five centuries earlier, when there was also an Anglo-Saxon version of the collection of Latin hymns used in the church.

The Psalter was the one book of the Bible which was always available in the common tongue, perhaps because it was thought to present fewer theological dangers to the unlearned. Psalters glossed in Anglo-Saxon were numerous and widely distributed, and among the earliest works written in Anglo-Norman were glosses to both the Gallican and the Vulgate forms of the Psalter in the early twelfth century. In the same century appeared a Commentary on the Psalter written in the Anglo-Norman dialect. A metrical Middle-English version of the Psalter was composed in the second half of the thirteenth century, and two religious houses had copies of this version combined with Latin and Anglo-Norman versions. Richard Rolle's English Psalter, a translation with continuous commentary, was written about 1340 and gained a wide circulation, as is indicated both by the surviving copies and by references in other medieval works and documents. Psalter

Bede had reportedly translated at least part of the Gospels in the eighth century, but the earliest versions we have, the West Saxon translation and the Northumbrian gloss added to the Lindisfarne Gospels at Chester-le-Street, date from two centuries later. The early books of the Bible were also translated into Anglo-Saxon during the later part of the tenth century, and there was an Anglo-Saxon version of the Acts of the Apostles, according to a medieval catalogue of Canterbury. Stories from the Bible had been turned into Anglo-Saxon verse as early as the seventh century, by Caedmon of Whitby, and the poets who produced the works formerly Biblical books and stories

attributed to Caedmon took the same themes.

There are two very incomplete Anglo-Norman versions of the Bible, and French Bibles appear in four medieval catalogues, from the early twelfth to the middle of the fifteenth century. Most of the Anglo-Norman translations, however, were of excerpts from the Bible. In the twelfth century appeared two metrical works, one a translation of stories from the Bible, the other the Proverbs of Solomon by Sanson of Nanteuil, who was chaplain to a lady. Another chaplain, Robert of Gretham, writing for a lady in the thirteenth century, produced a metrical version of the Sunday gospel-readings. Works which may have been copies of the translations by Sanson and Robert appear in monastic library catalogues. A very popular biblical book, as the extant copies prove, was the Apocalypse. Very often this was written in picture-book form, with text and commentary in Latin, Latin and French or French. One of the thirteenth-century versions in Anglo-Norman was written by William Giffard, chaplain to the nuns of Shaftesbury. The reading habits of the ladies of a nunnery, and especially of such a wealthy and influential nunnery as Shaftesbury, were similar to those of their sisters, aunts and nieces who were still in the world.

The translation of the Bible into Middle English begins with a group of New Testament books during the fourteenth century, some combining a commentary with the translation. By the end of the century, the Wycliffite version of the New Testament was circulating, closely followed by the full Bible. Whether the version was considered heretical or not, it was certainly very widely distributed. A much wider public of literate lay people was producing a demand for English books, and several parish priests had a copy of the Wycliffite version of the gospels and epistles for Sunday reading. By 1537 a full translation of the Bible, by Matthews, was available in print. According to a command of Henry VIII, 1539, every parish church was to contain a large Bible in English.

English Bible

The most highly respected authorities after the Bible were the church fathers such as Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and Jerome and the later doctors of the church. Their works, which were almost always in Latin, formed the theological core of the monastic library. King Alfred translated extracts from the Soliloquies of Augustine of Hippo, and Bishop Waerferth made an Anglo-Saxon version of the Dialogues of Gregory the Great. An Austin canon of St Frideswide's, Oxford, wrote a metrical Anglo-Norman version of Gregory's Dialogues in 1212, but it seems not to have gained any wider circulation. French and Middle

Church Fathers

English were otherwise used only for short extracts from the authorities in collections of sentences.

A work which was accorded much the same status as the Christian authorities was Boethius' De consolatione Philosophiae. It was translated into Anglo-Saxon by Alfred, freely into Anglo-Norman by Simund de Freine, canon of Hereford, and later into Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer and also by Walton, canon of Osney. Boethius

(ii) Religious duties and instruction of the public

Most of the copies of the monastic rule were in Latin, but there were also versions in the vernacular languages. Anglo-Saxon or bilingual versions of the Benedictine Rule, the Regularis concordia and the Rule of Chrodegang were at Canterbury and other houses. Four copies of the Benedictine Rule in French appear in medieval catalogues of Benedictine houses, and a translation was made for the nuns of the order at Wilton. The canons of Leicester owned three copies of their Austin Rule in French, one of which survives. The Ancrene Riwle, which was later translated into French, was written in English, perhaps as early as the late twelfth century in the original form, and early the next century it is English which Simon of Waveney employed for his translation of the Benedictine Rule which he made for the nuns of Wintney. It seems probable that Simon was more at home in French, since he used that language for his dedicatory verse-letter, and he clearly expected the nuns to be able to understand both that and the instructions for the use of the calendar, in French prose. Three centuries later the version, by then virtually incomprehensible, was replaced by Bishop Fox's translation made and printed for several Benedictine nunneries. Rules of religion

Several other religious houses owned copies of their religious rule which had been written in English or translated for them. A translation of the modification of the Rule of St Clare which was used by the Paris Minoresses was made for its daughter-house in London, founded 1293--4. Syon had two copies of the English version of the Rule of St Austin, two Latin and English copies of the Rule of St Saviour, and also two copies of the Additions to the Rule of St Saviour composed for the use of the Birgittine community in 1416 at the command of its founder. Richard Whitford, finding the first of these 'scabrouse, rughe, or rude, and not after the commune englysshe of this countree,' made a new translation which was then printed

for the house. Syon also owned one of the two extant copies of the English version of the Formula noviciorum. One translation of the Rule for Solitary Hermits attributed to St Celestine was written at the Hospital of St John the Baptist, Bristol, and another was written by a canon of Coverham. The only known copy of the English version of the Speculum inclusorum was owned by the first priest of William Browne's foundation at Stamford, who may possibly have made the translation himself. The Ordinances and customs of the hospital of St Lawrence, Canterbury, were also in English.

Under Bishop Wulfstan, 1003--16, and later in the eleventh century, Worcester seems to have taken the lead in compiling and copying Anglo-Saxon Penitentials for confessors and the texts known as Ecclesiastical Institutes, giving instructions in religious duties. Worcester apparently used until the thirteenth century its two copies of Alfred's translation of Gregory's Pastoral Care, which work he had prepared and circulated to the bishops in an effort to combat the illiteracy of many of the clergy. There was apparently no other guide for the unlearned parish priest on his day-to-day duties written in his own language until John Myrc, a fifteenth-century Austin canon, wrote his Instructions to Parish Priests.

Religious duties

There were, however, numerous paraphrases and expositions of the essentials of the Christian faith, such as the Creed, the Paternoster, the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins, and forms of confession, first in Anglo-Norman and later in Middle English. Many of the paraphrases were in verse form for easier recall. These tracts and paraphrases are by no means limited to manuscripts owned by those who had the care of souls, but some of the compilations were clearly designed to help a priest to teach his flock the element of their religion in their own language, as was his canonical duty. The series of English paraphrases in the late thirteenth-century manuscript from Sompting church were presumably used by the incumbent in his sermons, and English verse was also incorporated into Latin religious compilations and sermon-manuals written in the late fourteenth century, such as the Fasciculus Morum, the Speculum Christiani and the commonplace-book of the Franciscan preacher John de Grimestone. The sermons of the medieval preacher might be delivered in Latin, French or English, depending on the audience. Bishop Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln, for example, appears to have used all three languages.

Religious teaching

Preaching

In the Anglo-Saxon period, homiliaries were common, and collections were written by Ælfric and Wulfstan and compiled from the sermons of other authors. The genre of the verse-sermon makes its appearance in the Anglo-Norman dialect. One verse-sermon was written by an Austin canon of Carmarthen for one of his brothers at that house, and another was written at the request of a bishop of Lincoln. The collection of French sermons on the Sunday gospel-readings by Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris 1168--75, is extant in both continental and Anglo-Norman copies, and at least three of the latter were owned by English religious houses. Other French sermons, perhaps copies of the same collection, occur in medieval library catalogues. Homilies written in Middle English begin to appear in the thirteenth century. Collections for preaching on the Sundays throughout the year were written in English, as they had been written in Anglo-Saxon and French. Three houses of canons are known to have owned such collections of English sermons.

Sermon collections

(iii) Saints' lives

One of Ælfric's series of Anglo-Saxon homilies had been based on Lives of the Saints, and this genre of literature, combining dramatic narrative and devout intention, was one of the most popular throughout the Middle Ages. A house naturally owned or produced lives of its patron saint or saints and of any other with whom it could claim a connection or of whom it possessed a relic. Quite a few of the lives were written in or translated into Anglo-Saxon, but many of them have been lost, as may be seen from references in medieval catalogues and in other works, such as the Liber Eliensis. Probably the last Anglo-Saxon hagiographer was Colman, who was chaplain of Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester. This is not the homilist Wulfstan, who was Archbishop of York from 1016 to 1023, but a later namesake who died in 1095. When Colman, who had previously translated saints' lives from the Latin, then wrote a Life of Wulfstan, Anglo-Saxon was already falling into disuse, and soon afterwards the monks of Worcester asked William of Malmesbury to translate the work into Latin for them.

Anglo-Saxon saints' lives

From the early twelfth to the late thirteenth century, Anglo-Norman was the vernacular language used for writing saints' lives which were to be read by, or read aloud to, ladies and gentlemen in religion or in the world. Almost all of these saints' lives were in verse.

Benedeit translated the Voyages of St Brendan for Queen Aelis in about 1121, and about fifty years later, Garnier of Pont-Sainte-Maxence compiled his Life of St Thomas à Becket with the co-operation of the monks of Canterbury and the Abbess of Barking. Towards the end of the century Beneit, a monk of St Albans, wrote a different Life of St Thomas à Becket, and another monk, Denis Pyramus of Bury St Edmunds, a former courtier, produced a Life of St Edmund.

Anglo-Norman saints' lives -- twelfth century

Nuns and secular priests also turned their hand to writing similar works. Clemence, a nun of Barking, wrote a Life of St Catherine about 1150--60, and either she or another nun of the house composed the Life of St Edward. Adgar, who was probably a chaplain of the same nunnery, produced a collection of Miracles of Our Lady about 1160--70, which he claimed was translated from a book at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and from another secular Cathedral, that of Hereford, came a Life of St George, written by a canon, Simund de Freine.

