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Editorial

The choice of theme for this summer's issue of Marginalia rendered up precisely the creative diversity of responses it was hoped would emanate. The three articles in this issue also give a concise demonstration of incipiently innovative developments in graduate work: an engagement with modern 'eco-theology' from Corinne Dale; critique of post-modern obsession with 'othering' discourses in Duncan Hardy's article on English 'national identity'; and in Kiel Shaub's piece, a good methodological lesson in microhistory through the wider view he opens out from the narrow lens of Lincoln Cathedral Library's booklist.

Corinne Dale argues for evidence of early medieval understandings of the natural integrity and goodness of Creation through two riddles about objects shaped from trees from the tenth-century Exeter Book. She challenges past arguments that the medieval theological account of the irredeemable fallenness of creation established the basic conditions for later environmental exploitation. This is true especially outside doctrine in the malleable and even playful literary context. Within the riddle is enacted in little the relationship between man and nature; they can be read towards different ends — glorifying or debasing to nature — as they are 'solved' for variant answers. Dale inventively argues that here, as in the *Dream of the Rood*, this allows the speaking shaped matter of the tree's wood to be engaged in the moral reshaping and redemptive remaking of its addressee and of course co-creation: the human reader.

Duncan Hardy's deftly-argued article shows up a false 'creation': an oversimplified narrative of the emergence of the English language and of English identity. The coincidence of the Hundred Years War and the increasing prevalence of Middle English as a literary vernacular, as well as the popularity of the idea of the formative 'other', still lead many writers to emphasise falsely the importance of a reactive movement towards the 'non-French' language of English. As literary scholars will especially appreciate, the picture is much more diverse and resplendent: the French language formed and informed the literary language of Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate, in a time of English claim to the French crown. Indeed, Hardy suggests, English may have been much more about 'us-ing' than 'other-ing', formed from a sense of the 'commons' speaking to all and for all, lewd and learned.

Finally, Kiel Shaub uses a few leaves of textual history to explore the many traces an intentionally created work can carry. He questions bald readings of the medieval booklist as functional record, reading beyond, through and around its volumes and those who owned and kept them to render up a richer account of the twelfth-century life of Lincoln Cathedral and its Bishops. His emphasis on what was established, built and done as well as read and thought challenges the potentially 'dry' and papery bibliographic bias.

As always, we also feature a series of reviews of recent books of interest to medievalists, including volumes on the allegorical quest tradition, the practice and rhetoric of inquisition, the very earliest history of the book and the *vitae* of some intriguing holy women.

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'Deope gedolgod': Wounding, Shaping and the Post-Lapsarian World in Exeter Book Riddles 53 and 73

Corinne Dale

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Exeter Book riddles 53 and 73 depict flourishing trees being cut down and shaped by 'enemies'.[1] Most of the scholarly attention given to these two riddles has been invested in finding their solutions – a task that has proved particularly difficult for the ambiguous Riddle 53. This focus means that the pathos of the riddles' narratives, which involve the trees being wounded and changed from their natural states, tends to be overlooked. I wish to draw attention to these narratives, emphasising their importance for what they reveal about early medieval attitudes towards the natural world and man's use of his materials. These attitudes resonate with the concerns of modern eco-theology about the troubled relationship between man and the rest of creation and have their roots in the Christian narrative of the fall. The tree-riddles' subjects, like a number of other subjects in the collection, are depicted in a post-lapsarian dystopia of suffering and corruption in which the relationship between man and nature is damaged.[2] This dystopia is the antithesis to a time when man was incorrupt and lived in harmony with the rest of creation, such as is described in Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon translation of St. Basil's *Hexameron*:

> Næs he na geworht mid nanre wohnysse. ne mid nanum
> synnum gesceapen to menn. ne nane leahtras on his life næron.
> ac hæfde on his anwealde eall his agen gecynd. butan geswince
> on gesælðe lybbende. Ne him nan gesceaft næfre ne derode ða
> hwile ðe he gehyrsumode his scyppende on ryht.[3]

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[1] All citations of the Exeter Book riddles are from *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book,* ed. by Craig Williamson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979). Whilst citations are from this edition, I use the ASPR numbering system of the riddles, as opposed to Williamson's, since this is the system more widely used by scholars.

[2] The notion that a number of the riddles reflect aspects of a post-lapsarian dystopia forms part of a larger study I am conducting into theology, eco-criticism and the natural world in the riddle collection. For some examples of these riddles, see ox-riddle 72, with its depiction of suffering and toil, as well as riddles 23, 26, 81, 83, 88 and 93.

[3] 'He was not made with any wickedness, nor shaped with any sins for man, nor were there any corruptions in his life, but he had in his control all his own quality, existing without labour in happiness. He never injured a created thing, not one, while he obeyed his creator in the right manner.' Old English citation taken from *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Hexameron of St. Basil; Or, Be Godes Six Daga Weorcum; and the Anglo-Saxon Remains of St. Basil's* Admonitio ad filium spiritualem, ed. and trans. by Henry W. Norman (London: John Russell Smith, 1849), 22–3. Unless stated otherwise, all translations into modern English are my own.

The tree riddles, in particular Riddle 53, not only depict their subjects within this dystopia but draw connections between the integrity of the tree in its natural environment and its role as an object in the hands of man. The emphasis on the trees' early life and initial wholeness, I suggest, produces a conflict in the riddles between the trees' natural integrity and their potential value as objects. The riddles' emphasis on a natural object's wholeness is strikingly at odds with the importance placed on the 'end product' in early Christian thought. A metaphor from Augustine, for example, imagining God's love of sinners to be like the carpenter's love for the potentiality of his material, suggests trees are valued for their future use as objects, just as humans must be considered for their spiritual potential.[4] Interestingly, the riddle-solver's quest for a solution mirrors a similar anticipation for, or preoccupation with, the end product, not the natural source of the material. Yet the quest for a solution is challenged in Riddle 53 through the text's depiction of the tree's early life and its refusal to allow the solver to find a satisfying answer. This paper explores the riddles both in terms of their post-lapsarian setting and their interest in organic beginnings and moves into a consideration of the fallen man's affiliation with the natural world through his spiritual status as 'unshaped' material.

Before beginning our analysis of the tree-riddles, let us consider the concept of a post-lapsarian dystopia in more detail and its relationship with eco-theology. The Anglo-Saxon view of the post-lapsarian world that we are perhaps most familiar posits nature as a malign, destructive force. Jennifer Neville's study of the representation of the natural world in Old English poetry has provided an in-depth reading of the negative role nature played in the Anglo-Saxon imagination.[5] When Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden, says Neville, their relationship with the created world underwent a 'complete reversal': where they were once 'granted power over the marvellous new world', they now faced 'subjection to the power of the natural world'.[6] Less discussed in Anglo-Saxon scholarship is the contrasting notion that man could be an enemy to the natural world. Yet the riddles clearly project the notion that the fallen man, operating in a sinful world, could be seen as an enemy to the created world that he dominates and exploits through his God-given supremacy. In these enigmatic texts about non-human creations, man constrains, wounds, enslaves and exploits the other inhabitants of the natural world.

The Fall caused 'natural sovereignty to become less a cooperative partnership, a benign symbiosis, and more a relationship of power and exploitation',[7] and it is easy to see how this notion lends itself to eco-theology, with its acknowledgement of nature as a victim of man's dominion. Says Michael S. Northcott, 'the responsibility of humans for creation is properly described as dominion, but, because of the effects of the Fall, the human dominion over nature

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[4] A full citation and discussion of this metaphor can be found later in this study.

[5] JENNIFER NEVILLE, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 27 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See in particular chapter 3, 53–88.

[6] *Ibid.*, 20.

[7] GEORGE OVITT, 'The Cultural Context of Western Technology: Early Christian Attitudes toward Manual Labor', *Technology and Culture*, 27 (1986), 477–500 (489).

has been exercised in sinful and corrupt ways'.[8] Eco-theologians look for ways in which Christian doctrine encourages an improved relationship between man and the natural world, working against the long-held belief that creation theology was one of the main causes of our modern ecological crisis; to quote from Lynn White's well-known 1967 article, 'Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects'.[9] I refer to these two standpoints here because I aim to show that there was certainly no 'mood of indifference' in the Exeter Book riddle collection towards the natural world, but rather a recognition of man's exploitative ways and an appreciation of the integrity of living things, an appreciation that is akin to modern eco-theology.

Having discussed the theological framework of this study, let us now turn to the two tree-riddles. Riddles 53 and 73 depict a living thing growing up in its natural environment before being enslaved by man and put to use – a trope that we find throughout the riddle collection. Both depict servitude and suffering and, though they ultimately help men to accomplish deeds, the writers express concern over how they came to serve man. Like its preceding ox-riddle, Riddle 73 begins with a living thing being nurtured in its natural environment before being cut down and displaced by man. For many years, the tree has flourished and been content, until enemies come to turn it into a weapon, as the tree itself relates:

> Ic on wonge aweox,   wunode þær mec feddon
> hruse ond heofonwolcn,   oþþæt me onhwyrfdon
> gearum frodne,   þa me grome wurdon,
> of þære gecynde   þe ic ær cwic beheold,
> onwendan mine wisan,   wegedon mec of earde,
> gedydon þæt ic sceolde   wiþ gesceape minum
> on bonan willan   bugan hwilum.[10]
>   (R. 73, 1a-7b)

The tree suffers at the hands of man and enters a form of enslavement. As an anthropomorphic subject, the tree defies Augustine's assertion that 'the life of a tree [is] without understanding or sentience';[11] it can feel pain and can, through the medium of poetry, lament its cruel shaping and removal from its *earde* 'native land'. The writer invites the reader to feel compassion for the subject's plight, for the loss of its happy existence at the hands of man. There have been a variety of suggestions as to what the tree is made into, including a lance, spear and bow and

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[8] MICHAEL S. NORTHCOTT, *The Environment and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 127.

[9] LYNN WHITE, 'The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis', *Science*, 155 (1967), 1203–1207 (1205).

[10] 'I grew in a field, dwelt where earth and heaven-cloud fed me, until those who were grim against me turned me, old in years, out of the quality that I previously held when living, changed my condition, bore me out of my native land, made it so that at times I must, against my nature, bend to a killer's will.'

[11] 'But that life [which God lives] is not the life of a tree, without understanding or sentience; not the life of a beast, which possesses sentience in its five divisions, but no understanding.' Translation from the Latin is taken from AUGUSTINE, *Later Works*, ed. and trans. by John Burnaby (Westminster: Westminster John Knox Press, 1955), 134.

arrow,[12] but I take 'bow' as the most likely answer. This is primarily because the act of bending in obeisance to a master mimics the bending of a bow as the string is drawn back, but also because it is comparable to Riddle 23 whose answer, also 'bow', is more certain. In Riddle 23, the weapon is described as both *on gewin sceapen* 'shaped in affliction' and through *wite gescop* 'torture created' (Riddle 23, 2b and 6b), whilst in Riddle 73 men are *grome* 'grim' against the tree (3b). In Riddle 73 the object must bend *wiþ gesceape* 'against [its] nature' (6b), alluding to the drawing of the bow, whilst in Riddle 23 the object will not obey its master unless he is *unbunden* 'unbound'; it will not *ænigum hyran* 'serve anyone' unless *searosæled* 'cunningly tied' (15a-16a). In both instances, the writer plays with the concept of servitude through the shape or handling of the bow.

The shaping of wood in Riddle 53 is equally as harrowing as that in Riddle 73. This riddle also depicts a tree being felled in the woods and then being turned into something for man's use:

> Ic seah on bearwe   beam hlifian,
> tanum torhtne.   Þæt treow wæs on wynne,
> wudu weaxende.   Wæter hine ond eorþe
> feddan fægre,   oþþæt he frod dagum
> on oþrum wearð   aglachade
> deope gedolgod,   dumb in bendum,
> wriþen ofer wunda,   wonnum hyrstum
> foran gefrætwed.
>
> (R. 53, 1a-8a)[13]

What then follows is a depiction of its labour: it must *hildegieste oþrum rymeð* 'clear a path for another enemy' with his *heafdes* 'head' (8b-10a). Like the labouring ox in riddle 72, the tree is *dumb in bendum*; in its service, it is silent. The solution to this riddle is harder to determine than Riddle 73, although most critics take 'battering ram' as the answer.[14] F. H. Whitman prefers 'the Cross' as a solution,[15] since, he says, 'all the motifs are to be found associated with this subject in the writings of the period'.[16] He further argues that 'structurally the riddle divides into two halves, the Cross in preparation and its battlework, corresponding to the two principle

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[12] For 'spear or lance' see FREDERICK TUPPER, ed., *The Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Boston: Ginn, 1910), p. 211 and A. J. WYATT, ed., *Old English Riddles* (Boston and London: D. C. Heath, 1912), 114. For 'bow and incendiary arrow' see HANS PINSKER and WALTRAUD ZIEGLER, *Die altenglischen Rätsel des Exeterbuchs*: *Text mit deutscher Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Anglistische Forschungen, 183 (Heidelburg: C. Winter, 1985), 304.

[13] 'I saw a tree rise high in a wood, bright in its branches. The tree was in joy, a flourishing wood. Water and earth fed it abundantly, until old in days he fell in another torment, deeply wounded, dumb in fetters, wounds fastened over, adorned at the front with dark ornaments.'

[14] This is despite there being no material evidence of their use in Anglo-Saxon England, although WILLIAMSON has argued that 'knowledge of the Roman ram was passed down through literary...and iconographic sources', 297.

[15] F. H. WHITMAN, 'Significant Motifs in Riddle 53', *Medium Ævum*, 46 (1977), 1–11.

[16] Ibid., 2. These motifs include primarily, though not exclusively, the adorned tree and the 'clearing of a way' into heaven – 'the opening of the way for the righteous into heaven' (p. 6).

movements of the crucifixion, Christ's suffering and his triumph'.[17] In contrast, Jonathan Wilcox puts forward 'gallows', which he believes 'better accounts for all the details of the riddle'.[18] He argues that the gallows 'clears a way for the criminal, a journey downwards to death, the grave, and hell', thus explaining the motion of the object.[19] As Wilcox goes on to demonstrate, the interpretation also proves to be a striking comparison to *Rood* in which the tree, though similarly violated, provides a path to heaven. For now, the final solution is not the most important aspect of the riddle – indeed, either riddle – rather, the depiction of the cutting down and shaping of the tree. As I shall argue later, Riddle 53 refuses to offer one simple answer, asking us, the readers, to play the carpenter and choose what we turn the object into – a cross or gallows, or other objects of our imaginations.

The Old English poems *The Phoenix* and *The Dream of the Rood* provide an important point of comparison and contrast for the tree-riddles and a useful starting point for thinking about the riddles' themes of shaping and fallenness. Both poems contain flourishing trees, but they are trees that have very different fates: the tree in *The Phoenix* grows within the borders of Paradise and is protected from death and suffering, whilst the tree in *Rood* grows in the post-lapsarian world of corruption and decay and, unprotected, is cruelly cut down and injured by man (the 'enemy'). In the least discussed of the two poems, *The Phoenix*, the primary subject is the ancient bird and its resurrection from the ashes, but the poet devotes much attention to the description of the realm of Paradise and the tree in which the phoenix dwells. Paradise is a pre-lapsarian ideal, protected from the suffering and decay of the post-lapsarian world. Here there is to be found no *laðgeniðla* 'persecutors', *ne wop ne wracu* 'no weeping or cruelty', *weatacen nan* 'no sign of grief' and no *enga deað* 'no painful death' (*Phoenix*, 50a-52b).[20] Being *afyrred* 'removed' from *manfremmendum* 'sinners' by *meotudes meaht* 'the Lord's might' (*Phoenix*, 5b-6b), the woods flourish, as the author goes on to describe:

> Smylte is se sigewong;   sunbearo lixeð,
> wuduholt wynlic.   Wæstmas ne dreosað,
> beorhte blede,   ac þa beamas a
> grene stondað,   swa him god bibead.
> Wintres ond sumeres   wudu bið gelice
> bledum gehongen;   næfre brosniað
> leaf under lyfte,   ne him lig sceþeð
> æfre to ealdre,   ærþon edwenden
> worulde geweorðe.
> <div align="right">(Phoenix, 33a-41a)[21]</div>

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[17] Ibid., 2.

[18] JONATHAN WILCOX, 'New Solutions to Old English Riddles: Riddles 17 and 53', *Philological Quarterly*, 69 (1990), 393–408 (398).

[19] Ibid., 400.

[20] The Old English citation is from GEORGE PHILIP KRAPP and ELLIOT VAN KIRK DOBBIE, eds, *The Exeter Book*, The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 94–113.

[21] 'The glorious plain is tranquil; the sunny grove glimmers, a joyful wood. Fruits do not perish, nor bright foliage, but the trees stand always in youth/green, as God commanded them. Winter

This is an enclosed place not affected by the Fall; it is a realm of 'benign symbiosis'[22] between all aspects of nature, sheltered from the corruption of the world beyond. Here, Nature has not been condemned to suffer for man's sins but can live eternally, without suffering. Exploitative man lives on the outside, where the *Exeter Book* riddles situate themselves.

In its depiction of a flourishing, incorrupt realm, the text also offers us a model of the thriving tree. This tree is described as being given to the phoenix by God and as excelling in its growth and bloom:

> Hafað þam treowe forgiefen   tirmeahtig cyning,
> meotud moncynnes,   mine gefræge,
> þæt se ana is   ealra beama
> on eorðwege   uplædendra
> beorhtast geblowen;   ne mæg him bitres wiht
> scyldum sceððan,   ac gescylded a
> wunað ungewyrded,   þenden woruld stondeð.
> <div align="right">(Phoenix, 175a-181b)[23]</div>

What is particularly notable here is the description of the tree's protection from violence and corruption. The tree cannot be damaged or altered from its original state and this, the poet insinuates, is something to be celebrated and admired. Of particular interest is the use of the word *ungewyrded* 'uninjured', which gives the tree an anthropomorphic quality. The poet is vague about the *scyldum* 'crimes' that can be done to this tree, and about the *bitres* 'bitter' forces that carry them out, but the most likely implication is that they are wicked men who would cut it down, thus causing it 'injury'. To glorify a protected tree in this way suggests that any alterations of a tree's original state by sinful beings (the *manfremmendum* of line 6b) was seen, in this context at least, as a type of violation.

This is the type of violation carried out on the tree in *Rood*. In this much-discussed poem about the creation of the cross of Christ, the tree relates how it was *aheawen holes on ende* 'hewn down at the edge of the forest' and *astyred of stefne* 'removed from root' (*Rood*, 29b-30a).[24] It was then *genaman* 'seized' by *strange feondas* 'strong enemies' and made into a *wæfersyne* 'spectacle' (30b-31a). At man's hands, it was turned into a cross and, after suffering alongside the Lord, thrown into a *deopan seaþe* 'deep pit' (75a) – a final degradation. But it is given a new life by God and becomes the *sigebeam* victory-tree (13a), newly adorned with jewels and given a new purpose – namely, to act as a symbol of Christ's sacrifice and to save mankind. In the poem, there is a dual focus on the tree's natural beginning,

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and summer, the wood is equally hung with leaves; a leaf never withers under the sky, nor does fire injure them, always and forevermore, before the change happens to the world.'

[22] OVITT, 489.

[23] 'I've heard tell that the king of glorious might, the lord of mankind, has granted to this tree that it alone, of all upward rising trees on earth, is the brightest in its blooms; never can anything bitter harm it with crimes, but it always will stand shielded, uninjured, while the world remains.'

[24] Old English citation is from MICHAEL SWANTON, ed. and trans., *The Dream of the Rood* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1970).

wounding and humiliation as well as on its value as an object. In the hands of wicked men, the tree is cut down and exploited as an object with which to perform a wicked deed, but God gives it a new worth; it is decorated and becomes *wædum geweorðode* 'ennobled by [its] garments' (15a). Now the focus is not on the tree's intrinsic worth, but on its worth as an object – an end product. This duality will be important as we move into a more detailed consideration of the tree riddles.

In both riddles 53 and 73, the trees are depicted as thriving in their natural surroundings. There is much that is paradisal about the descriptions, although their location is certainly not in Paradise: the various descriptions of flourishing (*weaxende*) and of abundance (*fægre*) and joy (*wynne*) are reminiscent of the wood in *The Phoenix*. The tree in Riddle 53 is particularly flourishing. Before it was cut down it was *tanum torhtne* 'bright in branches' and the wood was *weaxende* 'flourishing'. But the trees are not *gescylded* 'shielded' like the phoenix tree and they are therefore subject to afflictions caused by the post-lapsarian world. Even their nourishment by rain and water, though idyllic, is not Paradisal, since the trees in Paradise are not touched by rain, but bloom without the need for sustenance. Where with the phoenix tree *ne mæg him bitres wiht/scyldum sceððan* 'never can anything bitter harm it with crimes', the riddles' trees are harmed (*deope gedolgod*, in the case of Riddle 53), and killed by men perceived as 'enemies'. In Riddle 73, the men are *grome* 'grim' against it, whilst both trees suffer a form of violation: at the hands of man, they are turned into something that is *wiþ gesceape* 'against [their] nature' (R. 73, 6b).

Sinners or criminals in the post-lapsarian world can wound and violate, and they have a malign relationship with the natural world. Yet, turning to commentaries on Christian doctrine, we are reminded that it was considered to be God's intention that man use trees, primarily for food, but also for construction. Says Ambrose, 'some [trees] are created to provide fruit; others are granted for our use'.[25] Ambrose gives the example of the cedar which, he says, 'is useful for constructing the roof of a house, because its material is of such a kind as to furnish both spacious length for the roof and a quality of lightness for the walls'.[26] Man has dominion over the living world and is entitled to the resources created by God. However, as Northcott puts it, 'according to the Biblical idea of covenant this dominion still involves the recognition of the distinctive integrity and order of each aspect of creation, both personal and impersonal'.[27] This interpretation of creation – of the individual value of not only the personal (human) but impersonal (animals and plants) – is reflected in Ambrose's commentaries: 'there is nothing without a purpose', he says, 'each and every thing which is produced from the earth has its own reason for existence, which, as far as it can, fulfils the general plan of creation'.[28] Yet, in the following metaphor from Augustine, we find the tree's integrity is at odds with its potential value as an object. The metaphor, using the traditional motif of God as craftsman, involves the carpenter and a fallen tree:

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[25] Translation from the Latin taken from ST. AMBROSE, *Hexameron, Paradise, Cain and Abel,* ed. and trans. by John J. Savage, The Fathers of the Church, 42 (New York: CUA Press, 2003), p. 107.
[26] Ibid., 107–8.
[27] NORTHCOTT, 127.
[28] AMBROSE, 96.

Imagine the trunk of a tree lying before you: a good carpenter may see such a piece of timber, unhewn, as it was cut in the forest. He loves it at sight, but because he means to make something out of it. The reason for his love is not that it may always remain what it is: as craftsman, he has looked at what it shall be, not as lover of what it is; and his love is set upon what he will make of it, not upon its present state. Even so has God loved us sinners.[29]

The tree, if used by a 'good carpenter' is treated personally and with recognition for its potential value; man contemplates, lovingly, the product the wood will be turned into through his skills. However, the carpenter (whether the earthly carpenter or God) does not value the tree for its own identity but for the object that it will become. The riddles, typically non-conformist in their handling of subjects, go beyond doctrine in the attention they give to the natural integrity of the tree. In a playful reversal, the tree's state prior to human intervention is as important as its final appearance after shaping.

The main theme in Augustine's allegory is love; the shaper – whether the carpenter or God – is a benign individual who contemplates with care and devotion how the end product will look. The men in riddles 53 and 73 are not the craftsmen from Augustine's metaphor; they are enemies who inflict pain and suffering on the material. The contemplative nature of the craftsmanship described by Augustine contrasts particularly strongly with the work done to the tree in Riddle 53 where the *wunda* 'wounds' (R. 53, 7a) are fastened over in a way that seems to lack the art of craftsmanship. Craftsmanship in the riddles is that which is portrayed in Riddle 26 ('Bible'), where much time and attention is given to the process and the end result is something beautiful, adorned with *golde* 'gold', *gereno* 'ornaments' and *wuldorgesteald* 'glorious possessions' (R. 26, 14a, 15a and 16a). Indeed, the ornamentation of the object in Riddle 53 is more ambiguous. Though the tree is said to be *hyrstum/foran gefrætwed* 'adorned at the front with ornaments' (Riddle 53, 7b-8a), there is the sense that these words are used ironically, since it seems unusual for ornaments to be described as *wonnum* 'dark'. Ornamentation is used variously in the riddles, *frætwe* being employed in Riddle 7 to describe the bird's feathers as ornaments (Riddle 7, 6b), but it is usually bright or shining.[30] What we have in Riddle 53, then, is a description of object creation that is ambiguous about the nature of craftsmanship and man's use of his materials.

Thus far we can observe a strong relationship between the fallen man, the shaping of trees and the importance of the end product. Riddle 53 takes this relationship one step further, setting out not only to reverse the emphasis on the tree's potential value as a product in certain Christian allegories, but to

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[29] AUGUSTINE, *Later Works*, 324.

[30] In Riddle 14, for example, the horn is described as being *beorhtne* 'bright' in its ornaments (Riddle 14, 7b), whilst in Riddle 20 the sword's decorative wire is similarly *beorht* 'bright' (Riddle 20, 3b). In Riddle 40, Creation is said to be *fægerre frætwum goldes* 'fairer than ornaments of gold' (Riddle 40, 46a–b).

problematise the reader's ability to name the finished product. It is no accident, I suggest, that critics have produced such diverse readings and solutions; the riddle's ambiguity allows the reader to design the object his or herself. The riddle allows for more than one reading of its subject.

Riddle 53 is told from a third-person perspective and is much harder to solve than Riddle 73, being distinctly vaguer in nature. There is a lack of detail surrounding the nature of the object's use, and the ambiguity allows for more than one interpretation of the end product. The opportunity for personal interpretations is ensured by both the last few lines of the riddle, where we are unable to fathom out what the object is doing,[31] and by the indefinite description of the ornamentation – is it ugly or is it beautiful? What is more, the word *hyrstum* can mean 'decorate' as well as 'equip', which opens the object up to various interpretations. Does the reader see the tree as degraded, as Wilcox does, or venerated, like Whitman? Readers can interpret the object as something hideous, like a gallows, or beautiful, like a cross, because the ambiguous nature of the language describing it allows them to do so. We can read the riddle, perhaps, as a mirroring, in textual form, of the process of creating objects from trees. Readers, then, have a role to play as the tree's shaper. Does the reader play the 'sinful enemy' and turn it into something degraded, or play a more virtuous individual and venerate it?

Riddle 53 leads us back to the idea presented at the start of this paper, that the riddles draw attention to man's fallen condition and his God-given supremacy over the created world. The riddle causes us to reflect back on ourselves and ask whether, as part of the fallen race, we would see the shaped tree as a chance to engage in wicked activities or rather, perhaps, in spiritual reflection. It is up to the reader to see the intrinsic worth of the tree and its potentiality as a positive symbol. In this sense, the riddle is like Riddle 12 ('ox' or 'leather'), where the reader must decide whether the drunken maidservant is engaged in a sexual act or an innocent act of cleaning or manufacture; the sinful mind might see the act as sexual, whilst the purer mind might see it as more innocent.[32] Due to the provocative language in the riddle, the likeliness of the reader not seeing any sexual innuendo at all is slim and reminds us that we are all part of the fallen race and, as such, struggle to see the use and misuse of objects through anything but the eyes of sinners.

It is interesting to reflect here on the fallen nature of the dreamer in *Rood* and what this nature reveals about the nature of sin and shaping in the Anglo-Saxon imagination. The dreamer is said to be by *synnum fah* 'sins stained' and *forwunded mid wommum* 'badly wounded by faults' (13b-14a), and this description is strikingly similar to the wounding of trees in the riddles. Furthermore, when the dreamer sees the tree he is also said to be with *sorgum gedrefed* 'afflicted by sorrow'

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[31] WHITMAN, gives a brief account of how scholars, particularly those who prefer the 'battering-ram' solution, have tried and failed to interpret the action successfully. See WHITMAN, 1.

[32] JOHN W. TANKE has briefly argued for a similar moral principle in Riddle 12, suggesting that 'the "original" purpose of the riddle is for the riddler to lure the solver to propose the sexual solution, in order then to expose his salacious imagination'. See TANKE, '*Wonfeax Wale:* Ideology and Figuration in the Sexual Riddles of the Exeter Book', in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections,* ed. by Britton J. Horwood and Gillian R. Overing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 21–45 (28–9).

(20b), drawing further connections between dreamer and *beam*. By thinking of the dreamer as afflicted and wounded like a felled tree, we can consider him as 'material' that is in need of shaping. We might see him as the sinful man of Augustine's metaphor, who needs to be 'shaped' by God's love into something new and better. The dreamer's 'shaping' comes through the dream's revelation and the tree's desire for its story to be told. Thus, like many of the riddle's subjects that have been turned from material to object, the dreamer will assume a new task: he will *onwreoh wordum* 'reveal in words' the story of the tree. The nature of the narrator's shaping and his new task lead us to this thought-provoking realisation: in the Anglo-Saxon imagination, a man can change a material, like a fallen tree, into an object that is new and better, but an object, in the form of the message-bearing rood tree, also has the power to turn material, in the form of the un-shaped man, into something new and better, too. As 'wounded' and 'afflicted' materials that were once in need of shaping, both the narrator of *Rood* and the rood tree share an affinity and an anticipation for redemption that unites man and the natural world.