Austin, or Augustinian, canons were introduced at the beginning of the twelfth century, and soon appear as authors and patrons of literature. About the middle of the century, Hermann of Valenciennes wrote a Life of St Tobit for the prior of Kenilworth, and the author of the Life of St Giles was apparently a canon of Barnwell. Probably the Life of St Osith, which was written in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, originated in the Austin house dedicated to that saint which gave its name to St Osyth.

The abbeys of Bury and St Albans, both large and flourishing in the early thirteenth century, continued to produce Anglo-Norman literature. Everard de Gateley of Bury revised some of Adgar's Miracles of Our Lady, and at St Albans Matthew Paris, the Latin chronicler, composed metrical lives of four English saints -- Alban, Thomas à Becket, King Edward and Archbishop Edmund Rich, the last a translation of his own Latin original. Some copies at least of Matthew's works were designed as picture-books for noble ladies. Another Benedictine abbey, Burton, may have produced the thirteenth-century translation of Abbot Geoffrey's Latin Life of St Modwenna.

Anglo-Norman saints' lives -- thirteenth century

Among the Austin canons who wrote in the thirteenth century was Angier of St Frideswide's, Oxford, who followed his translation of Gregory's Dialogues mentioned above by a Life of St Gregory, written in 1214. Another canon, Peter d'Abernon, possibly also working at St Frideswide's, produced a Life of St Richard Wych, Bishop of Chichester,

for one of the secular canons of that cathedral college.

The Franciscan Order, introduced into this country about 1220, grew rapidly during the thirteenth century. The Franciscan Nicole Bozon produced a larger number of Anglo-Norman works than any other known author, but many of them are short. He produced at least thirteen short saints' lives, four of which were included with d'Abernon's Life of St Richard Wych and other twelfth- and thirteenth-century saints' lives in a collection made for reading in the refectory of the canonesses of Campsey. One early thirteenth-century author belonged to the order of Knights Templars. At the request of a colleague, Henri d'Arci, he wrote metrical versions of the Vitas Patrum, the Life of Thais, the Coming of Antichrist and the Vision of St Paul.

In the twelfth century, Hermann of Valenciennes had written biblical poems with special attention to the lives of Our Lady and Our Lord, and similar works were produced in the next century too. The accounts of the childhood of Christ, or Enfances Nostre Seigneur, were based on the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. Several versions of the Purgatory of St Patrick were also made in French verse.

The fourteenth century saw the rise of Middle English hagiography. The works were written mainly in verse, but some prose appears in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The anonymous South English Legendary must have been widely distributed, as many copies survive. There was also a Scottish Legendary, extant in one copy, which has been attributed to John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen until 1397. The first English version of the Golden Legend, or Legenda aurea of Jacob of Voragine, was written in prose in 1438. Caxton's version was a fresh compilation from French, Latin and English sources, and several probable copies of the edition appear in medieval booklists of religious houses.

English legendaries

Benedictine monks of the great abbeys and cathedral priories were prominent as authors of individual saints' lives. John Lydgate, monk of Bury St Edmunds and apparently the most prolific translator and author in Middle English, wrote six saints' lives, one of which, the Life of St Alban, was commissioned by Abbot Whethamstede of St Albans, about 1430. Laurence Wade, monk of Canterbury, produced a Life of St Thomas à Becket in 1497, and the short anonymous account of the Martyrdom of St Stephen which occurs in a manuscript from Canterbury may perhaps be attributed to William Brewyn, the chantry priest who owned the book. From Rochester we have the Life of

English saints' lives

St Ursula by Brother Edmund Hatfield, and an early sixteenth-century Benedictine of Chester, Henry Bradshaw, composed the Life of St Radegund and the Life of St Werburga. Alexander Barclay wrote his Life of St George whilst he was a monk of Ely, and some of his other works, including saints' lives, may date from that period.

Further works were written by and for members of other religious orders. John Capgrave (1393--1464), whose works include lives of St Augustine, St Gilbert of Sempringham, St Norbert and St Catherine, was an Austin friar of Lynn. The second of these was commissioned for the nuns of Sempringham by the Master of their Gilbertine Order, and the Life of St Norbert, founder of the Premonstratensians, was intended for the abbot of the West Dereham house of canons of that order. Osbern Bokenham, canon of Stoke-by-Clare, was also writing several saints' lives in the middle of the fifteenth century. It would seem that there was also a poet or versifier at Stone priory, who put into English verse the Life of St Wulfhad and St Ruffin.

Wilton nunnery owned the unique copy of the Life of St Edith and Life of St Audrey written about 1420 in the local dialect, obviously for the sisters and quite possibly by one of their number. Another anonymous fifteenth-century author, the 'englisshe compyloure' of the lives of four female saints which are found in Douce 114, was probably one of the monks of Beauvale, and the English Life of St Robert of Knaresborough may be assumed to be the work of a Trinitarian brother of the Knaresborough convent.

A group of saints' lives written at or for Syon was in English prose. Thomas Gascoigne, a friend of the house who was Chancellor of Oxford University 1442--5, wrote a Life of St Birgitta for the nuns, and Simon Winter, a priest of Syon, wrote a Life of St Jerome and probably also a Life of St Francis. All three works appear in early editions.

(iv) Welsh religious tracts and religious and other poems

In 1346, an anchorite of Llandewivrevi wrote for a friend translations of the Elucidarium and other religious works, including some saints' lives, all in Welsh prose. The Austin house at Carmarthen had a collection of many Welsh poems on historical, mythological, religious and literary themes. An important Welsh medieval poet, Gutyn Owain, was connected with the Cistercian abbeys of Basingwerk and Strata Florida, but it is not known whether they owned copies of his work.

Scarcely any Gaelic survives from religious houses of Great Britain, but there were poems by and about Columba current at Iona in the late seventh century.

(v) Prayers and religious verse

A few Anglo-Saxon prayers occur in the extant manuscripts. From the post-Conquest period, we also have a number of prayers in Anglo-Norman and Middle English prose, but much more numerous are verse-prayers, hymns and religious lyrics. The popularity of some of these pieces is indicated by the number of surviving copies, often in manuscripts from widely separated houses of different religious orders.

The vast majority of the religious pieces are anonymous, but some are by known authors. Nicole Bozon produced religious poems, verse-prayers and allegories as well as saints' lives, and a metrical allegory by Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, was very popular. St Richard of Chichester's English verse-prayer survives in a Syon manuscript and early editions of the Book of Hours, and Richard of Caistre, vicar of St Stephen's church, Norwich, is credited with the composition of a verse-prayer found in many manuscripts. Another vicar, William of Shoreham, who was probably also an Austin canon of Leeds in Kent, produced a series of religious and didactic poems, perhaps for the benefit of his parishioners at Chart Sutton. Verse-prayers were among the works of John Lydgate of Bury St Edmunds, and there were at least two further significant poets in religious houses. John Audelay, Austin canon of Haughmond, produced a large number of religious hymns or poems despite his physical handicaps, but the only copy appears to be the original one, later given to a canon of Launde by a minstrel of Coventry. Similarly, the translations of William Herebert of the Hereford Franciscans survive only in his own copy.

Religious verse

Authors of Middle-English religious verse

(vi) Didactic religious books and spiritual guides

In the thirteenth century, in addition to anonymous tracts and verse-prayers and allegories such as those by Bozon and Grosseteste, two major works of religious instruction were written in the Anglo-Norman dialect, both in verse. These were the Manuel des Péchés attributed to William of Waddington and the Lumière as Lais, based chiefly on the

Elucidarium of Honorius of Autun, which was begun by the Austin canon Peter d'Abernon at the Newark house of his order and finished in 1267 at Oxford. Both works were very popular, and were owned by several houses of more than one religious order. The fact that d'Abernon's work was primarily intended for the laity did not prevent its acceptance into monastic libraries. The influencial continental work written in 1279 by Friar Laurence de Premierfait for King Philippe III of France and hence often called the Somme le Roi was owned not only by the Franciscan friars of Southampton, but also by the Benedictines of St Augustine's abbey, Canterbury, as two entries in their medieval library catalogue show. Another treatise, an allegory actually written by a layman, Henry, Duke of Lancaster, also appears in the medieval catalogue of a religious house, in this case Titchfield.

French manuals

The most popular religious manuals of the fourteenth century were in English, and usually in verse. The Ayenbite of Inwyt by Michael of Northgate, monk of St Augustine's, Canterbury, never gained popularity, and this failure was presumably due not only to the Kentish dialect in which he wrote, but also to the immense popularity of its metrical counterpart, the Prick of Conscience. Nassington's Mirror of Life, again in verse, was also very popular, to judge by the surviving manuscripts, and the metrical, though unrhymed, Lay Folk's Catechism, based on the Latin original by Archbishop Thoresby of York, spread from York at least as far as Durham and Rievaulx.

English manuals

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many anonymous tracts in English prose were written for the unlearned but devout laity, and found their way into religious houses. One of the groups, the Pore caitif, is extant in over fifty copies. Later authors, such as Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, and Richard Whitford, priest of Syon, continued to produce simple didactic religious works for the general public.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, however, some devout lay men and women and nuns, though unable to read Latin, were expressing a need for spiritual guidance of a more advanced nature on matters such as contemplation and the stages of spiritual development. The English works of Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton and anonymous writers on the life of the spirit appear in the wills of the laity and were owned by members of religious houses too, regardless of which type of person they were originally designed for. Hilton's Epistle on Mixed Life, written for a lay lord, was owned by two nunneries. Other

Spiritual guidance

works originally written for nuns, such as the Chastising of God's Children and the Doctrine of the Heart, were left to religious sisters by ladies not under religious rule. Ladies, indeed, play an important part in the development of this branch of English literature. Not only were many works addressed to nuns, among whom we may include Lady Rolle's disciple, the recluse Margaret Kirkby, but later in mystics the fourteenth century two women mystics wrote of their experiences in English prose. One, Lady Julian of Norwich, became a recluse after her vision, the other, Margery Kempe, continued in the world.

Syon probably helped to introduce in this country the accounts of the revelations of the continental female mystics, to which it would have access through its association with the mother-house of the Birgittine Order in Wadstena, Sweden. The brothers' library possessed English versions of the Revelations of St Matilda and Syon those of St Elizabeth of Hungary, and no less than seven copies of the Revelations of St Birgitta, presumably the Latin version. Some of the fifteenth-century English translations of the work may have been made from Latin copies borrowed from Syon. Two English copies were left to nuns: Margaret Purdans left a copy to a sister of Thetford, and the Duchess of York left one to her daughter, a prioress of Syon. Richard Whitford of Syon may have used the latter copy when making his translation of the Revelations of St Birgitta, and in translating the Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis, he would presumably have had access to the copy of the earliest English version which had been copied for an abbess of Syon by William Parker, or Darker, Carthusian of Sheen. Two works were written in English for the sisters of Syon during the fifteenth century, and later printed for their use. These were the Orchard of Syon, based on the Dialogue of St Katherine of Siena, and the Mirror of Our Lady, a translation of and commentary on the church offices and the Hours of Our Lady.

Syon had close links with Sheen Charterhouse and the two houses apparently loaned each other books. Copies of the Speculum Spiritualium, a work which was owned by three other monasteries, appear in the catalogue of Syon, where the book is attributed to one Adam the Carthusian. Syon's copies, however, were apparently derived from Sheen, as they contained the summaries of the books which had been prepared by Master Henry of that house, so the attribution was probably made on the authority of the Carthusians themselves. The author of the work in its present form, which incorporates English extracts from Rolle and Hilton, cannot have been the same Adam the Carthusian, formerly of the Premonstratensian house at Dryburgh, who wrote several Latin tracts, but may well have been a later namesake, since

the sources mentioned were certainly studied by members of that order.

One work known to have been written by a Carthusian, Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Life of Christ, based on a Latin work which is attributed to Bonaventura, became very popular. Three of the many copies were owned by Charterhouses, one, possibly Prior Nicholas' own copy, being from Mount Grace, and another having been written by a brother of Sheen. William Parker, also of Sheen, copied the Latin and English religious compilation known as the Speculum Christiani, in addition to the manuscript for the abbess of Syon which is mentioned above. James Greenhalgh, who was at several Charterhouses in turn during the early sixteenth century, made a special study of religious writings, in which work a sister of Syon, Joan Sewell, was apparently his pupil or colleague. James' studies are known to have included Hilton's Scale, the Chastising of God's Children, the Mirror of Simple Souls and the Divine Cloud of Unknowing, and he and Joan owned a copy of the first edition of Hilton's Scale and Epistle on Mixed Life. The three anonymous works show close association with the Carthusian Order. The Chastising of God's Children was owned, as far as is known, only by Charterhouses, by Syon and by nuns. Three copies survive of the Mirror of Simple Souls, and all were owned by Carthusians. The Cloud was owned by three Charterhouses, and copies of the tracts associated with it were at two houses of the order and at Syon. In addition, Richard Methley of Mount Grace translated the Cloud and the Mirror of Simple Souls into Latin. The same house also owned the only known manuscript of the Book of Margery Kempe, one more indication of the interest shown by the members of the order in this field of English literature.

Carthusian scribes and students of English religious books

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5 NON-RELIGIOUS WORKS IN THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGES

(i) History and geography

Several Anglo-Saxon king-lists and similar pieces of historical material survive, but the first serious attempt at historical writing in the vernacular was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, compiled at Winchester under King Alfred's direction. From there the work spread by successive copies and versions to others houses where chroniclers continued the record of events. At Peterborough, this continued into the early twelfth century, but elsewhere the post-Conquest monastic chronicles and annals were in Latin.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

The metrical chronicles in Anglo-Norman verse took as their starting-point the Historia Regum Britannie by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Robert Wace planned a trilogy, the first part covering the same period as the Historia, that is, from Brutus, the supposed founder of Britain, to the death of Cadwallader in 689, the second part dealing with the Anglo-Saxons and the third with the Normans. A similar trilogy was intended by Geffrei Gaimar, but only the second part of the work survives. Copies of the Anglo-Norman chronicles were owned by religious orders, but the works are no longer dependent on the monasteries for their distribution. A metrical Chronicle was written by Peter Langtoft, an Austin canon of Bridlington, in the fourteenth century, and two of the extant copies belonged to local houses of the same order. By Langtoft's time, however, various of the many versions of the Brut Chronicle were beginning to circulate. There are also several extant chronicles of shorter periods of national history, one of which was written by Jordan Fantosme, master of schools at Winchester.

Bruts

Although Geoffrey's Historia had been completed in about 1136, and as early as the end of the same century Lazamon, priest of Arley Kings, had written a metrical English national chronicle or Brut, he appears to have inspired no imitators. The members of religious communities confined their writing to Latin and to local chronicles or versions of chronicles in Anglo-Norman. Wigmore abbey and Delapré and Godstow nunneries had chronicles of their foundation. The Geste de Burgh was an account of Peterborough abbey's history in chanson de geste form. In a manuscript owned by the Hospitallers of Waterford is a metrical account of the origin of the order, presumably written by a knight of the house. Canterbury Cathedral produced the Polistorie, based on Wace's Roman de Brut, and quite probably also the

Local and specialised chronicles

Livere de Reis, a chronicle epitome. The Norwich Benedictines and the Gilbertines of Sempringham added their own continuations to the Livere de Reis, and at St Mary's, York, where there were two copies of the Brut Chronicle, an anonymous continuation was added to the latter. English chronicles came later. During the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, a verse-chronicle was produced at Gloucester, one of the authors and revisers of which was Robert of Gloucester. Wilton nunnery and the Trinitarian house at Knaresborough each combined a foundation-chronicle with a metrical Life of the local saint. Foundation-chronicles were also written at the Austin houses at Stone, St Bartholomew's in Smithfield, and Walsingham, and one of the Benedictines of St Albans wrote a Chronicle of England, adding some local historical material. The History of the Carmelites was translated into English by Thomas Scrope whilst he was living in a cell by the church of the Norwich house of that order, from 1425 to 1440.

The writing of chronicles naturally continued up to and beyond the end of the Middle Ages, but monastic writers were no longer taking an active part. John Warkworth, Master of Peterhouse, copied by hand the chronicle in Caxton's 1482 edition, and added his own continuation, and soon afterwards Robert Fabyan brought out his own Chronicle, the latest and most ambitious of a series of chronicles in Latin, French and later English which had used the resources of the Guildhall library and records of national and London events.

Meanwhile, a cycle of chronicles was developing in Wales, resulting in numerous extant copies. Indeed, the Welsh chronicle appears to pre-date the Anglo-Norman, since Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed as his source a little book in the British tongue brought from Wales and given to him by his friend Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. This Walter died in 1151, and is not the humorist Walter Map who held the same office half a century later. The chronicler Caradoc of Llancarfan, a contemporary of Geoffrey, may have been a member of a religious community, and his Gwentian Chronicle formed the basis for the Chronicle of Princes. The latter may be the work which was compiled at the two Cistercian houses of Strata Florida and Conway. Another Cistercian abbey, Basingwerk, owned a volume of Welsh chronicles partly in the hand of Gutyn Owain, bard and herald, who is our authority for the chronicling activity of the other two abbeys. Welsh chronicles

King Alfred had translated from the Latin Bede's Ecclesiastical History, and also Orosius' World History, to which he added a little additional information. Later attempts to produce a universal history in English include, in the fourteenth century, the Original Chronicle in Scots verse by Andrew of Wyntoun, prior World history

of St Serf, and the translation of Ralph Higden's Polychronicon by John of Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley, and, in the early fifteenth century, the Chronicle by John Capgrave, prior of the Austin friars of Lynn. An earlier friar, the Dominican scholar and historian Nicholas Trevet, had used the French language in writing a chronicle-epitome, or child's history of the world, for the benefit of Princess Mary, a young nun of Amesbury, who died before the work was completed.

The curiosity of the medieval reader extended not only to the beginnings of the world, but also to the orient, home of every possible and impossible wonder. Anglo-Saxon and bilingual versions survive of the Marvels of the East, and later the account of the fantastic Travels attributed to John Mandeville became very popular in its Anglo-Norman form and in several English translations. One English version is unique to a manuscript from St Albans abbey, which suggests that the translator may have been a monk of the house. Mandeville was supposed to have been a native of the town of St Albans.

The East

More reliable accounts of the East, and especially of the places associated with Christ, were prepared by those who had actually been there. The description of the Holy Land and its recapture, written by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, was translated into French by the hospitaller Jehan de Vygnai in 1330. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, had a book 'de terris orientalibus et decimalibus' which was at least partly in English. The fourteenth-century poem on the Stations of Rome followed the route of a pilgrim in Rome, and early in the next century Capgrave, who had himself been on pilgrimage, wrote a 'Solace of Pilgrimes' or Guide to the Antiquities of Rome on the Christian and antique sights. These works might serve to guide the pilgrim, or to allow the reader at home to travel in his imagination. More practical information for pilgrims was compiled by William Wey during his last years at Edington, based on his own experiences. He included advice on what to take and how much to pay, Latin and English itineraries, a Hebrew glossary, a Greek phrase-book and a Spanish song from St James of Compostella. A later English travel-book was written by Richard Torkington, rector of Mulberton.

Guides for pilgrims

(ii) Sciences

Works in the vernacular languages survive on many of the medieval sciences, especially on those of practical application, foremost among which was medicine. A composite herbal and several collections of recipes were made in Anglo-Saxon, and at least seven monasteries owned such medical volumes. After the Conquest, the religious houses had collections of recipes, glossaries of medical and herbal names, and medical tracts, written in French and later in English. One of the most popular tracts was an English translation of the Latin poem Macer Floridus de Viribus Herbarum. Medical pieces are usually minor items in a manuscript, so many more would doubtless come to light if we had fully detailed catalogues of medieval libraries, and, indeed, of all the modern collections of medieval manuscripts.