　　　　To conclude, it is clear to see how looking beyond the riddles' answers and considering their literal narratives of shaping and creating can be beneficial to our understanding of Anglo-Saxon attitudes to the natural world. Using the principles of modern eco-theology, I have endeavoured to show how there was no 'mood of indifference' towards the suffering of the natural world in these Old English riddles, but rather an appreciation of the integrity of living things. The acts of shaping and creating are important to this eco-theological reading, with the riddles demonstrating how man has the power to shape material into an object both with his hands and with his imagination. Lastly, Augustine's carpenter metaphor reveals how man, too, could be perceived as material waiting to be shaped – in this instance by the hands of a loving God. This notion, I suggest, creates an affiliation between humans and organic materials, a positive affiliation that echoes the principles of modern eco-theology and broadens our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards the created world.

The Hundred Years War and the 'Creation' of National Identity and the Written English Vernacular: A Reassessment

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The so-called 'Hundred Years War' and the creation of both English and French nationhood have been inextricably bound together in the historical imaginations of modern historians. Historiographical commonplaces about the later middle ages as a chaotic era of transition towards modern Europe typically treat the Anglo-French wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the archetypal example of 'nation states [being] forged by conflict against their neighbours'.[33] This prominence has its roots in the mid-nineteenth century, the high point of explicitly nationalist historiography in England and France. The association with nationhood remains today, and it can still be very overt.[34] For France in particular, the language of the nation and national identity has been strongly connected with the Hundred Years War.[35] It is a little more difficult to propose such a strong link on the basis of the English evidence; nonetheless, 'representations of the Hundred Years War have become intertwined with constructions of nationalism both by the English and the French'.[36] Even those who have argued that 'it is vain to look for nationalism' in this period have wanted to see 'the beginnings of a crude form of patriotism' stemming from the French wars.[37]

Both historians and social scientists have seen a powerful connection between the phenomenon of 'national identity' – as well as other 'identities' – and language. In Benedict Anderson's influential scheme, the medieval 'imagined community of Christendom' derived much of its relevance and force from the status of Latin as a universal 'language-of-power', and the rise of vernaculars as 'competitors' for this position in different places ('French in Paris', 'English in London') at once manifested and catalysed the displacement of Christendom by 'national' imagined communities.[38] This argument puts a linguistic spin on the traditional narrative which situates in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the 'decay' of the 'medieval ideal' of 'world government' in the face of a number of consolidating monarchies which were underpinned by a 'modern theory of

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[33] M. L. KEKEWICH and S. ROSE, *Britain, France & the Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 161.

[34] For example G. MINOIS, *La guerre de cent ans: naissance de deux nations* (Paris: Perrin, 2008).

[35] C. BEAUNE, *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

[36] E. C. CALDWELL, 'The Hundred Years' War and National Identity', in *Inscribing the Hundred Years' War in French and English Cultures*, ed. by D. N. Baker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 237–65 (237).

[37] J. BARNIE, *War in Medieval Society* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 97.

[38] B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 2006), 42.

sovereignty' centred upon the incipient nation state.[39] It harnesses the voluminous evidence that 'vernacular tongues… intruded more and more into the sphere of written culture' in the later middle ages to the narrative of nation state formation.[40] Given that England and France have been treated as the two archetypal late medieval incipient nation states, it is hardly surprising that their endemic wars have been linked to the legitimation and increased use of the English vernacular in England and the French vernacular in France. Philippe Wolffe articulates this war-induced linguistic divergence in strong terms: 'Ce sont surtout les haines de la guerre de Cent Ans qui creusent le fossé linguistique [entre l'Angleterre et la France]'.[41] This is a particularly significant argument for England. Whereas in the heartlands of France a written version of *langue d'oïl* was the only alternative to Latin, in later medieval England the vernacular had to be chosen over a third written language: French. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the very clear increase in the use of written English in all kinds of contexts between 1337 and 1453 has often been attributed by historians to the 'semblance of "national sentiment"'[42] or 'growing national feeling'[43] which they believe was stimulated by the wars with France between these years. Mark Ormrod's evocative description of the contemporary English view of the Hundred Years War as 'a form of national crusade'[44] epitomises the presumed connection between it and constructions of Englishness – and, by association, the English language.[45] Even the canon of Middle English works traditionally classified as 'literature' have been seen in part as products of the Hundred Years War. It is typically one of the most prominent 'factors' cited to explain the rise of the use of English in prestigious texts from the late fourteenth century onwards.[46]

This tendency to connect the ascent of the written English vernacular with the Hundred Years War is understandable. The chronologies of these developments appear to coincide neatly, and, as we have seen, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are viewed as a period in which early statehood and nationhood – with which the written vernacular is closely associated – were forged in war. The idea of nationhood in particular is deeply rooted in the foundational nineteenth-century scholarship, and even shaped the selection and arrangement of the source collections which we still use today. The preoccupations of historians and literary

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[39] G. HOLMES, *Europe: Hierarchy and Revolt* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1975), p 1–4; J. H. BURNS, *Lordship, Kingship and Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 162.

[40] C. F. BRIGGS, *The Body Broken: Medieval Europe 1300-1520* (London: Routledge, 2011), 262.

[41] P. WOLFFE, *Les origines linguistiques de l'Europe occidentale*, 2nd edn (Toulouse: Association des Publications de l'Université de Toulouse-le-Mirail, 1982), 136.

[42] S. LEWIS, *Later Medieval France* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 77.

[43] K. FOWLER, *The Hundred Years War* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 20.

[44] W. M. ORMROD, 'The Domestic Response to the Hundred Years War', in *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War*, ed. A. CURRY and M. HUGHES (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1994), 83–101 (87).

[45] Cf. W. M. ORMROD, 'The Use of English: Language, Law, and Political Culture in Fourteenth-Century England', *Speculum*, 78 (2003), 750–87 (781).

[46] For example N. WATSON, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by J. WOGAN-BROWNE and others (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 331–52 (334); J. H. FISHER, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', *PMLA*, 107 (1992), 1168–80 (1170).

scholars in recent decades have also worked to place language at the centre of historical debates and explanations. Already in the 1970s the new quest to capture past *mentalités* forced historians to think about the limitations that language (amongst other things) placed upon their subjects' ability to imagine, articulate, and engage with the world around them. The 'linguistic turn' then underlined the historical agency of language, while the broader 'cultural turn', especially insofar as it has stemmed from literary theory, has largely manifested itself as an obsession with discourse, textuality, and semiotics. These methodological and historiographical shifts have quite rightly accentuated the dimension of subjective meaning in sources and the importance of language beyond its old role as a tenuous subsidiary of nationhood. The casual consensus that the Hundred Years War strengthened English identity and catalysed the employment of the written English vernacular is not simply a result of blind acceptance of old national teleologies; today it is just as much a consequence of a well-meaning desire to acknowledge the historical significance of worldviews and language.

Nonetheless, the widespread presumed relationship between war, identity, and language in later medieval England poses a problem. As Anne Curry has pointed out, the notion 'that the change of language [of English writers] from French to English towards the end of the fourteenth century was due to the sense of national identity which the French wars had strengthened… is clearly an over-simplistic explanation of the complex issues surrounding the rapid rise of written English in the period'.[47] The vernacular texts produced between 1337 and 1453 by no means unequivocally support this hypothesis; important bodies of evidence either do not relate to it, or even contradict it outright, in ways which are discussed below. Furthermore, the interpretations discussed above contain underlying assumptions about vernacularity, warfare, nationhood, and identity in the later Middle Ages which are challenged by the nature, content, and context of sources surviving from this period. The motivations behind language use are complex, so positing a vague connection between war and the increase in the production of vernacular writing not only explains little, but also occludes potentially more significant social developments and their intersection with the intricate events and agencies behind the nineteenth-century abstraction of 'the Hundred Years War'.

The role played by 'identity' in this narrative is particularly unclear and schematic. Because it has become a 'defining concern of cultural history',[48] there is now a fashionable tendency to read identity into all sources and situations, often in a rather perfunctory manner which unwittingly assumes that this reified category was a universal and authentic phenomenon at both individual and collective levels. This danger is not automatically averted by qualifications about the fluidity, multiplicity, or instability of the identities in question; such disclaimers simply rob identity of its analytical purchase by making it ambiguous to the point of meaninglessness.[49] One way to clarify the significance – if any – of identity is to reformulate it as 'identification', that is to say the constant process of self-definition

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[47] A. CURRY, *The Hundred Years War*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 6.

[48] P. JOYCE, 'What is the Social in Social History?', *Past and Present*, 206 (2010), 213–48 (220).

[49] R. BRUBAKER, 'Identity', in *Colonialism in Question*, ed. by F. Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 59–90 (59–60).

in relation to the surrounding world which is intrinsic to human life and which can – but does not have to – create a sense of group affinity at a given point in time. A common consequence of identification is 'self-understanding', an appraisal of the self in particularistic terms which can motivate action on the part of the appraiser.[50] Thinking in these terms entails precision in specifying the actors who engaged in identification and the way in which the outcomes of this activity had agency.

Precision is what this essay will seek to attain, by reference to some key episodes and developments which involved English users in the centuries of the Hundred Years War, for the sake of a closer consideration of the validity and implications of the purported relationship between war, identification, and vernacularity in this same period. It is after all the task of historians to 'specify the cultural contexts' in which identification took place and affected other phenomena (in this case vernacularity) in a historically contingent manner.[51] In undertaking it, this essay also aims to consider how vernacularity itself, as a vital aspect of the later middle ages, might be explained and conceptualised.

Questions of chronology and identification in the rise of 'Middle English'

The traditional dates of the Hundred Years War encompass the 'long fourteenth century' which has often been viewed as the decisive period in the 'triumph of English', centred above all on the lifetime of Chaucer.[52] Despite this narrow focus, literary scholars have turned the era of Chaucer, Langland, and Gower – and, to a lesser extent, that of Hoccleve and Lydgate – into a vast field with its own 'medieval literary theory'.[53] The advent of this canonical vernacular literature has traditionally been associated with a nationalistic self-confidence in the face of the people and culture of France, 'the clear enemy'.[54] The decision to write in English is said to reflect its sudden new status as 'the language of the nation, a powerful patriotic bond uniting commons, aristocracy, and crown against enemies from abroad'.[55] Even in Jeremy Catto's provocative assault on the view that it was inevitable that English should acquire this status, the choice of written English remains a very deliberate and combative one which reflects an attempt to elevate the national language and challenge Francophone hegemony on the 'horizon of European culture'.[56] Though it is rarely fully articulated, the implication of these interpretations of the valorisation of vernacular writing against the backdrop of war with France is that the activity of writing the kind of texts conventionally

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[50] Ibid., p 68–73; P. MANDLER, 'What is "National Identity"?', *Modern Intellectual History*, 3 (2006), 271–97 (276).

[51] Ibid., 273.

[52] D. MATTHEWS, *The Invention of Middle English* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 3.

[53] R. EVANS and others, 'The Notion of Vernacular Theory', in *Vernacular*, ed. by WOGAN-BROWNE, 314–30 (314).

[54] B. COTTLE, *The Triumph of English* (London: Blandford Press, 1969), p 10, 51–88.

[55] WATSON, 'Middle English Writing', 339.

[56] J. CATTO, 'Written English: The Making of the Language 1370–1400', *Past and Present*, 179 (2003), 24–59 (59).

thought of as 'literature' was an exercise in conscious self-identification in relation to a long-standing foe with a different mother tongue.

The chronology of the French wars before and during the age of Chaucer presents a problem for this explanatory framework. As some Middle English scholars have begun to point out, there are no neat cut-off points or sudden departures in the long evolution of Anglo-Saxon into recognizably modern English.[57] Already in the early thirteenth century texts were being carefully crafted in a language which is unmistakably the close ancestor of the vernacular used by Chaucer. Sometimes, as in Laȝamon's *Brut*, the author's desire to locate and honour Englishness is advertised plainly: 'þat he wolde of Engelond [i.e. English people]… / [and] the Englene lond… / þe ristnesse telle'.[58] By the early decades of the fourteenth century, the decision to write in the English language was itself being given worth in certain texts, notably the *Cursor Mundi*, the writings of Robert Manning, and the *Speculum Vitae*.[59] Their purpose is apparently to attempt to define, convey, and celebrate a linguistic self-understanding grounded in and projected onto a perceived realm-wide (or 'regnal')[60] community of England. In the case of these texts, it can plausibly be said that 'the very act of writing in English is a statement about belonging'.[61]

Of course, these vernacular verses were not simply contributions to an abstract process of self-definition, but participations in polemical debates about religious and political policy in the troubled decades preceding Edward III's first French campaign. It seems likely that some of those involved in these debates employed and were receptive to rhetorical appeals to linguistic and ethnic solidarities framed in opposition to Francophone groups. This does not reflect a social, still less a racial, division along linguistic lines in early fourteenth-century England, but rather the construction of a deep-rooted collectiveness to facilitate the conceptualisation of the 'regnal' entity that was being negotiated and fought over from within in this period. If 'otherness constitutes national narratives',[62] it is not surprising that Frenchness was singled out at this time when even the gentry was adopting English as its everyday tongue, and French was beginning to be learned as a foreign language by all but the highest peers of England.[63] However, the French element to this discursive 'othering' should not be exaggerated. The *imaginaire* which seems to have driven the vernacular identification in these texts was located above all in the mythologies and realities of the political and legal consolidation of the English realm and its struggle for dominance in the British

[57] MATTHEWS, *Middle English*, p 1–15.

[58] *Laȝamon: Brut*, ed. by G. L. BROOK and R. F. LESLIE, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1963–78), I, 3.

[59] See the extract from the *Cursor Mundi* in *Vernacular*, ed. by WOGAN-BROWNE, 270; on Manning and the *Speculum Vitae*, see Watson, 'Middle English Writing', 337.

[60] S. REYNOLDS, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 254.

[61] T. TURVILLE-PETRE, *England the Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 11.

[62] W. SCASE, 'Nation, Identity, and Otherness', *New Medieval Literatures*, IV (2001), 1–8 (4).

[63] G. L. HARRISS, *Shaping the Nation: England 1360–1461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 156.