Medicine

Prognostics, too, were strictly practical pieces of information, being the only guide to lucky and unlucky days, suitable times for the regular blood-letting and the forthcoming weather. Quite a few manuscripts from religious houses contain Anglo-Saxon prognostics or verse or prose prognostics in French or English. Prognostics from the casting of dice are also found in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English forms, and St Augustine's, Canterbury, had a French tract on chiromancy, or palmistry. Among the items in a manuscript once owned by the Knights Hospitallers of Waterford is a French tract on the significance of dreams. A similar tract in English, clearly based on a Latin dream-book, occurs in a compilation, mainly in English, which was probably made at Ely and which includes other prognostics and tracts on numerology and astrology. A study of cosmology, with diagrams and tables, was in the possession of an early sixteenth-century prior of Muchelney. Astronomy, not yet clear of astrological significance, was studied in the monasteries, some of whose inventories list astrolabes. Titchfield, according to the medieval library catalogue, had instructions in French on how to construct both an astrolabe and its quadrant.

Prognostics

Cosmology

An essential and practical branch of knowledge, linked to both prognostics and cosmology, was the science of the calendar. Computistical notes in Anglo-Saxon are found in several manuscripts, and Byrhtferth, a monk of Ramsey, compiled a Handboc on the subject. Later, three religious houses owned French tracts on Algorism, or arithmetic.

Computus

Arithmetic

The study of cosmology led naturally to that of alchemy, which was, clearly, pursued by monks and canons. The science had not yet become disreputable. Abbot Cremer of Westminster may be considered a student of the subject, since in the first half of the fourteenth century he had a picture of the Grand Mysteries of the Philosopher's Stone painted on an archway in the abbey. Richard Dove, one of the Cistercian monks of Buckfast, owned a manuscript in which occur English translations of the Semita recta and the Speculum luminum, two tracts by Albertus Magnus. George Ripley, a canon of Bridlington who, after studying abroad, is reported to have become a Carmelite, dedicated his Compound of Alchemie, written in English verse, to Edward IV, apparently hoping to find in him a 'chyld of thys Dissyplyne.'

Alchemy

Although there are extant an Anglo-Saxon lapidary in a manuscript from Canterbury and an early thirteenth-century English bestiary from Norwich, the main language for both kinds of writing was Anglo-Norman. Among many French lapidaries in verse and prose are three metrical tracts by Philippe de Thaun, who also wrote the Computus, an exposition of the calendar, and a Bestiary, both in verse. Bestiaries were also written by William the Norman and Richard de Fournival.

Lapidaries and bestiaries

Late in the Middle Ages, when printing was making it possible for large numbers of quite poor laymen to purchase at least one book, the Shepherd's Calendar was published for such readers. This combined in one volume an almanack and calendar, rules for maintaining good health, and elementary religious instruction for the unlearned. It seems, however, that even learned monks found the work useful, as Monk Bretton owned a copy and another was sent to Mount Grace from the Charterhouse at London, where the book was on sale.

Shepherd's Calendar

(iii) Law and administration

There are several early collections of Anglo-Saxon laws, but after the Conquest, Latin and Anglo-Norman were the languages of the law and the court for centuries. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the legal tracts which were not in Latin were in French. A number of such legal treatise were written, mostly in the short period of Edward I's reign (1272--1307). This was a time of drastic re-organisation of the law concernind land-tenure, and religious houses were vitally affected by measures such as the 'Quo Warranto' writ

Legal tracts

of 1278 and the Statute of Mortmain of the following year. Several houses are known to have owned copies of the French legal tracts and collections of statutes, which often included some statutes in Anglo-Norman and glossaries of the old English legal terms. A house needed to know not only how to defend its rights, but also how to administer its estates, and so another genre of Anglo-Norman writing sprang up in the thirteenth century, that of the Husbandry. These tracts on the practical business of an estate, including accountancy and auditing, are found in estate-books, rentals or chartularies of religious houses. Although there was an English version of the Rules of St Robert, no community seems to have owned any works on husbandry in English, perhaps because by the time English became the language which would have been chosen for such a purpose, the affairs of monasteries were in the hands of hired officials, and not of the brothers themselves. Even the useful little English poem on gardening found in a manuscript from Glastonbury is not found elsewhere, though as there is a fragment of a different version extant, the subject may not have been neglected.

Husbandries

Major Anglo-Saxon chartularies survive from the ancient monasteries of Canterbury, Rochester and Worcester. Post-Conquest registers of charters were drawn up in Latin, but sometimes preserved the original form of early charters in Anglo-Saxon, or, in the case of Llandaff, in Welsh. In the twelfth century, a few charters in Gaelic were added to the Book of Deer. In the Dover priory catalogue, the 'Evidencie castri et prioratus douorre' were at least partly in French. In the middle of the fifteenth century, English versions were made of the Latin chartularies of the Austin abbey and of Godstow. The friend who translated the Godstow register specifically says that the nuns needed to look after the possessions of the house but, though 'for the most party in Englyssh bokys well y-lernyd,' they were hampered by their poor knowledge of Latin.

Chartularies

(iv) Education

Ælfric, as a teacher at Winchester, provided the first known schoolbooks in the vernacular languages of Great Britain, his Grammar and Glossary. Soon, Anglo-Saxon glosses were added to his Colloquy, which his pupil Ælfric Bata had revised, and to other scholastic colloquies, and at least five glossaries were compiled. French grammar-books begin with glosses added to Latin textbooks such as

Grammar

Alexander Neckam's treatise De Utensilibus, and with glossaries, usually of French nouns or verbs, that is, Nominalia or Verbalia. Sometimes the material was gathered together into a 'donait' or grammar-book, thus named from Donatus. In the late thirteenth century appeared a metrical tract of instruction in the French language, written in French and English by Walter of Bibbesworth, and there followed several other treatises in verse and prose. Writers in the late Middle Ages, when English was the mother-tongue, produced instruction in that language, with French examples. Two such authors were Alexander Barclay and Giles Duwes, the latter being tutor to Henry VIII's daughter Mary. English grammatical texts were owned by Worcester priory and Winchester College, but the language-teaching in schools was directed towards Latin, as in Ælfric's time. A surviving copy-book of a student at Canterbury shows a pattern still familiar today: lists of vocabulary, grammar lesson, translation of English sentences into Latin, and finally Latin passages. William Horman, headmaster of Eton and later of Winchester, also used translation exercises from English, or Vulgaria, which he published after his retirement from teaching.

The earliest Latin-English dictionary, the Campus Florum, was probably written at Merevale abbey by Thomas Walleys, who died in 1359, and a Dominican recluse of Lynn is credited with the writing of the Promptorium Parvulorum in 1440. Several copies of the anonymous Medulla grammatice, and of its printed form the Hortus Vocabulorum, were at religious houses, and a subchantor of Lincoln Cathedral owned one of the two known manuscripts of the alphabetical English-Latin dictionary known as Catholicon Anglicum. Dictionari

Business training included the study of the French language, and was conducted in French and Latin, at least by the Oxford teacher Thomas Sampson in the first half of the fourteenth century. Notes from his lectures were taken by former students to the abbeys of Bury St Edmunds, Robertsbridge and St Albans. These lectures probably included an extant tract on heraldry, in French, of course, that being even now the language of the art. Tracts on other courtly pastimes, such as falconry, hunting and chess, first appeared in French, and only later, if at all, in English. The Book of St Albans, printed there in 1486, on the subjects of hunting, hawking and coat-armour, was written by a lady who may have been the prioress of Sopwell nunnery. There were also two English versions, written earlier in the century, of Vegetius' Latin work De re militari. Syon owned a Business training

Courtly pursuits

copy of John Clifton's prose version, made about 1408 for Trevisa's patron, Thomas, Lord Berkeley. Witham Charterhouse also owned a 'tractatus de armis in anglicis.'

The accepted medieval textbook on conduct was Cato's Distichs, translated into French by several authors, including a monk of Bury and one of Winchester. Syon had a copy of one of the English versions of this work too, probably the one by Benedict Burgh. Other works on conduct and manners, first in French and later in English, were produced for the guidance of the young. Advice was also offered to kings and princes on how to rule. The author of the Book of Pluscarden included at the end of his work some Advice on just rule for James II, and Guthrie collegiate church owned a treatise by John of Ireland addressed to James IV. The English in both cases is of the Scots dialect. The Secretum Secretorum, which Aristotle supposedly sent to his pupil Alexander the Great, was translated into French by Peter d'Abernon and also by Joffroi, a Dominican friar of Waterford in Ireland, but few copies of either version survive. On the other hand, we have over twenty copies of the English version begun by Lydgate and completed by Burgh, and forty-six of the Regiment of Princes, a work by Lydgate's contemporary Thomas Hoccleve using the Secretum Secretorum and also the tract De regimine Principum by Guido delle Colonne (Egidius de Colonna). Both English poems were owned by lay men and women, by nuns and by monks or canons.

Conduct

Advice to rulers

Brunetto Latini's Livre dou Tresor, an encyclopaedia of history, science, ethics, and rhetoric, was written about 1260 and became extremely popular on the continent. Copies of the work appear in the library catalogue of St Augustine's, Canterbury, and in the list of the Beauchamp donation to Bordesley. At least three religious houses owned another popular encyclopaedic tract in French, the Livre de Syndrac, on natural history, and a brother of St Augustine's, Canterbury, had Hugh de Campeden's metrical English version printed.

Encyclopaedias

(v) Fiction

The distinction which the modern reader would make between history and hagiography on the one hand, which should at least in principal be based upon actual events, and complete fiction dealing with similar themes on the other hand is not clear in medieval literature, nor, apparently,

in the medieval mind. The legends of Eustache the Monk, Barlaam and Josephat, and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus were regarded as saints' lives. Similarly, the chansons of the English heroes Beuves de Hampton and of Guy de Warwick are seemingly as factual as the story of the death of William Longespee and the verse-biography of William the Marshal. The two last, now extant in only one copy each, were, it appears, more widely copied than this would indicate, as copies of both were given by Guy de Beauchamp to Bordesley abbey in the donation already mentioned, and St Augustine's, Canterbury, owned the 'Liber de Guilelmo le March in Gallico.' A chanson de geste which was based on historical fact is that of the Capture of Antioch in the First Crusade. Probably Benoit de Saint-Maure's Roman de Troie, the Octavian romance, the so-called Turpin Chronicle and others were also thought to be historical. One of the French versions of the Turpin Chronicle was written by William de Briane, possibly the rector of Whitchurch-on-Thames.