Isles – a 'putatively unified space of insular rule'.[64] This narrative was a useful basis for the vernacularising cause of these early fourteenth-century polemicists, for border warfare within the British Isles was a constant experience for many English people in a way that war with France was not. In fact, beyond the south coast this remained true throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in their entirety. Revealingly, the refrain about 'Skottes... bot gaudes and gile'[65] in Lawrence Minot's poetic celebration of the victory at Halidon Hill in 1333 is more venomous than any of the anti-French sentiment in the *Cursor Mundi* (and a far cry from the poet's grudging admiration for 'þe franche men [who] er fers and fell').[66] Nonetheless, the few surviving early fourteenth-century vernacular verse compositions and pseudo-historical compilations contain the strongest written evidence of anti-French feeling linked with a self-identification in terms of Englishness of any late medieval texts of these genres. They suggest that, for a brief period ending in the mid-fourteenth century, the English language became an abstract code for a 'regnal' solidarity, as in the famous 1295 Latin declaration of Edward I that the French intended to 'obliterate the English language from the land'.[67]

Within a decade of Edward III's first attempt to make good his new claim to the crown of France in 1340, the polemical vernacular discourse which had celebrated the notion that 'euerich Inglische Inglische can' and differentiated these 'Inglische' from those who 'Freynsche vse' disappeared.[68] There is a conspicuous silence regarding French enemies in the writings associated with the 'triumph of English', despite the forty years of intermittent wars against Valois France which separate Manning's chronicle from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Whereas the glorious Crécy and Poitiers campaigns provided ideal subjects for the chivalric narratives of Froissart, it is difficult to find any suggestion that they inspired the writers who confidently adopted and valorised the English vernacular at the end of the fourteenth century. Chaucer assiduously limits his Knight's military itineraries to crusading conflict zones on the fringes of Christendom;[69] whether or not this is out of a desire to raise questions about chivalric conduct,[70] it is significant that French theatres are entirely omitted when these were far more likely destinations for knights who served abroad in the mid- to late fourteenth century (the battle of Crécy alone involved around 3,000 men at arms).[71] In Gower's case the relationship between the French wars and the use of English is contradicted outright. His only mention of the wars is his impassioned 'lettre' *In Praise of Peace* (*c.* 1400), addressed to Henry IV. In it he declares that 'werre is modir of the

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[64] C. INGHAM, *Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 171.

[65] *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. by R. H. ROBBINS (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 30.

[66] Ibid., 35.

[67] M. VALE, 'Language, Politics, and Society', *English Historical Review*, 120 (2005), 15–34 (20).

[68] TURVILLE-PETRE, *England the Nation*, 31.

[69] *The Canterbury Tales: General Prologue*, l. 43–66.

[70] Cf. S. H. RIGBY, *Chaucer's Knight's Tale* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 7ff.

[71] A. AYTON, 'The English Army at Crécy', in *The Battle of Crécy*, ed. by A. AYTON and others (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 159–251 (168–9).

wronges alle' and notes pointedly that even 'Alisaundre' could not achieve lasting conquests, his violent legacy being sinful division.[72] The realm of England is exalted on the basis of its wise laws (and wise new monarch), through which 'the pes schal stonde'.[73] England is conceptualised and praised in the vernacular, not in opposition to any 'other', but through its potential to lead the way in the pious task of ending strife between Christian brothers and healing the Schism within 'holy cherche'.[74] Thus, this final poem of Gower's is an exercise in identification which appeals to the very opposite of war-inspired 'otherness'; instead, England is subsumed within a wider Christian world in which its positive attributes are validated and shared.

The difficulties involved in linking the advent of English as a prestigious and widespread written language to war in France extend beyond the absence of or opposition to national and military themes in the canonical literature. Even the idea that the adoption of English was a gesture of cultural rivalry intended to elevate English to the same international status as French or Italian, which Catto has seen as a very deliberate top-down endeavour,[75] does not entail any 'othering' of the traditions vernacular English was supposed to supersede. Convention seems to have demanded humility and deference to Latin and even French traditions; thus Chaucer's *Complaint of Venus* ends with an apology for the use of English for a verse style invented by and better suited to 'hem that maken [poetry] in Fraunce'.[76] Even translations, which form the bulk of the vernacular 'literature' produced between 1337 and 1453, do not attempt to validate the choice of written English in confrontational terms. At their least self-deprecatory, they end with a dead-pan acknowledgement of the work's non-English origins: 'This is the name that turned this book fro latyn to Englische…'.[77] If the text was embellished or reinvented, the protocols of the *translatio studii* demanded that the work be prefaced by reverential comments about the original material and *auctor* and a recognition of the unworthiness of the Anglophone end-result and its translator.[78] Clearly, the downplaying of English here forms part of a set of obligatory topoi which prestigious texts were expected to incorporate. In some cases, particularly John Lydgate's prolific work, the topoi may have been deployed in an ambivalent manner which aggrandised the patron and therefore, indirectly, vindicated the patron's decision to promote vernacular English. It has even been suggested that behind the usual tropes found in the *Troy Book* lay a nationalistic manifesto in support of Henry V's cross-channel expeditions.[79] The notion that Lydgate

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[72] *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. MACAULEY, 2 vols (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1900–01), II, 482–84.

[73] Ibid., II, 492.

[74] Ibid., II, 488–89.

[75] CATTO, 'Written English', 46.

[76] *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F. N. ROBINSON, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 538.

[77] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 233, fo. 207; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 291, fo. 120v.

[78] R. COPELAND, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 112.

[79] EVANS, 'Vernacular Theory', 320–21.

supported his patrons' ambitions and transmitted their ideas in the vernacular to a growing politically engaged public centred on London seems very plausible,[80] but if works such as the *Troy Book* were in any way intended to identify England and Englishness, they did not do so by reference to a French 'other' over which a self-confident English vernacular had been chosen, in spite of the background of diplomatic and military tensions.

An important point raised by a recent volume on the theme of English vernacular writing in relation to France can help to explain the complete absence of explicit 'othering' of Francophone subjects and the plentiful evidence of respect for and incorporation of them: there was an awareness amongst the authors and compilers behind the traditional canon of great Middle English works that 'court culture' in England had long been intertwined with French (and, more broadly, 'European') trappings, and never more so than during Chaucer's lifetime.[81] The Chaucerian brand of English was unapologetically reliant upon French loanwords; it 'required not just the presence but the interanimation of both natural languages'.[82] For wealthy or aristocratic English people, the relationship between Englishness and Frenchness was characterised by a tension between shared tastes, values, and vocabularies and conflicting political agendas which produced 'constant cycles of friendship and violence'.[83] English literary scholarship has produced some extremely thorough and nuanced research, but as a discipline fundamentally centred upon English texts it understandably struggles to formulate frameworks and narratives in which the adoption of the English language for its own sake and for the sake of a strengthened understanding of Englishness were not priorities for the very actors who undertook that adoption. Yet the celebrated vernacular writings of the supposedly decisive phase of the 'long fourteenth century' present very ambivalent justifications for the use of English, and none of them appear linked to the wars in France. What identification was undertaken by the authors (and audiences) of these texts does not seem to have been straightforwardly 'national' (in the sense of self-definition in relation to a perceived 'other'), especially compared to the relatively explicit rhetoric of the early fourteenth-century vernacular polemics. The 'Hundred Years War' and the self-confident rise of English clearly do not go hand in hand from the point of view of carefully crafted written discourse. As we shall see, the nature of the conflict actually militated against the discursive valorisation of English in war-related contexts, especially after 1415.

Vernacularity and identification in the context of a dynastic agenda

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[80] M. NOLAN, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3–14.

[81] *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War*, ed. by A. BUTTERFIELD (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8–10.

[82] S. GUTHRIE, 'Dialogics and Prosody in Chaucer', in *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, ed. by T. J. Farrell (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 94–108 (99).

[83] *Familiar Enemy*, ed. by Butterfield, 393; cf. also M. G. A. VALE, *The Ancient Enemy: England, France and Europe from the Angevins to the Tudors* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007).

In seeking to elucidate how the French wars affected the ways in which English users understood and expressed themselves, it is important to keep the aims of and justifications for the conflict in mind. The sporadic fighting and negotiating was above all about the defence or enforcement of dynastic claims to titles and their accompanying rights, revenues, and jurisdictions. This is acknowledged in the near-universal view that the struggle between Edward III and Philip VI was 'feudal' in origin,[84] but the idea that later 'phases' of the Hundred Years War became more 'national'[85] in character (which, as we have seen, underpins the standard narrative of the rise of the written vernacular) can occlude the fact that until 1453 the central *casus belli* remained the claims of the English monarch to possessions and privileges in France, including the French crown itself, claims taken more seriously than ever after the 1420 Troyes settlement. This does not mean that England and France were not experiencing increasing cultural divergence, or that aspects of what we call 'nationhood' and 'statehood' were not created or stimulated by the ongoing wars. However, it does mean that the way in which the Anglo-French wars manifest themselves in the sources can best be understood in terms of a contest for rights and possessions rather than a clash of 'nations' which reinforced English identity and linguistic self-confidence. What Edouard Perroy saw as a 'strange contradiction' – that 'Englishmen' continued to support 'their king's French policy with all their might' despite becoming 'more and more anglicized'[86] – ceases to present a problem once it is appreciated that the wars were not primarily conceptualised in relation to Englishness (and an opposing Frenchness), but to the legal cause of a dynasty.

Nowhere does this emerge more clearly than in the treaties which were intended to resolve the disputes behind the wars. The very first clause of the Treaty of Brétigny attempts to address the vexed question of jurisdiction and ownership in Aquitaine: 'Premierement, que le Roy d'Engleterre, aveuc ce que il tient en Guyenne et en Gaiscoigne, aura, pour Lui, et pour ses Hoirs, parpetuelment et a touz jourz, toutes les choses qui s'ensuivent…'.[87] The document drawn up at Troyes in June 1420 does justify itself 'pro Franciae et Angliae Regnorum reintegranda Pace',[88] but the practicalities are very much focused on legal issues, most supremely that of the right of Henry V's descendants to inherit the French crown, and the settlement is contractually guaranteed in the first clause in a very personal way: a dynastic marriage between the houses of Lancaster and Valois. It was the status of the kings of England and France and their vassals as competing claimants which drove the Anglo-French conflict, and contemporaries understood this. That is why we find few references to 'nations', let alone linguistic conceptions thereof, after 1337. Instead, English propagandists concentrated on their monarch, emphasising the justness of his cause and the invalidity of the enemy claimant's. Already in the 1338 Anglo-Norman poem *Veus du Hairon* the Valois are consciously

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[84] E.g. C. T. ALLMAND, *The Hundred Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 11.

[85] Ibid., 171.

[86] E. PERROY, *The Hundred Years War* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951), 210.

[87] *Foedera, conventions, literae et cujuscunque generis acta publica*, ed. by T. RYMER, 20 vols ([n.p.]: [n. pub.], 1704–35), III.i, 202.

[88] Ibid., IV.i, 171.

denigrated as usurpers ('Philype de Valois, Qui se fait roi de Franche'),[89] and an anonymous Latin work written shortly after Crécy provides an in-depth genealogical justification of Edward III's claim to the French crown in rhyming couplets.[90] This approach survived into the fifteenth century; the Anglo-Burgundian faction in post-1420 France attacked the character and legitimacy of Charles VII and uncompromisingly portrayed the Lancastrian leaders as *de jure* rulers of France.[91]

Because this emphasis on the rights of an individual ruler was concerned with him in his capacity as king of France, there does not seem to have been any preference for the vernacular as a register for pushing the Plantagenet or Lancastrian agenda. The dynastic cause was after all neither entirely 'national' nor entirely 'foreign', which made it difficult to link the use of particular language to its promotion. Certainly, as English gained prominence as a prestigious language, it was used to celebrate Lancastrian pretensions in France. For example, John Audelay used English poetry to rejoice at the birth of Henry VI, which he believed would 'saue our ryght [to the French crown] þat was forelorne'.[92] In the 1420s and '30s Lydgate wrote a series of poems justifying the Lancastrian claim to the French crown, most notably his 'remembraunce of a peedeugre how that the kyng of Englond, Henry the Sext, is truly borne heir vnto the Corone of Fraunce by lynyall successioun', which comes to the arresting conclusion that the young king was 'to Seint Lowys sone & very heir'.[93] But because this was about the ambitions of a dynasty, there is no attempt in these works to relate the choice of English to the subject matter, and discursive articulations of Englishness and a sense of nationhood are nowhere to be found. The sentiments contained in them are no different to the support expressed in French by Thomas Langley for the accession of Henry as 'un Roy de les deux Roialmes d'Engleterre, et de France' in parliament in 1423.[94] Lancastrian propaganda (and Plantagenet propaganda before it) was not an exercise in identification, except perhaps in that it affirmed the shared loyalty of English subjects to their sovereign and their willingness to support his projects within reason. Furthermore, the theory of a war-related, Anglocentric Lancastrian 'language policy' has 'been steadily crumbling away under historians' and linguists' investigations'.[95]

Indeed, the Lancastrian project seems to have attenuated any sense of Englishness predicated on linguistic separation from a French 'other'. The Treaty of Troyes, which established the Lancastrians as heirs (and, from 1422, rulers) of

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[89] *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*, ed. by T. WRIGHT, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1859–61), I, 16.

[90] Ibid., I, 35.

[91] E.g. 'The Duke of Bedford's challenge to Charles VII', in *Joan of Arc: La Pucelle*, ed. by C. TAYLOR (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 119–22.

[92] *Historical Poems*, ed. by ROBBINS, 110.

[93] *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by H. N. MACCRACKEN, 2 vols (London: [n. pub.], 1911–34), II, 613–22.

[94] 'Henry VI: October 1423', *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116530> [accessed 30 May 2013].

[95] *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c.1100-c.1500*, ed. by J. WOGAN-BROWNE and others (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), 4.

France, enjoyed substantial support in northern France, Burgundy, and Gascony. These supporters needed to be cultivated, especially as they bore the brunt of the war effort against the opponents of the Troyes settlement. Jean-Philippe Genet's judgement that the Lancastrian 'politique de guerre' was 'antifrançaise par excellence'[96] does not square with this imperative. The Anglo-Burgundian faction could ill afford to alienate its supporters, which is why the treaties of Troyes and Amiens assiduously safeguarded the rights of loyal lords, towns, ecclesiastics, and corporations in Lancastrian France, while soldiers, mercenaries, and settlers who upset local populations were dealt with harshly.[97] Paris in particular had to be nurtured, for possession of the traditional French cultural centre gave credibility to Lancastrian pretensions (especially when the time came to crown Henry VI), and the Parisians had to make enormous sacrifices and engage in near-constant frontier warfare to avoid recapture by Charles VII. Some remarkable correspondence from Paris to the municipality and people of London and Henry VI's Regency Council survives from the period of Lancastrian control of Île-de-France which attests to the close links between the war agenda of the crown and the Parisian authorities until the Valois reconquest of 1436.[98] In it the Londoners are consistently addressed as 'tres chiers freres et tres especiaulx amis', and asked to petition the government of Henry VI, 'nostre souverain seigneur et le vostre' for aid for beleaguered Paris.[99] These are admittedly formulaic phrases, but such expressions of affinity from the heartlands of France must surely have made it very difficult for public references to war and nationhood to contain anti-French feeling of the kind which supposedly fostered the use of vernacular English. Indeed, the Lancastrian regime was keen to avoid this: a disciplinary ordinance passed by the duke of Bedford in 1423 actually prescribed penalties for anyone who labelled the Armagnac-Dauphinist enemy 'the French'.[100] Literate and politically engaged English people had to have some awareness of the divided loyalties of different groups and regions in France, some of which shared their commitment to the Lancastrian dynastic agenda, and the popular poems bemoaning the loss of Burgundian support following Philip the Good's *volte face* at the 1435 congress of Arras show that this awareness was widespread.[101] In view of this appreciation, the notion that 'what was becoming increasingly a "national" war forced men to think in terms of "French or English"' is clearly too simplistic.[102]

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[96] J.-PH. GENET, 'Le roi de France anglais et la nation française au XVe siècle', in *Identité régionale et conscience nationale*, ed. by R. BABEL and J.-M. MOEGLIN (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1997), 39–58 (44).

[97] A. CURRY, 'The Impact of War and Occupation on Urban Life', *French History*, 1 (1987), 157–82 (p 168–70); A. CURRY, 'Isolated or Integrated? The English Soldier in Lancastrian Normandy', in *Courts and Regions of Medieval Europe*, ed. by S. REES JONES and others (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 191–210 (210).

[98] *Collection générale des documents français qui se trouvent en Angleterre*, ed. by J. DELPIT (Paris: [n. pub.], 1847), 233–39, 248–49.

[99] Ibid., 233, 249.

[100] J. W. MCKENNA, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965), 145–62 (151).

[101] *Historical Poems*, ed. by ROBBINS, 78–89.

[102] FOWLER, *Hundred Years War*, 21.

The need to promote a particular configuration of dynastic rule – what historians have dubbed the 'Lancastrian dual monarchy' – capable of transcending the increasing divergence of native vernacular languages on either side of the English Channel appears to have led the Lancastrian regime to avoid language as its primary medium of propaganda as much as possible. It is true that, as we have seen, some court poetry was harnessed to the dynastic agenda. James Doig has detected an intermittent programme of Lancastrian-sponsored written works, extending back even to the years before Troyes.[103] This seems plausible, especially in the case of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*; Latin was a suitably neutral language in which to eulogize a king who aspired simultaneously to rule an English-speaking and a French-speaking realm, and the *Gesta* endorses that goal in no uncertain terms: 'Et det deus… ut uterque et Francorum et Anglie gladius in debitam redeat monarchiam'.[104] However, still more thought and resources were invested into non-verbal means of encapsulating and communicating the pretensions and objectives of the Lancastrian dynasty. Iconographic representations of the dual monarchy in the form of mingled leopards and fleurs-de-lis and two side-by-side crowns were applied to some of the coins minted in Lancastrian France (some of which would inevitably have reached England through cross-Channel trade).[105] A genealogical 'poster' showing the purported descent of the Lancastrian dynasty from Clovis, via St Louis, has survived in some English manuscripts; it appears to have been intended for widespread consumption, though the extent of its circulation is unknown.[106] On a more prestigious and less public level, intertwined symbols of the English and French royal houses have been found in several manuscripts, some of them otherwise unrelated to the war effort.[107] Such intertwining of Lancastrian or English and French or Burgundian motifs happened in much more public locations: a façade of the Hôtel de Ville in Paris was decorated with fleurs-de-lis and Lancastrian 'rosiers' in 1434, while the banners carried by the duke of Bedford's troops at the battle of Verneuil were decorated by a combination of St George's crosses overlaid by Burgundian St Andrew's crosses.[108] Most expensive and most targeted of all were the parades and ceremonies performed at the time of Henry VI's coronation in Paris and his return to London the following year. The journal of the so-called 'Bourgeois' of Paris and a report from the municipality of the town itself relate the sumptuous and heavily symbolic details of the procession of the young Henry through the streets of Paris in December 1431. Its most significant feature in relation to the dual monarchy was the leading of the royal retinue by a stag covered in a drape with the arms of France and England along an itinerary which culminated at a tableau consisting of a boy

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[103] J. A. DOIG, 'Propaganda, Public Opinion and the Siege of Calais in 1436', in *Crown, Government and People*, ed. by R. ARCHER (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), 79–106 (87).

[104] *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. by F. TAYLOR and J. S. ROSKELL (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 180.

[105] McKENNA, 'Dual Monarchy', 145–50.

[106] Ibid., 151–52.

[107] E. DANBURY, 'English and French Artistic Propaganda', in *Power, Culture, and Religion in France*, ed. by C. Allmand (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), 75–97 (84, 93).

[108] C. REYNOLDS, 'Evidence for Painting in Paris and Normandy', in ibid., 37–55 (48–49).

dressed as Henry and sitting beneath two suspended crowns.[109] The authorities in London put on an even more extravagant celebration of Lancastrian claims for the king's royal entry in February 1432. The Latin narrative of the proceedings mentions two 'antelops' decorated with English and French royal heraldry and a wooden castle within which stood a huge tree (representing, we are told, Henry's lineage) at the roots of which sat figures representing St Edward the Confessor and St Louis. According to the lyrics transcribed in the report, the attendant choir rejoiced that 'God… hath holpe you atteyne your right / And crouned twyes with gemes bright'.[110]

The performative, visual, and material aspects of Lancastrian propaganda are a reminder of the importance of non-written media of communication in the later Middle Ages, but they also represent an attempt to avoid the potential pitfalls of having to choose a language while ruling two increasingly distinct vernacular spheres. Whereas under Charles V the French monarchy was able to begin quite deliberately to promote an association between itself, the French space, and the French language,[111] the claims of English kings in France precluded such an exclusive, identification-oriented valorisation of the English vernacular, especially during the brief fifteenth-century window within which these claims seemed fully realisable.

Conclusion

The incontestable rise to predominance of the English language in the written culture of the Anglophone world between the early fourteenth and the mid-fifteenth centuries cannot adequately be apprehended by reference to sweeping background forces such as 'national identity' and 'the Hundred Years War'. The exercise of interrogating sources with these thematic categories in mind underlines their unwieldiness and lack of explanatory power. Of course, as a narrative discipline which has to engage with large-scale change across time, history cannot avoid generalisation. However, it is clear in this instance that there is an unsatisfactorily large disconnect between the popular metanarrative which links manifestations of the vernacular to an emerging sense of nationhood catalysed by war and the contextually contingent detail of the sources which it purports to encompass. Some historians have made a convincing case for the existence of medieval collective solidarities which could be described as 'national identities',[112] and sensitive work grounded in rigorous analysis of certain discursive fields and their attendant circumstances has provided some late medieval examples of direct relationships between conscious use of vernaculars and conflict with foreigners.[113] In the case of the sporadic and evolving 'Anglo-French' wars, however, we have

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[109] *A Parisian Journal, 1405-1449*, trans. by J. SHIRLEY (Oxford: Clarendon Press , 1968), 269; *Documents*, ed. by Delpit, 243.
[110] Ibid., 245–7.
[111] F. AUTRAND, *Charles V: le Sage* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 1–6.
[112] R. DAVIES, 'Nations and National Identities in the Medieval World', *Revue belge d'histoire contemporaine*, XXXIV (2004), 567–579 (576).
[113] E.g. C. SIEBER-LEHMANN, *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus: Die Burgunderkriege am Oberrhein* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995).

seen that conditions were not favourable to such a relationship, even if the logic of the lingering teleology of nation state formation dictates that they should have been.

The ambivalent place of French vocabularies and mores in the English literary and linguistic landscape, further complicated by the claim of the kings of England simultaneously to be the rightful rulers of France, did not foster any straightforward hostile 'othering' of the French on the part of English users, especially – paradoxically – those who were most intimately involved in the war effort. Indeed, the notion that self-identification was automatically the product of constructions of 'otherness', popularised by 'fashionable postmodern thinking on the significance of "difference" in constructing meaning',[114] is not borne out by the justifications for and employments of vernacular English investigated here. Insofar as vernacular use even involved self-identification in the first place, this pertained to the well-explored and substantiated themes of communitarianism[115] and pastoral instruction for 'lewed peple',[116] neither of which originated in or primarily found expression through war-related national sentiments. The multitude of different situations and ideologies subsumed within the falsely monolithic 'Hundred Years War' ceased to be conducive to simplistic discursive contrasting of the English and French languages and their associated peoples after the mid-fourteenth century. Even by the mid-fifteenth, when a wide variety of perspectives were finding vernacular expression, the choice between English, French, or an ad hoc and interchanging mixture of both languages seems to have been determined by the prosaic limitations imposed by the linguistic familiarity and scribal habits of writers and audiences. Indeed, the importance of language and written discourse as sites for the articulation and affirmation of self-understandings should not be overstated given the parallel roles of performative, visual, and material modes of communication. Against the attention-grabbing backdrop of dramatic political and military events, and given our training to engage with the past through written sources, it is difficult for us as historians – and still more difficult for literary scholars – to assign the vernacular its proportionate place in later medieval life. If we are to do so, we will ultimately have to improve the capacity of our clearly inadequate narrative frameworks to apprehend the way in which our subjects' various plausible preferences and opportunities were shaped by the specific and historically contingent psychological and social processes which conditioned their existence.

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[114] MANDLER, '"National Identity"', 273.

[115] J. WATTS, 'Public or Plebs: The Changing Meaning of "the Commons"', in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by J. Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 242–60.

[116] E.g. F. SOMERSET, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ch. 2.

What's in a Booklist? Institutional Formation and the Creation of Lincoln Cathedral's First Catalogue

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In the long and messy history of organizing Lincoln's cathedral library, Rodney Thomson, in his 1989 *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library*, produced apparently for the first time a comprehensive and navigable catalogue of Lincoln's manuscripts. One booklist survives from before 1200 listing a total of 136 books, of which 39 are known to be extant.[117] The earliest part of the list dates to about 1148. By this time Lincoln's first two bishops, Remigius and Robert Bloet had already come and gone, Alexander the Magnificent was at the end of his career, and Robert de Chesney would shortly take his place on the episcopal throne. Thomson notes that the cathedral collection prior to 1148 is rather small compared to those at cathedrals like Durham and Salisbury, whose book collections had already become fairly substantial by 1100.[118] He concludes his introduction to the old catalogue (Cat. Vet.) with two points warning against 'making too much, a priori, of the encomia about Lincoln as a centre for theological scholarship at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries:'[119]

- The library's modest size, the absence of a co-ordinated programme of acquisition and of even single copies of obvious textbooks, let alone multiple sets, do not reflect an environment of enthusiastic teaching and learning.[120]
- [The contents of the catalogue suggest] that teaching and learning at the cathedral were neither highly institutionalized nor continuous. They were probably dependent upon the chance presence of one or two chancellors with such interests and reputations.[121]

While acknowledging Thomson's warning, I would like to explore some possible alternatives to his conclusions. When Thomson discusses the books in the collection he mainly speaks of trends rather than irregularities. He recognizes 'two classes' of texts, which he says are in line with what 'one would expect at a secular

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[117] RODNEY M THOMSON. *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Published on Behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln by D.S. Brewer, 1989. xiii. Booklist, fig. 1.
[118] Ibid, xiv.
[119] Ibid, xv.
[120] Ibid, xv.
[121] Ibid, xvi.

cathedral: ten [volumes] are collections of sermons, and four, grouped together in the inventory are on canon law'.[122] Although Thomson cites the lack of continuity in any particular discipline as an important factor in determining Lincoln's intellectual tradition, recent research suggests that 'continuous' interest in any subject, and in particular the study of law, must be understood within the context of the medieval cathedral school. In his 2007 study on the development of medieval legal practice, Stanley Chodorow found that law libraries and legal schools were not well-organized by the time the Cat. Vet. was created around 1148.[123] Even a collection of four or five volumes at that time could indicate the presence of sustained legal study.[124] And the notion of a well-defined legal tradition did not exist in any recognizable form:

> In the twelfth century the study of law was not organized institutionally, but rather by schools that individual masters would found at given institutions. Thus, with the great law institutions of the twelfth century we are really looking at popular schools whose masters were around long enough to attract people who could eventually fill their positions, thus maintaining an interest in law at those institutions.[125]

At this early stage of its development the study of law was restricted primarily to cathedral collections and their *magistri scholarum*, and a duration of as short as thirteen years for any particular cathedral 'school' would have constituted a significant amount of time.[126]

Thomson's focus on continuity may also miss some valuable discontinuities that hint at a more vibrant intellectual community. To take a simple example, there are several glossed books and classical texts which Thomson doesn't mention in any significant way. What might these tell us about attitudes toward learning and education at the cathedral? What requirements need to be met in order to say that an English Cathedral in the twelfth century was or was not a vibrant intellectual centre? Lincoln was not a large producer of contemplative theology during the period, but are there other ways of understanding the contributions of particular religious houses to the culture of English learning? This paper will argue that Thomson's conclusions about the educational environment (1 and 2 above) depend too much on the numerical book-count in the Cat. Vet. and focus too little on the book list as a cultural document that can provide hints about the intellectual environment of the time. Incorporating biographical material concerning the bishops of Lincoln serves to highlight their role in establishing traditions of specialized intellectual pursuit outside the scope of pure theology, with a particular focus on practical knowledge, or knowledge of action. The cathedral at

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[122] THOMSON, xiv.

[123] STANLEY CHODOROW, 'Law Libraries and the Formation of the Legal Profession in the Late Middle Ages'. *Tarlton Law Library Legal History Series* 1st ser. 7 (2007), 4.

[124] Ibid, 3.

[125] Ibid, 4.

[126] Ibid, 4.

Lincoln may not deserve 'too much…encomia,' but it nonetheless provided diverse educational opportunities for some of the best historical, legal and political minds of the century and attracted intellects from both England and the continent through their own reputation for knowledge and patronage.

The booklist appears on folio 2 of Lincoln MS. 1 (A.1.2.), the first volume of a two-volume bible which Henry of Huntingdon's father Archdeacon Nicholas donated to the cathedral, probably at his death around 1110.[127] The list has two primary sections. The first primary section is itself divided into two sections. The first of these is a list of forty-four books found in the cathedral's 'armarium,' essentially a large chest, shortly after Bishop Alexander appointed Hamo as chancellor around 1148.[128] The second is Treasurer Jordan's list of 26 service-books, which probably also originally dates from around 1148, as he and Hamo were appointed around the same time.[129] The second primary section is a list, in multiple hands, concerning the donations (*de dono*) of different dignitaries of the church from the time of Alexander's death (on or before February 20 1148) into the thirteenth century. The hand in the first primary section is a fairly consistent proto-gothic, with one obvious exception above the line beginning '*Reliq.*,' where it looks as if someone has written in two patristic holdings.[130] The list itemizing Alexander's gift to the cathedral, beginning column two, is written in a hand more consistent with that of the first primary section in column one, and thus would probably predate the *de dono* of Gerald of Wales listed at the end of column A in a different hand. This makes sense of the two major temporal divisions beginning columns A and B:

> *Quando hamoni Cancellario Cancellaria data fuit…*
>
> *Postquam ut Cancellaria data fuit magistro hamoni…*[131]

Since a great deal of the information available concerning the intellectual environment at Lincoln Cathedral during the twelfth century depends in some form on this single folio, I will begin by taking a critical look at its content as well as several of its structural features. Rodney Thomson is primarily interested in questions having to do, obviously enough, with cataloguing. His basic goal is to make connections between the books mentioned on the list and those still present in Lincoln's library. Besides Thomson, other scholars have made extensive use of the booklist's contents in order to make connections between Lincoln's intellectual

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[127] THOMSON, 3. I use Thomson's catalogue when referring to extant books still housed at Lincoln Cathedral.