French historical romance and historical fiction

The Beauchamp donation to Bordesley incuded works on the 'matter of antiquity' (two copies of the Alexander Romance), on the 'matter of France' (chansons de geste from the Charlemagne cycle and other related French cycles), and on the 'matter of Britain (an incomplete copy of the Lancelot-Grail cycle of Arthurian romances in prose). Works from one or more of theses three 'matters' were owned by several other religious houses. Evesham had copies of two Arthurian romances and two chansons de geste, all copied at the house during the fourteenth century, and the library of St Augustine's acquired, from the private collections of past monks, four Arthurian romances, two metrical romances by Hue de Rotelande and five different chansons, including no less than three copies of the chanson of Guy de Warwick, This chanson may possibly have originated at Osney, where the major manuscript of the Chanson de Roland was kept.

French chansons and romances

English romances do not appear to have been popular in monastic libraries, or perhaps it would be truer to say that by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the reading public for such works was predominantly the literate laity. Even the two highly popular historical romances in English verse written by Lydgate, a monk himself, seem not, as far as the surviving copies show, to have spread to other monasteries. Two nuns owned copies of the Story of Thebes, but the Troy Book does not appear even in nunneries.

Lydgate's English historical romances

Although individual stories were written in the vernacular languages for the entertainment and often the edification of the reader, the earliest probably being the Anglo-Saxon translation of story of Apollonius of Tyre, it is commoner to find a series of tales. Marie de France, an early Anglo-Norman writer who may have been an abbess of Shaftesbury, produced two such series in verse, one consisting of Breton Lays, the other of fables based on those of Aesop, one of several French Ysopets. Both works were to be found in monastic libraries. There were also several early editions of Aesop's Fables in English, one of which may have been the 'Ysops fabylles in prente' sent from the London Charterhouse to Mount Grace.

Stories

Fables

Often the stories serve as exempla for a unifying theme or pattern. The anonymous early fourteenth-century collection of biblical and other stories known as Cursor Mundi took the Seven Ages as its framework. A common theme indicated by the title binds the stories in Giovanni Boccaccio's Latin work De casibus virorum illustrorum, which was translated into French by Laurence de Premierfait, and thence into English verse by Lydgate at the request of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester. This work, the Fall of Princes, like the same author's historical romances, seems not to have formed part of any monastic library, except, presumably, that of Bury, but there were copies at Exeter Cathedral and at St Catherine's Hall, Cambridge.

Collections of stories

In the Anglo-Norman Romance of the Seven Sages of Rome, which was owned by four religious houses, the stories are set within a narrative framework. Chaucer later uses the narrative framework technique for his Canterbury Tales, but adopts the first person for it, as the long allegorical poems do. Of the eighty-four copies of the Canterbury Tales now extant, only two are known to have had owners who were under religious rule, in both cases Austin canons.

Stories in narrative

Probably the most popular French work of the whole of the Middle Ages, with over two hundred copies, was the Roman de la Rose, begun as a love-allegory by Guillaume de Lorris and later completed by Jean de Meung, who showed how very much didactic material the allegorical form could be stretched to accomodate. Windsor College seems to have had a two-volume copy of this long work, and another copy may possibly have been at Dover priory. The Roman de la Rose, when transformed by Jean, could more truly be called an encyclopaedia than an allegory. Other authors used the medium of the allegory or dream narrative to discuss religious and moral matters, a method familiar to readers

Major allegories

throughout the medieval centuries from Boethius' De consolatione Philosophiae. Two fourteenth-century allegories in English, William Langland's Vision of Piers Plowman and John Gower's Confessio Amantis, were very popular, each extant in fifty or so manuscripts, only two of which in each case were owned by religious houses. A further two copies of Piers Plowman appear in the wills of secular clergy. Two of the allegorical and didactic Three Pilgrimages written by Guillaume de Deguilleville were translated into English. Copies of the anonymous prose version of the second part, the Pilgrimage of the Soul, incorporating Three Pilgrimages hymns by Thomas Hoccleve, were owned by an Austin prior, a Benedictine nun, and Carthusian monks, and among the books taken to Ewelme Hospital in 1466 was a copy of Lydgate's version of the first part of Guillaume's trilogy, the Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, sometimes known as Grace Dieu from the name of the narrator's guide and mentor.

It is interesting to note that even in the middle of the fifteenth century French works were still being disseminated in this country. The Ewelme list just mentioned includes the chanson of the Four Sons of Aymon and 'a frensh boke of the tales of the philosophers,' presumably a copy of the Romance of the Seven Sages. Both these works had been in existence for over a century and a half, but the list also includes a copy of the Citee des Dames, a translation of Boccaccio's work De claris mulieribus by the continental French authoress Christine de Pisan written at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and another volume in the list may well have been a copy of Christine's Poets poems. Even in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when many writers were laymen, others had connections with religious houses or were in orders. Two poets of the English language in this period, for example, were the Scottish Chaucerian, Robert Henryson, who was Master of the grammar-school attatched to Dunfermline abbey, and John Skelton, who, in addition to being a courtier and scholar, was also rector of the church of Diss in Norfolk, where he spent some years away from public life. Elsewhere there were doubtless authors in religious houses who, like Richard Whitford of Syon, continued to write up to and through the Dissolution.

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6 VERNACULAR LANGUAGES IN NON-LITERARY CONTEXTS

(i) Monuments and memorials

The vernacular languages of pre-Conquest Britain make their first appearance in the North on carved stones from the fifth and sixth centuries onwards.[1] The Latin inscriptions with occasional words thought to be in Pictish, and the Pictish symbols and inscriptions in ogham script which occur in isolation or are sometimes added to Christian stones, do not usually seem to be connected with Christian communities.[2] However, the Latin inscriptions in which apparently Goidelic words are incorporated may mark centres of Dalriadic evangelisation, and possibly lost monastic communities.[3]

Pre-Conquest stones

The surviving Christian crosses erected by the Anglians in Northumbria from the seventh century onwards may represent early communities.[4] Most of the inscriptions on the crosses are unfortunately very short, but one, the Ruthwell Cross, bears, carved in runes, an early eighth-century North Northumbrian precursor to the Dream of the Rood, perhaps the original form of that poem.[5]

Christian crosses

From the five centuries between the Conquest and the Dissolution, a number of epitaphs upon monuments in religious houses survive, or were recorded by early antiquaries.[6] A few of these are in French or English verse or prose. Parish churches had very numerous epitaphs, and at least two hundred and fifty still have surviving vernacular epitaphs.[7]

Post-Conquest monuments

The first Anglo-Norman epitaphs appear on stone coffin lids of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as those found in London near the Guildhall chapel and at the Austin priory of St Bartholomew, Smithfield. Flat slabs were also set into the floor, as at Chichester, or into the wall, as at Norwich Cathedral.

In stone

Throughout the Middle Ages, academics and ecclesiastics nearly all have Latin epitaphs, but inscriptions for the laity include a considerable proportion in French in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[8] English begins to appear in the late fourteenth century, and within a few decades replaces French on the tombs of the merchant class and even of the nobility.[9]

Language of epitaphs

On earlier tombs figures representing the dead were sometimes carved in high or low relief out of horizontal slabs set into church wall. On a less elaborate tomb, the figure was drawn in incised lines onto the slab, probably the origin of the monumental brass. The inscription, which was at first spelt out in Lombardic

Monumental brasses

brass letters set individually round the margin of the tomb slab, was later engraved on brass fillets let into the border, on plates below the figure, or sometimes on scrolls, shields or other devices held by them. Much rarer are effigies cast in brass, such as are found on the tombs of the Black Prince at Canterbury and of Richard Beauchamp at *St Mary's, Warwick.

Memorial brass plates

Brass plates were used to commemorate events such as the foundation of Bisham priory, and to ask prayers for the founder or benefactor.[10] Other brass plates set out the conditions of a benefaction. One at *St Michael's church, Wood Street, London, recorded a yearly donation from the proceeds of the Plough, and another at *Finchley church, Middlesex, showed an extract from a will setting up a chantry priestship and a yearly gift to the poor.[11]

Memorial inscriptio

Verses on a table at Stone priory, probably composed in the fifteenth century, told of eleven generations of the lords of Stafford, all benefactors or 'founders,' and nearly all buried at the church, and mural verses at Holloway chapel, carved into the stone, requested prayers for John Cantlow, who rebuilt it.

Memorial windows

Few traces are left now of votive windows, which may have become quite common in the wealthier areas in the late Middle Ages.[12] The house for Austin canonesses at Holywell, which, as one of many benefits and endowments, was partly rebuilt and enlarged, had windows with couplets reminding the nuns to pray for the donor. The 'Bede' window at All Saints church, York, with illustrations of the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday accompanied by verses from the Prick of Conscience, also contains a series of figures presumably representing the donor of the window and his or her family. Another window, at a Coventry church, was a reminder of the exemption from toll conferred on the town by Lurich in honour of Godiva.

(ii) Visual aids to thought

Momento mori

Many surviving examples testify to the wealth of devotional and didactic material which was formerly displayed in churches. One of the commonest themes, especially in epitaphs, was naturally the brevity of human life, often combined with an exhortation to good works, that is, almsgiving, while it still lies in one's power, executors being proverbially untrustworthy. A seven-line stanza in English and Latin on the dread of death is reported from at least four churches;[13]

*Luton, Bedfordshire, *Northleach, Gloucestershire, and *Great Tew and *Witney, Oxfordshire. From another two parish churches, at *Hampton-in-Arden, Warwickshire and *Kelshall, Hertfordshire, comes a four-line warning against faithless heirs and executors, and the same lines form part of further epitaphs elsewhere.[14]

Some of these widely distributed and popular pieces of verse occur in manuscript form too. The stanza beginning 'Whoso hym be-boughte' appears in manuscripts from Hereford and Hinton and seven more, formed part of a mural picture in the chapel of the Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon, and has been recorded as an epitaph at the churches of Diss, Norfolk, *Dun in Scotland, *Faversham, Kent, and *Saffron Walden, Essex. The other verse in the Stratford mural is found in at least twenty manuscript copies and as an inscription at Melrose abbey. Another reminder of the brevity of life was formerly at St Paul's in London and survives in two manuscripts, and a warning against using oaths is reported from the churches of Broughton and Heydon, and occurs in a manuscript from Canterbury. In the second half of the fifteenth century a rime royal stanza beginning 'Farewell my friends, the time abideth no man' became very popular and is noted as occurring, with variations, in at least six parish churches,[15] and in the collegiate church of St Michael, Crooked Lane, London.