[128] Ibid, xiii.

[129] 'Treasurers', *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300: volume 3: Lincoln* (1977), p 18–20. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33564&strquery=Hamo> [accessed 21 March 2013].

[130] The hand looks similar to the hand that appears at the bottom of column A, potentially suggesting a date later than 1187.

[131] THOMSON, Pl. 3.

culture and its more famous personages.[132] Diana Greenway, for instance, employs many of the titles from the booklist to describe where Henry of Huntingdon might have obtained his knowledge of the *artes*, classical mythology, military tactics, and canon law. [133] Greenway's priority is to shed light on the intellectual background of the twelfth century historian. Because these scholars are approaching the book list with very different motivations, their results are understandably varied, but I think it is important to point out that their interests in the booklist inevitably limit their description in some way or another. And they should. Spending a lot of time describing books no longer extant wouldn't make much sense to Thomson's project, just as making correlations between booklist books and current library holdings would be useless to Greenway. As important as these limitations are to constructing a coherent and economical scholarly narrative, they can also conceal the value of the booklist as itself a cultural product of twelfth-century England.

To begin, I ask a simple question: 'why a booklist?' What can the very fact that a booklist appears around 1148 tell us about institutional developments that are taking place during this period? The first lines of the booklist, 'Quando hamoni Cancellario Cancellaria data fuit. & libroru(m)Cura comissa ; hos In armario invenit libros. 7 sub custodia sua recepit,'[134] suggest that Hamo the chancellor oversaw the production of the inventory, or perhaps made it himself, and that the inventory occurred sometime before the death of Alexander, since Alexander appointed him chancellor. This is significant because it turns out that Hamo was the first dignitary to be given that title at Lincoln cathedral.[135] The development of the position of cathedral chancellor is obscure, but the first English churchmen to be called by that title were the third cathedral dignitaries at Salisbury and Lincoln, two organizations with familial ties.[136] It is thought that the chancellorship came to coincide with and eventually replace the traditional position imported from the continent of *magister scholarum*.[137] This was the title of Henry of Huntingdon's school master at Lincoln and was a title also given to other dignitaries before Hamo.[138] The chancellorship was thus the head of the schools as well as the primary librarian. And according to Kathleen Edwards,

> the first half of the twelfth century, when the change of title normally took place, was also the period when the growth of the chapter's business and the multiplication of official correspondence was causing the *scholasticus*, at those churches in which he acted as the chapter's secretary, to devote much more of this attention than he

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[132] cf. XENIA MURATOVA, 'Bestiaries: an Aspect of Medieval Patronage', in F. H. Thompson, ed., *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1986), 118–144.

[133] HENRY and DIANA E. GREENWAY, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), xxix–xl.

[134] THOMSON, Pl. 3.

[135] KATHLEEN EDWARDS, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages: A Constitutional Study with Special Reference to the Fourteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 179.

[136] Ibid, 179.

[137] Ibid, 179–80.

[138] Ibid, 180.

had previously done to his secretarial duties. These duties were similar in character to those of contemporary royal and other chancellors, and so it was natural for him to assume a title similar to theirs.

Since there is no precedent for the position of chancellor in Normandy until after the first half of the twelfth century, Edwards argues that we must look for alternatives to a continental derivation.[139] She suggests an origin at Salisbury, but Lincoln is clearly the first to record a cathedral dignitary with this position, about seven years before Salisbury.[140] I would argue that while Normandy is indeed not a viable option, other continental examples such as Chartres, Paris, and Laon would have been available. Bishop Alexander studied at the cathedral school of Laon in the second decade of the twelfth century and Laon had already had a chancellor position for some time, not to mention the fact that Anselm held the position when Alexander was studying there.[141] It seems perfectly plausible that Alexander would have wanted to model his library on that of his prestigious alma mater. If this is the case, the booklist, in addition to being a catalogue, may also serve as a kind of foundational document helping to establish the duties of the position within the context of the still developing Anglo-Norman church.

The motivation to organize the contents of the library could also have been driven to varying degrees by broader administrative efforts to render large bodies of people and knowledge manageable. With the Domesday Book being the most far reaching example of the Anglo-Norman monarchy's effort to keep track of its subjects and their taxable possessions, the booklist could provide information about the valuable literary holdings of various monastic and secular houses. These bishops, so close to the Norman monarchy, would have recognized and likely acted upon such pressures. Robert Bloet, Lincoln's second bishop, was a royal chancellor and justiciar for King Henry who developed a reputation as an keenly organized legal mind and would have been the first to really foster a concentration on law, both canon and civil, at the Lincoln school. Lincoln's lower dignitaries begin to show signs of legal expertise beginning with Bloet's succession, suggesting that this kind of knowledge was being encouraged before the turn of the twelfth century.[142] He sent many of his canons to study canon law under Ivo of Chartres, and presumably these canons would have come back to teach at Lincoln. Greenway suggests that Henry of Huntingdon might have been among them. Books of canon law, including 'two copies of Ivo's Decretum, the 'Lanfrancian' collection, 'Statuta Romanorum Pontificum', and 'Decreta Pontificum' (possibly a second copy of the first part of the Lanfrancian collection),' represent one of the two largest groups of texts in the 1148 booklist, and multiple copies of the same

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[139] Ibid, 176.
[140] Ibid, 183.
[141] JAMES R. GINTHER, *The Westminster Handbook to Medieval Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 145.
[142] GREENWAY, xxix.

work is an indication that these books served as reference materials for a 'small [school] of legal studies'.[143] In F.M. Stenton's analysis,

> The earliest episcopal documents follow very closely the general lines of a royal writ. Nothing can be more concise than the language in which Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln, confirms one of the first gifts made to the priory of St. Andrew's, Northampton.[144]

Unlike other institutions where 'free composition' began to dictate the form of the episcopal writ, Lincoln maintained the tradition of the 'simpler style' that Bloet had established.[145] The significance of this for the booklist is that while it appears primarily as a catalogue of the cathedral's books, it also has some characteristics of a legal document, recording transactions and gifts to the cathedral, exposing hints of an established culture of literary exchange.

The first point to make in this regard is that the first section of the inventory listed in Lincoln MS. 1 is itself a copy from an earlier document dating to some time before 1148, when Bishop Alexander appointed Hamo as chancellor.[146] It thus represents a snapshot taken of the 'foundational' collection prior to Alexander's death, which was then recopied c. 1160.[147] This supposedly still image, however, shows signs of motion. One Master Gerard has lost a copy of Boethius but replaced it with a book containing Vegetius' *De Re Militari* and Eutropius.[148] And a Master Reginald provides one volume of a six-volume passional to make up for a book of saints' lives he had misplaced.[149] While Thomson uses this evidence to make an offhand comment about irresponsible canons it nonetheless presents a problem for the stability of the book list. Were these lost books lost in 1148 or were they only recently lost in 1160 and copied into Lincoln MS. 1 to note changes that had occurred to the original in the ensuing twelve or so years? Looking at the manuscript itself may reveal a clue. When the scribe cites the exchange of Vegetius' *De Re Militari* and Eutropius for the lost copy of Boethius,[150] the two lines containing information about the person who lost the Boethius occur as a noticeably smaller script,[151] with a marked shift to a primarily curved 'd'. This may suggest that the scribe has noted a change in the original catalogue and left space for further discovery of the original book's whereabouts. This would perhaps indicate that the loss of the Boethius had occurred after the original cataloguing effort, between 1148 and 1160. Whether the exchange was new or retained from the

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[143] STANLEY CHODOROW, 'Law Libraries and the Formation of the Legal Profession in the Late Middle Ages', *Tarlton Law Library Legal History Series* 1st ser. 7 (2007), 3. Also cf. GREENWAY, xxxiii, THOMSON, xiv.

[144] F.M. STENTON, 'Acta Episcoporum'. *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1929), 11.

[145] Ibid, 11.

[146] Fasti <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33563&stquary=Hamo> [accessed 21 March 2013].

[147] THOMSON, xiii.

[148] GREENWAY, xxxii, or Cat. Vet. 23 (not extant).

[149] GREENWAY, xxxii, or CV 18a (NE).

[150] Column I, ll. 26–27 from the to Beg. 'nosticon[…]'.

[151] Column I, ll. 28–29 from the to Beg. 'qd magist[…]'.

1148 catalogue, there are a number of legal reasons to retain or note documentation of restitutions. Concerning a bestiary associated with Lincoln cathedral, Xenia Muratova notes that book theft was common enough to drive one scribe to threaten excommunication as punishment for anyone caught stealing his book.[152] The kind of documentation witnessed in this booklist would help to protect against such accusations, and underscores the unassuming yet efficient legal notation prevalent among Lincoln dignitaries and canons.

The records of lost books may also be able to tell us something about rates of exchange and a recognition of the value of individual books during this period. Why, for instance, was one volume of a six volume set of Passionals seen to be equivalent to a manuscript containing the Lives of John the Almoner and St. Faith? Or why was book of Vegetius and Eutropius considered a proper repayment for the loss of a Boethius? Even this small sample suggests an understanding of thematic equivalence, where saints' lives are exchanged for saints' lives and two classical texts on military and historical topics for one book of philosophy. In the order of the books listed the catalogue at least initially seems to follow the standard hierarchy of content in medieval library catalogues, beginning with the bible and patristic texts, moving subsequently to works of canon law and commentaries, and then into various pagan texts. Whether this is an indication of monetary value is difficult to say, but it does suggest that the list may be structurally organized according to the predominant Christian system of valuation, and that exchange value might have followed these accepted hierarchies.

These book exchanges also raise questions about the libraries of the canons and other clergy members with their own book collections. Thomson mentions that Philip Harcourt, who was dean of Lincoln c. 1130-40, owned a collection of around 140 books, which he gifted to the Abbey at Le Bec after his death.[153] There were more books in Harcourt's private collection than there were in the entire book list by the time of Robert de Chesney's death in 1166. While Harcourt's numbers may be an exception, it nonetheless highlights that the books recorded on the Cat. Vet. are part of a much larger network of literature that Lincoln dignitaries would have had access to. Remigius appointed Albinus of Anjou as *magister scholarum* from the cathedral school at Angers some time before the bishop's death in 1092. According to Greenway,

> Angers was an important intellectual centre in the eleventh century, with schools, libraries, and scriptoria in the cathedral and religious houses. And as Kathleen Edwards pointed out, it is quite likely that Remigius chose to recruit, as master of the schools at Lincoln, a canon trained at the flourishing cathedral school of Angers.[154]

I think it unlikely that Albinus would have come to Lincoln empty-handed, and there is some evidence to suggest that he indeed came equipped with some works of his teachers. Greenway has found that particular rhetorical and metrical

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[152] MURATOVA, 'Bestiaries: an Aspect of Medieval Patronage', 119.
[153] THOMSON, xv.
[154] GREENWAY, xxx–xxxi.

techniques of the poet and hagiographer Marbod show up in the poetry of Henry of Huntingdon, whom Albinus educated in the first decade of the 1100s.[155] Albinus would likely have trained under Marbod at Angers before Remigius appointed him *magister* at Lincoln, so some textual transmission seems likely in this case.[156] The evidence of the book exchanges recorded in the booklist, of Albinus, and of dean Harcourt suggests that the cathedral school dignitaries were often in possession of book collections that were readily available for use in the cathedral schools.

In the second section of the booklist there is also reason to rethink the number of manuscripts available at Lincoln by or c. 1148. As Diana Greenway notes, 'the mid-twelfth-century catalogue of the books in the 'armarium', drawn up when Master Hamo was appointed as the first chancellor in the mid-1140s, reveals a small collection, of only forty-four titles'. [157] These forty-four, added to the 26 volumes in the care of treasurer Jordanus, give us an initial total of 70 volumes. The later list of books donated to the cathedral after 1148 lists the gifts of bishops Alexander and Robert de Chesney along with those of many other canons and lower dignitaries associated with the cathedral. One thing to keep in mind is that these gifts most often occur at the donor's death and represent anywhere between all and a small portion of the books in the donor's possession. Robert de Chesney is known to have commissioned a Digest of Justinian that shows up nowhere on the 'Cat. Vet.' Many of these donors would have been at the peak of their careers when the scribe first compiled the booklist in 1148, and there is little reason to think that at least some of these books, especially those of Alexander, Robert de Chesney, and other dignitaries associated specifically with Lincoln, would have been available before or shortly after that date. Thus if we leave out all of the donations of the lower dignitaries, taking only Alexander's gift of seven books and Robert de Chesney's gift of ten books (with the assumption that Robert's collection would have grown throughout his career), and add it to the list of 70 books from the 1148 list, that amounts to between 77-87 manuscripts available at Lincoln in the years immediately following 1148.

We know too, that miscellanies constituted a significant part of the Lincoln collection, and that often the scribe has recorded only the primary work in the manuscript. Of the twenty-seven extant manuscripts we know to have been in the possession of Lincoln Cathedral in the twelfth century, five contain works by authors other than those listed in the Cat. Vet., and three contain multiple works by the same author, also unacknowledged in the old catalogue.[158] It is also reasonable to think that bishops Alexander and Robert de Chesney would have possessed copies of the several works dedicated to them, which puts the *Historia Anglorum*, *Prophetiae Merlini*, *Vita Merlini*, and perhaps a copy of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* among the bishops' holdings between 1129 and 1166.[159] All of these had

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[155] Ibid, xxxvi.
[156] Ibid, xxxi.
[157] Ibid, xxxii.
[158] Lincoln MSS. 1 (A.1.2.), 13 (A.1.26), 16, 107 (A.4.15), 134 (C.5.10), 141 (C.1.1), 145 (C.1.6).
[159] Henry completes the first version of *Historia Anglorum* by 1129. 1166 is the date of Robert de Chesney's death.

been completed by the 1160 copying of the 'Cat. Vet.' and all but one[160] were in circulation by the time the first list was taken down in 1148.