Inscriptions and literature

This last piece possesses some literary merit, and the unknown authors of several such epitaphs may justly be called poets. In some cases it is not clear whether the verses were intended primarily for books or for tombstones. Some other epitaphs were borrowed from poets. The Black Prince, for example, took his own epitaph from a didactic book in French verse, and a verse from an English poem by Skelton was adapted for a tomb in York Minster. The French prayer couplets which form part of the mural to the tomb of John Gower in what is now Southwark Cathedral may be by the poet himself. A third poet, the prolific John Lydgate, was commissioned to translate the French text accompanying a Dance of Death mural sequence in a cloister in Paris, and the English version, his Daunce of Machabree, was then incorporated into the new Dance of Death mural which was executed on the wall of a cloister at St Paul's in London. The literary life of this work was secondary, but most of Lydgate's poems were manuscript works from the start, though they might be adapted to other media. Extracts from Lydgate's Testament were painted onto stone scrolls in Clopton chantry, Long Melford church, as were extracts from another poem wrongly attributed to the poet.

Inscriptions and poets

Mural pictures with English verses are reported from the churches of Broughton, Oxfordshire, Horley, and Stratford-on-Avon. At least one parish church apparently has a mural inscription in French verse,[16] and graffiti in English verse occur on the walls of churches of Barrington and Great Barfield, and another was formerly visible on a pillar at Duxford church.[17] Another pillar, at Lydgate church, was used for a graffito in symbols and musical notes, and a tile on a pillar at Great Malvern priory is inscribed with some lines of English verse warning against false executors.[18] Ceilings were particularly vulnerable to the ravages of time, but traces remain of one ceiling on which were painted verses from the Apocalypse in Latin and French, in the chapel of St John in the courtyard of *Berkeley castle.[19] The inscriptions, which occupied the ceiling of the chapel, the sides of the roofbeams and the ceiling of the archway, must have been seen regularly by John Trevisa, parish priest of Berkeley and chaplain to Lord Berkeley, and he used them as an arguement to that nobleman in favour of translation from the Bible.

Mural verses

Pillars and ceilings

Where there was church furniture, the visible surfaces offered scope not only for decoration but also for improving verses. At Warkworth church is a fragment of one of the pew ends which had an English inscription, apparently a copy of a common verse-prayer. On the rood-screen at Campshall church are still lines of English verse urging reverence before the Crucifix which hung above, whilst the backs of the choir stalls in Carlisle Cathedral display a series of carved illustrations of the lives of three saints, with accompanying texts in English couplets. There are a few surviving examples of medieval wooden wall-tables which were used to display written material to visitors. The most notable example is the 'magna tabula' from Glastonbury abbey, now in the Bodleian.[20] Numerous Latin legends, mostly from John of Glastonbury's Historia, are written on parchment sheets attatched to the six inner panels, and the whole table was designed to fold together like a book. Another folding table in triptych form, which contains the Life of St Walstan of Bawburgh, most probably comes from Bawburgh church. An early wooden wall-table may have been at the minster of St Andrew, probably in Lewes, where the relics of the local saint, Lewinna, were kept and accounts of the miracles performed by her, written in Anglo-Saxon, were seen in 1058 on scrolls of parchment affixed to the wall. Stone priory had two tables, one, mentioned above, with verses telling of the patrons of the house, the other with English verses telling the story of Wulfhad and Ruffin, the patron saints.

Church furniture

The same legend was told in a different English metrical version at Peterborough abbey, which also claimed the brothers as patron saints. The cloister windows, still 'compleat and fair' in the seventeenth century, told the story in a series of pictures with texts in English verse. It is scarcely surprising that we now find so little medieval glass, plaster and wood remaining in our ancient churches, since what decay and bigotry had spared, pious restoration generally effaced. Cloth was an even less durable medium. Some English verses were worked into medieval tapestries,[21] and it is possible that the painted hangings which appear in church inventories may also have displayed short texts as well as pictures.[22] In the inventory of the collegiate church of All Saints, Derby, were 'Item paynted clothes hangyng above the stalls in the quere/on' of stories of ye newe law & Anoy^{r} of storyse of the old lawe.' These resemble decorations described by Henry Bradshaw of Chester abbey in his Life of St Radegund, 1500, which may have been suggested by murals or wall-hangings he had actually seen. Among other preparations for Radegund's wedding 'Ouer the syde tables curiously were wrought/Auncient histories of auctorite/Of patriarks and prophetes wisely outsought/Of the olde and newe testament set properly/Histories were painted of poetrie . . .'[23]

Story windows

Cloth hangings

(iii) Personal effects

Other artefacts at religious houses were for the private use of the members of the community, and were often their private property. Among the very numerous mazers, or maple-wood cups, at least seven are known to have borne inscriptions in Middle-English verse. Chaucer's prioress had a golden brooch with the Latin inscription 'Amor vincit omnia,' and another medieval nun may have owned the surviving golden ring-brooch which is inscribed on one side 'to þe iheu my trought i plight' and on the other 'and to þe mary his moder bright.'[24] Such a brooch may mark the occasion of taking religious vows, as may a thirteenth-century ring in the British Museum with the inscription '+ O cest anel de chastete/seu espose a ihesu crist.'[25] The provenance of the rings found at Godstow nunnery, *Kings Langley[26] priory and the abbeys of Fountains, Glastonbury, Ramsey and *Tilty[27] can only be assumed, but of several rings bearing the words 'en bon an' indicating a New Year's gift, one belonged to a member of Lewes priory and another to John Stanbery, Bishop of Hereford (d. 1474). Rings of office

Mazers

Nuns' brooches

Rings

were normally inscribed, if at all, in Latin, but Archbishop Bowet of York, 1407--23, had a ring with the motto 'honnour et joye.' Seals of religious houses were also normally inscribed in Latin, an exception being that of Evesham with its English couplet. Seal of Evesham

Inscribed finger-rings were quite common in medieval England. We even have some rings, perhaps sword-rings, with Anglo-Saxon inscriptions.[28] Some rings were elaborately decorated and had inscriptions of several lines, like the Coventry ring.[29] Brief metrical tags or proverbs were commoner. The tag 'Wel were him þat wiste/to whom he mizte triste' is reported from a surviving ring,[30] and occurs in several forms in manuscript copies. A set of verses 'taken from rings found in a sarcophagus,' presumably inscribed finger-rings, was incorporated into the Latin Fasciculus Morum. The English and Latin forms of the verses occur in a different kind of ring, a brass rose-plate or disc divided into four segments which was formerly on a tombstone in *Eddlesborough church.[31] Ring inscription and MS tags

The inscription 'Fuyr water wynd & lond' in the Fasciculus Morum may be from a talisman ring. Images of Pity and prayer-scrolls with holy images were also used as talismans against sickness, and gospel-books were used for oath-taking. Talismans

(iv) The laity

Every medieval religious institution depended on the continued goodwill of powerful and wealthy lay patrons, some of whom ended their days as members of such houses. The vernacular material displayed in churches was chiefly addressed to the laity and pre-supposes a degree of literacy. Lay people had access not only to churches of the Austin houses and secular colleges and Cathedrals, but also to those of abbeys and priories of monks and nuns of the religious orders. Many houses were granted indulgences which attracted visitors and benefactors, and in the last quarter of the fifteenth century accounts of these indulgences were issued in the form of printed sheets, about half printed in English and half in Latin. Another leaflet, telling of the foundation of Walsingham chapel, probably represents a large class of ephemera for sale to pilgrims. Many parish churches had at least one religious guild attatched to them, and these also issued letters of confraternity in Latin or in English in printed form from the 1470s onwards. The public

Printed sheets

Among the spiritual and practical functions of guilds was the production of plays. At least two religious guilds of York, those of the Paternoster and of Corpus Christi, performed plays, apparently in English, and the Beverley trade guilds produced between them an English Corpus Christi Play. The documents of a guild were in some cases at least kept in a chest in the chapel maintained by the guild or to which it provided a priest, and this may be where the playbook and parts were kept when not in use. One play was stored in a rood-loft.[32] Miracle plays may have grown out of the liturgical ceremonies of the church, and close links were maintained, as is shown by entries in churchwardens' account concerning expenses for and income from the performance of plays.[33] The church was also the one place where there should be a literate person to copy out the play. Master Ralph Ton, who copied Camborne's Cornish mystery play on the legend of the local saint Meriasek, was very probably the parish priest.[34]

Plays

Unauthorised play-acting by bands of jongleurs did not meet with official approval, and was banned from churchyards, along with the singing, dancing and other disorderly conduct which had long troubled churches.[35] Giraldus Cambrensis, writing in the twelfth century, gives an example of where this might lead. A priest who had been kept awake by the sound of carolling late at night used a refrain from the English love-song in divine service next morning.[36] The nuns of Romsey were also disturbed by the chattering and songs of their women servants, and their bishop, who had earlier forbidden anyone 'to sing lascivious songs, to perform plays, or to frequent dances or other foolish games,' directed that better discipline must be kept.[37] It was impossible to banish such songs entirely, as they were literally in the very air, and some of the pieces which we find in manuscripts from religious houses are far from devout, and others distinctly scurrilous.[38]

Banning plays and songs

A better solution to the problem of popular songs was to accept the tunes and give them religious words. Thomas of Bayeux, Archbishop of York (d. 1100), had a talent for extemporising hymns to song tunes,[39] and another prelate, the fourteenth-century Franciscan bishop of Ossory (or Kilkenny), provided his clergy with a series of Latin hymns to English and French secular songs. Preachers, especially friars competing for attention, used verse tags and songs to illustrate their sermons,[40] though they do not seem to have followed the example of Aldhelm, who turned minstrel to woo his still half-pagan flock who fled before the sermon.[41]

Using songs

(v) Secular entertainment

Religious houses had a duty to offer hospitality to travellers, and since most of these might be of the laity, no class of which used Latin for conversation, any material intended for their attention would probably be in French or English. At Launceston priory, which was noted for its hospitality, the exhortation to charity, addressed to the hosts, was in Latin, but the exhortations to appropriate virtues addressed to the guests and lay workers of the estate appeared on the walls above their tables in English. Guests