In addition to the questions that arise concerning the recopying of the booklist, the snapshot has also been understood to represent the collection of the cathedral up to c. 1148 when it was first created. Both Thomson and Greenway use the 1160 copy of the catalogue to claim that Lincoln Cathedral's book collection was considerably smaller than others at the time. Thomson bases his claim that 'teaching and learning at the cathedral were neither highly institutionalized nor continuous' primarily on the evidence of this list. While book production at Lincoln does not seem to have been as vigorous as at places like Salisbury and Durham, it was nonetheless continuous. This is evidenced by an early group of extant books associated with Lincoln MS. 1 that bear stylistic and decorative resemblances indicative of some scribal consistency.[161] There is no conclusive evidence as to whether or not this constituted a Lincoln scriptorium, but even the prospect that there might have been invites us to think more about broader historical obstacles that would have contributed to slower production.

Remigius' tenure saw several setbacks. Shortly after his appointment as bishop of Dorchester, a 'royal writ claiming the authority of pope Alexander and his legates, as well as of Lanfranc and the English bishops, ordered the transfer of the see to Lincoln and augmented its possessions there and elsewhere'.[162] While Remigius is thought to have brought some books with him to Lincoln, for the most part it seems that he had to start from scratch.[163] In addition to this he had to build a cathedral, which wasn't completed until after his death in 1092. Throughout his time as bishop he was in the middle of fights between Canterbury and York concerning jurisdiction of the Lincoln see. These factors could all have contributed to a slow start in book production under the first bishop of Lincoln. This is not to say, however, that Remigius was lacking motivation. On the contrary, he was likely to have had scholarly training of the highest caliber. But to get at his architectural interests it is necessary to go back to his pre-Conquest position as almoner at the abbey of Fécamp. Remigius served under John of Ravenna, who had assumed the abbacy after his own schoolmaster, the Italian architect, writer and reformer, William of Volpiano became unable to fulfil the requirements of his post. Abbot William was involved in the design and construction of some of the continent's most well-known Romanesque ecclesiastical structures, including those at Mont Saint Michel, Dijon Cathedral and the Abbey at Saint Germain des Prés.[164] As Frank Barlow notes, Remigius,

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[160] This was the *Vita Merlini*, GEOFFREY and BASIL FULFORD LOWTHER CLARKE, *Life of Merlin: Vita Merlini* (Cardiff: University of Wales [for] the Language and Literature Committee of the Board of Celtic Studies, 1973), vii.

[161] THOMSON, xiv.

[162] H. E. J. COWDREY, 'Remigius (*d.* 1092)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23361> {accessed 18 March 2013].

[163] THOMSON, xiv.

[164] 'Structurae'. *William of Volpiano*. <http://en.structurae.de/persons/data/index.cfm?ID=d002713> [accesssed 22 March 2013] and Véronique Gazeau. 'Guillaume de Volpiano en Normandie :

like Herbert Losinga later, had served under Abbot John of Ravenna (i.e. John of Fécamp), and so inherited the Italian cultural legacy which had been handed on by William of Volpiano. When he moved his see to Lincoln he built a new church which he constituted on the model of Rouen and in which he established the new learning.[165]

It is Remigius who appoints the first *magister scholarum* Albinus of Anjou, notable as the *magister* of Henry of Huntingdon and probably also Robert of Gloucester, also on the continental example of the cathedral school there.[166] In Remigius' career we see a highly educated man putting his architectural and scholastic knowledge to work by creating structures and educational positions that have all the characteristics of continental learning, only exercised in architectural and institutional rather than scribal output.

While King Stephen's arrest of Alexander in 1139 could have also contributed to a hiatus in developing the book collection, the case is rather difficult because Alexander's arrest seems more than anything to have changed his association with the royal court and secular patronage. Within a few months of his release from prison he became much more involved with monastic patronage and church matters, which could very well have resulted in a keener interest in the church's book collection. Yet a factor that could be implicated in the production of the booklist is the fire that burnt through the cathedral in 1141, causing the roof to collapse and badly damaging other structural features.[167] Within a few years Alexander had rebuilt the roof with stone instead of wood. Not only is it probable that book production would have fallen in priority immediately following this period, but it may very well be that some books were lost in the fire. Hamo's booklist could thus have been affected by several external factors that would have had little to do with the desire to create a thriving hub of learning.

Finally, I want to think a bit more broadly in terms of how each of Lincoln's first four bishops contributed to a tradition of learning and patronage that does indeed have grounds to call itself one of the major centres of learning in Anglo-Norman England. The claim was first made in Xenia Muratova's book article, 'Bestiaries: and Aspect of Medieval Patronage,' but was subsequently challenged by Rodney Thomson on the grounds that the collection was lacking major patristic and theological texts.[168] While it will pale in comparison to some of the great theological establishments of the day, the manner in which it pales is worth considering.[169] The written output of these bishops comprises primarily episcopal

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état des questions'. *CRAHM-UMR 6577, Université de Caen Basse-Normandie* <http://www.unicaen.fr/mrsh/craham/revue/tabularia/print.php?dossier=dossier2&file=04ga zeau.xml> [accessed 22 March 2013].

[165] BARLOW, *English Church*, 61. Architectural evidence suggests a similarly continental story that Lanfranc sent the architect who designed the cathedrals at Caen and Canterbury. See DOROTHY M OWEN, *A History of Lincoln Minster* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 16.

[166] GREENWAY, xxx–xxxi.

[167] For a discussion of the date of the fire, see OWEN, *A History of Lincoln Minster*, 22.

[168] MURATOVA, 131–34; and THOMSON, xv.

[169] THOMSON, 23.

acta, and is not generally considered to be of any literary or theological value. But does the lack of written output imply that Lincoln was an intellectual backwater, or is there another way to conceptualize the tradition at Lincoln? Might it be possible, in light of their careers, to think about the intellectual tradition at Lincoln as one of action rather than contemplation, one in which praxis was the fundamental feature? I would like to suggest two primary intellectual trajectories for the bishops of Lincoln. The first is one of patronage. Remigius, Alexander, and Robert de Chesney all oversaw the building of at least two major establishments connected to the diocese, not the least of which was the cathedral itself. Perhaps more important to Lincoln's modern reputation is a strong tradition of historiographical patronage that Alexander and Robert de Chesney inaugurated. The second is juridical. All four bishops, although most notably Robert Bloet, Alexander, and Robert de Chesney, were powerful and innovative legal officials that helped to organize Anglo-Norman administrative and legal practices in both civil and ecclesiastical contexts.

The culmination of both of these traditions occurs in the episcopacy of Alexander. In his tenure we see a continuing interest in legal affairs alongside a renewal of the scholastic goals of Remigius. In a time of much ethnic and political strife, he showed himself to be committed to cross-cultural understanding.[170] Early in his career as bishop he patronized Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth, and he brought the Italian scholar master Guido (Wido) to his court to teach scripture to the lower clergy.[171] He was also a patron to Gilbert of Sempringham and helped Christina of Markyate win her legal case not to marry and to become a recluse.[172] Alexander's patronage of Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth is well known. But what is it about history writing in particular that became so special to and so associated with Lincoln cathedral? Part of this seems to have had to do with the Anarchy, when Robert of Gloucester was no longer available to patronize Geoffrey of Monmouth. With Alexander being so close to the royal family, and about the same age as Robert of Gloucester himself, there would have been ample opportunity for Alexander to take over the Earl's patronage responsibilities.[173] But beyond this, it might be conjectured that history writing actually appealed to the kind of intellectual and juridical interests of the cathedral itself. Somewhere between theology and chronicle, histories, which in John of Salisbury's words 'demonstrat[e] the workings of Providence on Earth,' embody that scholarship of activity that bishops like Alexander and his successors would have appreciated. His successor Robert II carried on the tradition of legal expertise put in place by Robert Bloet, and his juridical reputation was held in high

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[170] GREENWAY, lvii.

[171] BRIAN GOLDING, 'Wealth and Artistic Patronage at Twelfth-Century St. Albans', F. H. THOMPSON, ed., *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1986), 110.

[172] DAVID M. SMITH, 'Alexander (*d.* 1148)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/324> [accessed 22 March 2013].

[173] GREENWAY, xxx.

enough esteem to attract the young Richard Barre to join legal practice.[174] Both of these examples demonstrate that while contemplative theological productions were minimal until after Robert de Chesney's time, an emphasis on the application of scholarship to practice began with Remigius and Robert Bloet and only grew with the succession of the next two bishops.

   None of this activity can be found in the booklist, and yet it is the booklist that has been the basis of many claims for and against the intellectual environment at Lincoln in the twelfth century. Of course we should not diminish the value of the booklist in examining Lincoln's early culture of learning, but instead use the booklist a little more critically than we have in the past to think about the quality of the scholarly community at Lincoln, and we should consider more external evidence to see where it conflicts and coincides with evidence from the booklist. As Rodney Thomson recognizes, we should be careful not to make too much of the encomia about the level of scholarship at Lincoln in the twelfth century, but it would also serve us well not to dismiss it without further investigation.

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[174] RALPH V. TURNER, *Judges, Administrators, and the Common Law in Angevin England* (London: Hambledon, 1994), 182–185.

Figure 1, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 1, fol. 2 of Biblia Pars 1. Reproduced by kind permission of Lincoln Cathedral Library.

Reviews

MARCO NIEVERGELT, *Allegorical Quests from Deguileville to Spenser* (DS Brewer, 2012) ISBN 978-1-84384-328-3 (hardcover); xii + 244 pages; £50.

Marco Nievergelt has written a beautifully-plotted journey through the development of the chivalric allegorical quest, bravely traversing the wandering wood of medieval and renaissance periodization, and boldly tackling the blatant beast of the emergence of the modern self. Beginning with Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pelerinage de la Vie Humaine* as the foundational 'paradigm' for the allegorical pilgrimage-quest, he takes us diachronically, but never in simplistically teleological fashion, through the web of four clearly-derived fifteenth-century works (Jean de Courcy's *Le Chemin de Vaillance*, Thomas de Saluces' *Le Livre du Chevalier errant*, René d'Anjou's *Le livre du cuer d'amour espris* and Olivier de la Marche's *Le Chevalier délibéré* – a translation itself of the Spanish *El caballero determinado*). In lengthier chapters he develops the responses to the new conditions facing the Tudor knight, taking his examples across a confessional range including Protestant and Catholic-authored texts, and finally to what he sees as the culmination of the engagement with the form and its developments in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

Nievergelt disavows a set original 'goal' for his book, echoing in the form of his own work his account of the quest as an experientially-developed process of becoming. He does, however, delineate a number of distinctly emerging towers to the city of his destination. He wishes to, following in the fresh tracks of other medievalists including David Aers and Lee Paterson, and countering the backsliding drift towards a monolithically understood Middle Ages of Stephen Greenblatt's *The Swerve*, to emphasize the continuity of a metaphysical and social understanding of the self from the medieval to the early modern period. More than this, Nievergelt asserts that the modern or 'private' self emerges as the continuation of a dialectical engagement, central to the medieval texts, between the transcendentally-directed self and the engaged, socially and temporally situated self. Nievergelt has chosen his paradigm of the pilgrimage-quest as one which engages directly, throughout its history, with the tension between these selves. To simplify, the first might be associated with the pilgrimage and pilgrim, the other with the knight and quest. The allegorical knightly pilgrimages the author addresses are all engaged in wedding the two. Overall the thread Nievergelt is tracing is that of how the poets, often figures of courtly power themselves, are working around the possibility of the synthesis or integration of the social and historical with the transcendental and the spiritual goals and *mores*. These are indeed pressures which appear to intensify in the sixteenth-century context, but it is rather because the courts and nation-states of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I appear in different ways to offer hope of convergence between temporal advancement and virtue and spiritual, transcendental goals than that they displace the metaphysical with the social, as Jonathan Dollimore has argued. Ultimately, but particularly in

the atmosphere of more politicized apocalypticism Nievergelt identifies in the Reformation period, the shadowy hope is even of a this-worldly apotheosis or perfection, the shimmering grail or marriage held out for at the end of the quest.

However he stresses that within the perspective of eternity there tends to be a point of failure, which either corresponds to an untenable, uneasy integration (as in the case of Jean de Courcy) the substitution of an ersatz, false Jerusalem (René d'Anjou), with premonitions of modern existential doubt and even agnosticism (Olivier de la Marche) or a deliberately framed sense of deferred eschatological perfection (Thomas de Saluces, and, after a long attempt at 'secularized' quest, Stephen Hawes). Despite the apocalyptic setting Stephen Bateman brings to his extensive adaptation of *Le Chevalier délibéré* and the development of the idea of the Reformation as an event in its timeframe or model, its pre-anticipation he finally, too, in orthodox manner abandons all to Christ's true Second Coming. Nievergelt also touches on yet another key area of development in early modern studies: the concept of the popular and pragmatic fluidity between religious confessions as developed by cross-fertilisation and translation between spiritual works from the Catholic continental and English Protestant traditions. He brings into play the easy adaptation by the Protestant merchant William Goodyear of a Catholic counter-reformation didactic allegory. Nievergelt also includes an explicitly Catholic allegory, Lewis Lewknor's version of *Le Chevalier délibéré*, and uses it to demonstrate how similar tensions of national and spiritual loyalty are opened up in a text which is both a 'manifesto of Catholic loyalism' and an implicit critique of the abuses of the Elizabethan court.

Perhaps the most weighty chapter of Nievergelt's book is the final one, in which he attempts to use the Deguivillian tradition as a new approach to Spenser criticism. As is true throughout this work, Nievergelt eschews source study in favour of an investigation of the development of the paradigm of the quest-pilgrimage itself. For Nievergelt Spenser solves certain crucial tensions. The division of exploits across different knights create an inherently communal and corporate quest, diffusing the pressure on the self. His knights' exploits in pursuit of the virtues and in the service of the Elizabethan court are *vita activa* 'drafts' of a spiritual quest still to come, and indeed an effectual 'prefiguration' of the cosmic, apocalyptic struggle.

A coda does some crucially important theoretical work in exploring how the 'predetermined' nature of John Bunyan's pilgrimage allegory works to found, in its doctrinaire formulation, the nineteenth-century assumption of allegorical 'flatness'. Here Nievergelt argues Bunyan writes the self as pre-given in its salvation, and the metaphors of struggle and journey become merely exercises of patience and endurance rather than formative processes of becoming. If this is a recognizably alienated, modern self it is only so through a new theological development, and one which relates to the transcendentalising moves of earlier quest allegories.