Minstrels and groups of singers and players were invited to perform in the halls of ecclesiastic and secular lords alike.[42] The author of the French chronicle of Delapré nunnery was familiar with 'les lyveres as Engleys' of Richard the Chantor of Nottingham, perhaps from Richard's visit to the house. In 1338 a minstrel named Herbert performed for the monks of Winchester two songs apparently of the 'chanson de geste' kind.[43] It may have been from another such visit by a minstrel that a former monk of Peterborough knew the ballad of Randolf, Earl of Chester, the substance of which he passed on to Dugdale. Langland also knew of the ballads, and three early monastic chroniclers[44] report popular songs of Gunhilda, daughter of King Canute. Minstrels

The song-books from religious houses, cathedrals and colleges contain a mixture of religious and secular songs, and the song-schools doubtless had both in their repertoire.[45] A macaronic song to be performed by schoolboys occur in a manuscript from Coverham, and another schoolboy's song, also in English and Latin, appears in the Winchester Book,[46] accompanied by a Address to the Bishop of Winchester from a member of the school. Another school, Eton College, performed a play, the Tragedy of Dido, written by the headmaster. Performances by schools

Official proclamations and leaflets, the fore-runners of the printed news-sheets, were in the Middle Ages often published by being affixed to church doors.[47] Malcontents also posted lampoons and bills of protest, apparently undeterred by the risk of the death sentence. Such bills are reported from St Paul's and other London churches, from the Cathedral and another church at Coventry, and from the Cathedral and the Franciscan convent at Norwich, and a lampoon was even affixed to a church door at York by Scottish raiders. Bills

Religious houses were involved in the early development of printing. Many, as was mentioned above, provided themselves with printed indulgences or letters of confraternity, and Syon Printing

had several books printed and seems to have provided copies for the printing of other works. Book-printing took place at St Augustine's, Canterbury, St Albans and Tavistock, and probably elsewhere, and there were premises in the churchyard of St Paul's in London where books were sold, and perhaps printed too.

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NOTES

1 W. D. Simpson, The Celtic Church in Scotland, Aberdeen University Studies, 11 (Aberdeen, 1935), and The Ancient Stones of Scotland, 2nd edn (London, 1968).

2 However, a rock found imbedded in the wall of a church at *Kirk Maughold, Isle of Man, has an inscription in runes to the effect that it was carved by Iuan the Priest, followed by the runic and ogham alphabets, see N. K. Chadwick, Celtic Britain (London, 1963), plate 64 and note p. 230. Another ogham inscription which was probably connected with a Christian community appears on a stone in the churchyard of St Ninian's Isle, Dunrossness.

3 See F. C. Diack, 'The Dumnoqeni inscription, at Yarrow (Selkirk) and the Lociti inscription at Whithorn (Wigtown),' Scottish Gaelic Studies, 2 (1927--8), pp. 221--32.

4 There is also a runic inscription marking the burial place of one Tidfirth at *Monkwearmouth.

5 The cross now stands in Ruthwell parish church, and a quotation from the Dream of the Rood also occurs on the Brussels Cross, an ancient silver reliquary, see M. Alexander, The Earliest English Poems, Penguin Classics (London, 1966), p. 103. The Bewcastle cross in Cumberland also has some Anglian runes.

6 J. Weever, Ancient funerall monuments within the united monarchie of Great Britaine with the dissolved Monasteries therein contained (London, 1631) and John Stow, The Survay of London, ed. H. B. Wheatley for Everyman edn (London, 1912) from the edn of 1618.

7 H. Haines, Manual of Monumental Brasses, ed. J. Busby (Bath, 1970); T. J. Pettigrew, Chronicles of the Tombs (London, 1875); T. F. Ravenshaw, Antiente Epitaphs from A. D. 1250 to A. D. 1800 (London, 1878). Churches with French or English epitaphs but from which no other vernacular material is recorded are not included in the study.

8 French epitaphs occur at Ashford, Hereford, Lincoln and Westminster.

9 The earliest English epitaph recorded is that of John the Smith at *Brightwell-Baldin church, Oxfordshire, 1370, in verse, beginning 'Man com & se how schal alle dede be' (RC, Index, no. 2050.5). English epitaphs were at the hospitals of Great Ilford, London (St Bartholomew's, Savoy and St Thomas of Acon), and at the abbeys of Bury St Edmunds, Netley, St Albans and Waltham. The epitaph of Richard Beauchamp, 1439, is pr. H. W. Macklin, The Brasses of England, 2nd edn (London, 1907), pp. 65--6.

10 Another plate at *Morley church, Derbyshire, is pr. Haines, Monumental Brasses, p. 246 and Macklin, Brasses of England, p. 166. Another was reportedly set up at *Culham hospital in honour of the benefactor who helped to provide the bridge, see R. M. Wilson, The Lost Literature of Medieval England, 2nd edn (London, 1970), p. 88, n. 1.

11 Weever, Funerall monuments, p. 533, and also noted Haines, Monumental Brasses, p. 123.

12 For some of the benefactors of the church of the Franciscan friars of London, whose names appeared on the windows there, see J. J. Jusserand, English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages, translated L. T. Smith, University Paperbacks, 31 (London, 1961), p. 167. The fine library of the brothers is also mentioned, p. 166.

13 'Man in what state so ever thou be' (RC, Index, no. 2066.5).

14 'Mon yt behoves the oft to have in mind' (RC, Index, no. 2068.5).

15 See BR-RC, Index, no. 765.

16 M. D. Legge, Anglo-Norman in the Cloisters: the influence of the orders upon Anglo-Norman Literature, Edinburgh University Publications, Language and Literature, 2 (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 1, reports from the Church of the Holy Rood, *Wood Eaton, the couplet 'Ki cest image verra/Le ivr de male mort ne mvrra.'

17 See G. C. Coulton, 'Medieval Graffiti, especially in the Eastern Counties,' CAS, Proceedings and Communications, 19 (1914--5), pp. 52--62, followed by plates. Most of the hundred or so medieval churches examined contained graffiti, but often these were only scratched symbols or words.

18 Another tile, found at a ruined church at Smarmore, Ireland, gives directions in English for First Aid for Horses, possibly intended for the priest's servant or groom.

19 J. H. Cooke, 'On the ancient inscriptions in the chapel at Berkeley Castle, with some account of John Trevisa,' Trans B. and G., 1 (1876), pp. 138--46. The verses were four lines of French and four of Latin on each beam, see sketch and reproduction between pp. 146 and 147. Cooke thought Trevisa the author of the translation.

20 J. A. Bennett, 'A Glastonbury Relic,' Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, Proceedings, 34 (1888), pp. 117--22; J. A. Robinson, Two Glastonbury Legends (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 41--2 and plate facing p. 41.

21 T. Warton (or Wharton), The History of English Poetry, from the close of the eleventh to the commencement of the eighteenth century, 4 vols (London, 1774--81); 1, pp. 209--12, notes several tapestries in medieval palaces, including one with French verses. See also E. P. Hammond, 'Two Tapestry Poems by Lydgate, the Life of St George and the Falls of Seven Princes,' ESt, 43 (1910), pp. 10--26.

22 The hangings at Westminster abbey had Latin verses as well as pictures.

23 Frescoes illustrating the Miracles of Our Lady survive at Eton College and in the Lady Chapel at Winchester Cathedral; Cromwell's soldiers destroyed another mural which was at Westminster abbey and a window behind the pulpit in *St Margaret's church, Westminster, both illustrating the Grand Mysteries of the Philosopher's Stone, see M. R. James, The Frescoes in the Chapel at Eton College. Facsimiles of the drawings by R. H. Essex, with explanatory notes (Eton, 1907). Winchester Cathedral formerly had another mural showing Guy de Warwick who killed the Danish giant Colbrand, it was said, outside the city.

24 A ring (RC, Index, no. 3775.5) in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle-on-Tyne, see J. Evans, English Posies and Posy Rings (London, 1931), p. xiii.

25 O. M. Dalton, Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Early Christian, Byzantine, Teutonic and later, bequeathed by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, 2 vols (London, 1912); 2, no. 712, p. 108, and Evans, Posy Rings, pp. xiii, 4.

26 A ring engraved 'nul si bien' owned by Sir Arthur Evans, see Evans, Posy Rings, p. 12.

27 A fifteenth-century ring inscribed in the hoop 'tut disun' found at *Tilty abbey, Dunmow, Essex, see Dalton, Finger Rings, 2, no. 923, p. 147

28 One surviving ring has the owner's and maker's names in a niello inscription in letters and runes, reading 'Æthred mec ah eared mec angraft.'

29 Dalton, Finger Rings, 2, no. 718, p. 109.

30 Another ring owned by Sir Arthur Evans, see Evans, Posy Rings, pp. xv, 5.

31 Haines, Monumental Brasses, p. cx, note d, and Weever, Funerall monuments, p. 581. The Latin version was previously to be seen on a similar plate set into a slab at St Albans abbey.

32 This was at Louth in Lincolnshire, see Wilson, Lost Literature, p. 215.

33 The Chester play cycle was performed under the aegis of St Werburga's abbey. One of the monks, Sir Henry Francis, senior monk 1377--82, is reported to have obtained a grant of a pardon of a thousand days for all who watched the plays, and a copy of the text is attributed to Randle Heggenet, monk of Chester, 1447, in a late inscription, see introduction in F. A. Foster, A Stanzaic Life of Christ compiled from Higden's Polychronicon and the Legenda Aurea edited from MS. Harley 3909, EETS, 166 (London, 1926).

34 Another Cornish play, the fifteenth-century Passion Play, occurs in Harley 1782, see J. C. Zeuss, Grammatica Celtica, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1853), 1, pp. xliv--xlvi. An English Play of the Sacrament was copied out by 'R. C.' at 'Croxton' in 1461 in the manuscript now Dublin, Trinity College F. 4. 20. Both plays are pr. W. Stokes, 'The Passion,' and 'The Play of the Sacrament,' Philological Society, Transactions (1860--1), App., pp. 1--100, 101--52.

35 Plays were banned from Worcester Cathedral cemetery in 1384, see Wilson, Lost Literature, pp. 212--3.

36 Wilson, Lost Literature, p. 161.

37 The directives of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, to Romsey and Wherwell nunneries, in his Register at New College, Oxford, f. 87v, noted E. E. Power, Medieval English Nunneries c. 1275 to 1535, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 156--7.

38 Two such songs occur in a manuscript which was at Hinton Charterhouse and Beer church.

39 'Nec cantu nec voce minor, multa ecclesiastica composuit carmina. Si quis in auditu ejus arte joculatoria aliquid vocale sonaret, statim illud in divinas laudes effigiare,' N. E. S. A. Hamilton, Willelmi Malmesburiensis monachi De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum, Rolls Series, 52 (London, 1870), p. 258.

40 Some examples are given Wilson, Lost Literature, pp. 165--6.

41 'Populum eo tempore semibarbarum, parum divinis sermonibus intentum, statim, cantatis missis, domos cursitare solitum. Ideo sanctum virum, super pontem qui rura et urbem continuat, abeuntibus se opposuisse obicem, quasi artem cantitandi professum. Eo plusquam semel facto, plebis favorem et concursum emeritum. Hoc commento sensim inter ludicra verbis scripturarum insertis, cives ad sanitatem reduxisse; qui si severe et cum excommunicatione agendum putasset, profecto profecisset nichil,' Hamilton, Gesta Pontificum, p. 336.

42 At the installation of Ralph, Abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury, in 1309, the six thousand guests were entertained by minstrels who were paid 70 shillings, Warton, History of English Poetry, 1, p. 89.

43 On the occasion of the visit of Adam de Orleton, Bishop of Winchester, to his cathedral priory in 1338 'cantabat Joculator quidam nomine Herebertus canticum Colbrondi, necnon Gestum Emme regine a judicio ignis liberate, in aula prioris,' Warton, History of English Poetry, 1, p. 89.

44 William of Malmesbury, Matthew Paris of St Albans and Ralph of Diceto of St Paul's, London.

45 Tattersall College owned copies of 'The Cry of Caleys,' 'Maydens of London' and 'Flos Florum.'

46 I have used this name for the newly discovered manuscript, British Library, Add. 60,577.

47 Bills were affixed in other public places, such as the gates of the mayor's house at Cambridge, the walls of Canterbury, and the city gates of Norwich, see Wilson, Lost Literature, pp. 193--5.

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7 THE USE OF ANGLO-SAXON, ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Before the Conquest, the vernacular of this country enjoyed a high status even among the learned, a situation which was not to recur until centuries later. Even in the early sixteenth century, Latin was the preferred language of scholars writing for their peers, whereas Wulfstan had chosen Anglo-Saxon for pastoral letters. Other eminent churchmen, such as Aldhelm, Bede and Dunstan, were proud of their Anglo-Saxon literary tradition and skilled in its prose and poetic styles.

High status of Anglo-Saxon

The Anglo-Saxon tradition influenced writers of Middle English, and not only early writers such as Lazamon. John of Taysteke's unrhymed alliterative verse and Richard Rolle's rhythmical prose derive from the same heritage, which was handed on orally during the early Norman period when Anglo-Saxon written literature had virtually ceased. Through this oral tradition, Reginald of Durham had access to Anglo-Saxon sources when writing his Latin Life of St Oswald in the middle of the twelfth century. One informant, a visiting monk, had pieced together the sense of fragmentary writings at Bardney, and another, Robert, a 'vir ingenuus' of the ancient hospital at York, had reworked the material of his source into contemporary English verse for recitation, as Dunstan, two and a half centuries earlier, had transmuted the story of the death of St Edmund which he had heard from an old man who had been that king's armour-bearer. Anglo-Saxon works were still being read at Worcester in the thirteenth century, when Middle English works in verse and prose — Lazamon's Brut and the Ancrene Riwle — were already available.

Anglo-Saxon heritage of Middle English

French, however, had taken the lead in vernacular writing soon after the Conquest, and retained it until the second half of the fourteenth century. John Gower, with a major book in Latin, French and English, typifies the intermediate stage. Chaucer was one of the first to keep to English consistently. The rise of English as a literary language was helped by the growth, due to economic developments, of a class of commoners with wealth and leisure to devote to reading. Many copies of popular English works were made for this large reading public during the fourteenth and especially the fifteenth century, so that only a small proportion of the extant copies show signs of having been owned by religious and other houses. This proportion is larger in the case of Anglo-Norman works, since during the period when

Literate laity and English

they were copied, the number of people within the communities formed a larger proportion, probably a majority, of the total number of readers. Moreover, Anglo-Norman books on the shelves of institutional libraries would have a better chance than other of surviving the fifteenth century, when French was not widely spoken or, consequently, read.

In Middle English writings, the South Eastern dialect was only one of several. Scots, or even Kentish, dialect could be used for literature, the only requirement being intelligibility to those for whom the work was intended. In fourteenth-century religious writing, the 'standard' English was that of the North East. Similarly, despite deprecating comments by some of its users, Anglo-Norman cannot be regarded as inferior to the other dialects of medieval French. For nearly three centuries, it was not only the normal speech of the well-born and the well-educated, but also a leading literary language. French medieval literature would be seriously impoverished by the exclusion of the Anglo-Norman contribution to genres such as saints' lives, metrical chronicles, chansons de geste, romances, and biblical translation.

English dialects and Anglo-Norman dialect

Most of the French works which were owned by religious houses in Great Britain are either Anglo-Norman in origin, or rendered practically so in the copying, but by no means all are in that dialect. Chaucer's Prioress would be able to read most continental French, even though she spoke it 'After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe/For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.' It seems that a few of her successors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries could also read the French of France. Abbess Sibilla de Felton of Barking bought a continental collection of religious works in 1411 or later, and in 1477 the same nunnery was given another collection, some of the works in which are clearly of continental origin. Margaret Windsor, who was a prioress of Syon in the early sixteenth century, owned a French book printed in France, a copy of Laurence de Premierfait's French version of Boccaccio's De casibus virorum illustrorum.

Continental French

The vernacular languages were used in the religious houses for didactic purposes and for entertainment. Works written for the laity were normally not in Latin, and many of them found their way into libraries because of their usefulness. The newer and less learned brothers, most in need of instruction and most desirous, one may imagine, of light reading, would be especially helped by books

Use of vernacular

in their mother-tongue, and the same would apply to nuns, who were scarcely thought capable of mastering Latin, and who consequently seldom did so.

The vernacular works in medieval libraries reflected the interests not only of the members of the communities to which they belonged, but also those of their benefactors who gave a proportion of the books. Donations from the laity would affect the composition of the library, and especially the vernacular section of it, as Guy de Beauchamp's books must have done at Bordesley. There was naturally a tendence for the books in donations not to be the most recently written works. There is, of course, no evidence as to which books in medieval libraries were actually read. Even when a book was chosen at the annual distribution, the choice may have been influenced by a superior, by availability of books, and other factors. Only works which are known to have been composed in or for a community necessarily indicate an active interest.

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CONCLUSION

The vernacular writings formed quite a small part of the contents of medieval institutional libraries, but cover a very wide field of subjects. Only service-books and serious theology were practically always confined to Latin. Several genres of medieval literature are chiefly written in the vernacular, others in two or three languages. Authors who belonged to religious institutions produced many of the Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Middle English works, and even those which were written for or by the lay people were to be found in the monastic and college libraries.

Further reasearch on this subject might include a comparison of such libraries with those of lay lords which are recorded in medieval catalogues. Close examination of all the manuscripts of known provenance, which are listed in Ker's Medieval Libraries, would probably bring to light further vernacular works, especially among the smaller items. The study contains a number of pieces of Middle English verse not recorded in the Index of Middle English Verse or its Supplement, which were discovered in this way. It should also be possible to identify some entries in medieval catalogues and book-lists with extant manuscripts by means of an index of the 'secundo folio' references of each. The compilation of such an index and comparison of entries would be suitable for a computer program.

It is apparent from the size of the present study that the institutional libraries played a major part in the production, distribution and ownership of medieval vernacular literature, and their contents are thus important for literary studies. When considering an Anglo-Norman or Middle English work, analogues and sources in both languages, and also in Latin, are relevant, and if an author is known to have belonged to a certain house, its library will be the first place to look for influences upon his work. Also, the distribution of the known copies of a work between monks, nuns, secular clergy and laity is an indication of the readers which it attracted.

The available information is incomplete and very probably unrepresentative, and can only at best tell us what vernacular writings were there to be read by the brothers and sisters of communities of various orders and kinds. The material presented does allow one, however, to obtain a clearer view of the probable reading habits and interests of this large and important class of medieval society.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Am. HR	American Historical Review
Arch. Cant.	Archaeologia Cantiana
Archiv	Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen
Ausg. und Abh.	Ausgaben und Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der romanischen Philologie
BLR	Bodleian Library Record
Bodl.	Bodleian
BQR	Bodleian Quarterly Record
BR, Index	C. Brown and R. H. Robbins, The Index of Middle English Verse, The Index Society (New York, 1943)
BR-RC, Index	Brown and Robbins, Index, and R. H. Robbins and J. L. Cutler, Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse (Lexington, 1965)
Bull. SATF	Bulletin de la société d'anciens textes français
CCCC	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
Centralblatt	Centralblatt für Bibliothekwesen
CFMA	Classiques francais du moyen age
CUL	Cambridge University Library
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHR	English Historical Review
ES	Extra Series
ESt	Englische Studien
Hist. Litt.	Histoire Littéraire de la France
HMC	Historic Manuscripts Commission
Jahrbuch	Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur
Med. Aev.	Medium Aevum
MLA	Modern Language Association of America
MLN	Modern Language Notes
n.	note
MLR	Modern Language Review
N. and Q.	Notes and Queries
NM	Neuphilologische Mittheilungen
NS	New Series
OHS	Oxford Historical Society
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
PQ	Philological Quarterly
pr.	printed
RC, Index	Robbins and Cutler, Supplement to the Index
repr.	reprinted
RHS	Royal Historical Society
SATF	Société d'anciens textes français
SH, Manual	J. B. Severs and A. E. Hartung, A manual of the writings in Middle English, 1050--1500, The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 5 vols (New Haven, Connecticut, 1967--75)
Trans. B. and G.	Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society
ZdA	Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum
ZfSL	Zeitscrift für französische Sprache und Literatur
ZRP	Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie

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