This is a brilliant book which accomplishes its specific task immensely well, and also opens up onto so many crucial questions for medieval and early modern literary and historical study. There are, however, necessary reservations. The first is a perhaps inevitable one: the distinctions Nievergelt has drawn to develop his

'family' of texts do make some rather crucial and harsh divisions. It is not entirely clear, at the outset, why Deguileville 'makes' the 'pilgrimage of life' category he adopts from Siegfried Wenzel and *Piers Plowman*, for example, does not. The poet-narrator as figure of human *errance*, questions of the resolution of the active and the contemplative life, and the apocalyptic frame, hopes for social-spiritual apotheosis and its final deferral are all played out also in William Langland's poem in a manner of great sophistication. The poet-narrator may not be precisely a knightly figure, amphibious as he is between the clerical and the lay, but after all Nievergelt has had to skew his reading of a Cistercian monastic allegory to claim it is innately chivalric. He himself points out the good arguments in favour of Langland's own knowledge of Deguileville, advanced in Colin Burrow and the thesis of Josephine Houghton-Meyer.

Nievergelt argues that in his later writings, Spenser finally turns away reluctantly, under the pressure of the cloying contingency of historical event and disaster in Ireland, from his delight in cosmically figuring action and history. On the one hand he finds a pastoral and temporary apotheosis in Protestant marriage, and specifically his to Elizabeth Boyle, a private union which replaces the historical with the domestic apotheosis. Ultimately Nievergelt argues that he makes a final transcendental leap, vowing the self towards the contemplation of the timeless, eternal, still and universal. I would however somewhat quibble with the reading on which this depends, that of the final 'Mutabilitie Cantos' which 'close' the apparently unfinished quest that is the *Faerie Queene* as a staging of the attempt of the Titaness Mutabilitie, a daughter of Chaos, to demonstrate her rightful dominion over all the gods and Nature herself. Her extraordinary procession of hours, times and seasons is countered in strikingly few words indeed by Nature, who articulates a Thomistic understanding of the perfection of forms through time, by which change is dominated by the very things it thinks it rules. Using the word 'dilate' in a way which prefigures Derrida—dilate it is the frequentative of defer, containing the senses of differ and defer whose etymological divergence Derrida restores in his concept of 'différance'—Spenser speaks of a transformation in space and time which is more deeply extension than mutation, a state-change towards greater being rather than an (impossible) ontological shift. This verb, otherwise, Spenser uses to speak of narrative telling of the sort he himself is engaged in. Hence poetry itself is engaged in the necessary 'dilation' of experiential existence by which, in the process of becoming, the various and changeable events of history and expression in story are *necessary* instruments of changeless eternity itself. Nievergelt rightly acknowledges the Hebrew pun of Spenser's final prayer to the 'Sabboath God' of heavenly hosts (sabboath) and battle and then for a 'Sabboath's sight'—the sight of rest (sabbath) and changelessness, but he does not give enough weight to its ambivalence. Even in the midst of visioning stasis Spenser infuses it with the trace of action. It should be pointed out that the location of his final verses, Arlo Hill itself contains a similar equivocation; heavenly paradise and faeryland, although given over to the wolves of destruction its very name, in this anglicised version of 'Harlo' or 'Arlow' can be derived as *herle* and *hlaw*, the hill of the army. Its Gaelic name, Aherlow, gives 'between two heights' and the whole functions well as an allegory of the earthly condition with its expectation of what appears

here as an apocatastatic restoration, rather than an abandonment of things earthly for things heavenly. Nievergelt also misses the equivocation of the lines of the penultimate stanza on Spenser's own relationship to this world of action and history:

> When I bethinke me on that speech whyleare,
> Of *Mutability*, and well it way:
> Me seemes, that though she all vnworthy were
> Of the Heav'ns Rule ; yet very sooth to say,
> In all things else she beares the greatest sway.
> *Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,*
> *And loue of things so vaine to cast away;*
> Whose flowring pride, so fading and so fickle,
> Short *Time* shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Does Spenser 'loath this state of life' and does he 'cast away' 'loue of things so vaine' or, read again, is he 'loath this state of life so tickle, And loue of things so vaine to cast away'? The balance, then, does not quite fall as Nievergelt suggests it does towards Spenser as 'a resolutely transcendentalising poet'.

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MARY C FLANNERY and KATIE L WALTER, eds., *The Culture of Inquisition in Medieval England* (DS Brewer, 2013); ISBN 9781843843368 (hardcover); viii+193 pages; £60.

By considering the wider cultural impact of burgeoning inquisitional practices in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England, the aim of this volume is to extend the purview of recent historical work — by Ian Forrest and John Arnold, among others — on the origins and processes of late medieval *inquisitio*. Nine of the ten essays are by literary scholars — Forrest's own contribution is the only one from a fully-fledged historian — and emphasis is duly given both to "the varied and extensive textual culture" (2) produced by inquisition and to "inquisition as a concept and a discourse" (2). Part of the subject, in other words, is "imagined inquisition" (78; 159); and as Emily Steiner notes in her concluding essay, "The question that drives [the book] is: what does inquisition have to do with imagination?" (164). Above all, the editors are interested in conceptualizing inquisition as "a dialogic mode of inquiry, a means of discerning, producing or rewriting truth, and an often adversarial form of invention and literary authority" (1). This literary angle is certainly productive, though one might demur at the claim that the book is "the first to treat these discursive and cultural implications" (2) since the project evidently has some distinguished precursors, including Dyan Elliott's *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages*

(Princeton University Press, 2004) and Katherine Little's *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

Inquisitio was a canon law procedure (not an institution) first explicitly prescribed at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The procedure involved the ecclesiastical investigation, *ex officio*, of those formally suspected of specific wrongdoing. Suspicion was formally established only when two or more reputable persons testified that a suspect was widely believed to be guilty of a crime, and the burden of proof lay with the inquisitor. The practice was arguably an improvement on the older procedure of *accusatio*, wherein an individual could accuse another of a crime before an ecclesiastical arbiter, but only by accepting the burden of proof himself, with the attendant risk that if guilt could not be established the accuser would suffer the same penalty as the one he sought for the accused. As the editors of this volume are at pains to point out, *inquisitio* was not — as is often believed — deployed exclusively in the fight against heresy, but much more widely, especially in ecclesiastical attempts to regulate sexual relations. As a result, "it was bound up with sanctions like excommunication and public penance, as well as confession" (1), "imbricat[ed] with a number of other mechanisms of medieval canon law" (1) and "enmeshed in a complex set of pastoral, legal, social and literary structures" (2). Nonetheless, the new threat of heresy in fifteenth-century England — following the condemnation of the Wycliffite conclusions at the Blackfriars council in 1382 — undoubtedly provided a major stimulus to *inquistio*, both real and imagined, and heresy trials are central to several of the essays in the book.

The first three essays situate late medieval *inquisitio* within a wider context of canon law. In the opening essay on "Inquisition, Public Fame and Confession", Henry Ansgar Kelly — a literary scholar with a longstanding interest in inquisitional practice — sets out the case for considering *inquisitio* in a wider context than that of heresy and describes the development of inquisition in European canon law and its particular application in England. He also spells out some of the connections between the public and private forms of confession sought respectively by the inquisitor and the more mundane confessor — a theme that will be picked up in subsequent essays. Kelly is careful to emphasise that inquisitors undertook their work with a pastoral intent and that inquisition, at least insofar as it was practised in England, was a relatively sophisticated legal procedure with its own due process — not the crude and bludgeoning instrument of pathological hatred so often imagined. In "The Imperatives of *Denunciatio*", Edwin Craun's expertise in pastoral literature makes for an enlightening comparison between inquisition and canon law provisions for the admonishment of sinners within the community — a practice (*denunciatio*) rooted in Christ's prescription in Matthew 18:15–17 ("If your brother shall offend you, go and rebuke him…"). Ian Forrest describes his essay ("English Provincial Constitutions and Inquisition into Lollardy") as a rectification of an omission from his much-admired book *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England* (OUP, 2005). In it he describes the fillip given to provincial interest in local canon law collections in the second decade of the fifteenth-century – "the period in which lollardy was being defined and prosecuted" (46) in England following Arundel's 1407 anti-heresy legislation.

Following these essays setting out the historical background, a central contribution in the volume is provided by the editors, Mary Flannery and Katie Walter: "Modes of Inquiry and the Dynamics of Interiority in Vernacular Literature." Their chief contention is that, as a procedure concerned with the discernment of inner states, often unknowable, inquisition is related to sacramental confession; like confession, moreover, inquisition — especially "imagined inquisition" — is a mode of self-fashioning. The authors draw on several examples of the metaphorical application of inquisitional discourse in vernacular literature: from the dialogic commentary on the ten commandments *Dives and Pauper* (c.1405), the exempla collection *Jacob's Well* (c.1450), Lydgate's poem *The Fall of Princes* (c. 1431-38/0) and the Middle English translation of the spiritual treatise *De doctrina cordis*. These examples, the authors contend, "demonstrate the ways in which imagined inquisition provides an alternative model for the self-scrutiny and subject-formation traditionally understood to have been produced and fostered in medieval confessional practices" (78). One wonders if a third overlapping discourse — that of *discretio spirituum* (the discernment of spirits) — might profitably have been invoked in this chapter, for it too was a discursive mode of inquiry into inner states not immediately legible to the observing eye. Margery Kempe, who is only briefly mentioned in this book, certainly provides a striking case of "subject-formation" in which inquisition, confession and *discretio* are closely intertwined.

Three of the essays deal more or less directly with heresy trials and the textual production — by inquisitors and accused alike — that they precipitated. Diane Vincent (in "The Contest Over the Public Imagination of Inquisition, 1380-1480") focuses primarily on the propaganda war fought over the inquisitorial examinations of Nicholas Hereford, Philip Repingdon and John Aston in 1382, and the trial of the "Lollard knight" John Oldcastle in 1413–14. Vincent's main point is that "engagement between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the Wycliffites over inquisitorial question and answer was deliberately placed in the public sphere *by both sides*" (61). Genelle Gertz's essay ("Heresy Inquisition and Authorship, 1400-1560") reprises the main argument of her recent monograph, *Heresy Trials and English Women Writers 1400-1670* (CUP, 2012). Her chief contention, as expressed in that book, is that "heresy trial encouraged authorship about belief" (20). Inquisitorial procedure, in other words, often generated acts of authorship on the part of those under interrogation, whether in the form of simple "belief papers" or fuller, semi-fictionalized trial narratives. Here Gertz focuses on the way that statements of abjuration — essential components of heresy trials — often functioned as models for the production of dissenting statements of belief. The examples are mainly from the sixteenth century, Anne Askew prominent among them. In "Imitating Inquisition: Dialectical Bias in Protestant Prison Writings", Ruth Ahnert also deals with sixteenth-century material, and (like Gertz) passes in silence over the fifteenth-century cases of William Thorpe and Richard Wyche. Ahnert's is a slightly strange essay insofar as its conclusion is surely one with which few would disagree: that most accounts of trials, whether by the ecclesiastical authorities or by those charged with heresy, are affected by "bias" of one kind or another.

The remaining essays address other literary texts. According to Jenny Lee's reading of Thomas Usk, "key discourses of inquisition … shaped his textual imagination and self-fashioning in his written compositions both within the legal system (his *Appeal*) and outside of it (his literary *Testament of Love*)" (97). James Wade considers the unusually central place given to confession — and to what he regards as "inquisition masquerading as confession" (126) — in the late fourteenth-century romance *The Erle of Toulous*. Whether his reading of this little-known poem finally demonstrates "the cultural embeddedness of *inquisitio* in the period" (112) is questionable, but Wade's essay, which draws on other examples from romance including the problematic confession scenes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, certainly makes an interesting case for more constructive thinking about the relationship between medieval romance and the devotional and pastoral genres it is usually thought to exclude or subsume.

In her concluding "Response Essay", Emily Steiner thinks through some implications of Chaucer's putative allusions to inquisitional discourse in the prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*. Particularly provocative in this sometimes rather gnomic piece is Steiner's observation that inquisition is motivated by desires from which neither literary critics nor historians are exempt: "they include the desire to extract information, to exact punishment and to take pleasure in the dynamics of subordination and dominion" (166). In seeking to understand the past, we are all sometimes implicated in quasi-inquisitorial methods — a theme that John Arnold has more directly addressed in an article omitted from Steiner's footnotes and Flannery and Walter's bibliography: "The Historian as Inquisitor: The Ethics of Interrogating Subaltern Voices", *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 2:3 (2009).

Collections such as this often constitute a *potpourri*, but this is an unusually coherent volume in terms of agenda and thematics, though this coherence is frequently made too self-consciously explicit by unnecessary cross-reference between essays. ("As X says in this volume…") In making their case for the collection, the editors are also prone to occasional overstatement. To argue that "the discourses … of inquisition and confession interact with one another and even overlap" (2) is reasonable enough; but this quickly gives way to the much stronger — and less tenable — claim that "confession and inquisition are inextricable" (2). Even the title of the volume might be viewed as slightly overblown. The book is concerned with particular cases of inquisition and more widely with the cultural valence of inquisitional "discourse" — with the way in which aspects of *inquisitio* were used metaphorically — but it is not clear that the examples adduced, fascinating though they are, demonstrate an entire *culture* of inquisition in medieval England. One final quibble: given that two of the essays deal primarily with sixteenth-century material, the title of the book is slightly misleading in terms of periodization. For all these caveats, however, this is an engaging and informative volume that makes a provocative case for the importance of inquisition — real and imagined — and for the need to further our own inquiries with both imagination and tact.

Phil Robins

RICHARD GAMESON, ed., *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain, vol. 1 c. 400-1100* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) ISBN 9780521583459 (hardcover); xx + 827 pp. + 54 plates; £110.00.

After a long gestation the publishers of the series *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* have gathered into a single serviceable volume –– thirty-nine chapters by thirty-two authors on the British medieval book, from the oldest glimpse of writing in Roman Britain (the Vindolanda tablets) to manuscripts after the Norman Conquest. This is the first of the series planned in seven volumes, of which six have already been published, and it deals with the longest period; despite the series' own stated chronological limits, c. 400-1100, it covers, we find roughly the first thousand years of the book's existence. The volume's editor, Richard Gameson, author of six of the chapters printed here, has done well to deliver up a basic work of reference for this long and important chapter in the history of the book from the British Isles.

There are 395,000 words in the volume, divided into five unequal parts: 'The Making of Books', 'The Circulation of Books', 'Types of Books and their Uses', 'Collections of Books', 'Coda'. To this is prefixed an introductory chapter by the editor himself, 'From Vindolanda to Domesday: the book in Britain from the Romans to the Normans'; then, after the body of the text, added, more or less independently, the book's final chapter, 'The Study of Early British Books', on modern scholarship and new avenues of research. The apparatus includes three indexes: of manuscripts by name, e.g. the 'Tiberius Bede' (incidentally not listed here, but so called in the main text); of manuscripts by home and shelf-mark, e.g. London, Cotton Tiberius C. ii; and of names and topics generally. The bibliography provides adequate coverage of the vast literature in this rapidly developing subject-area. The plates, at the back of the book, plus one frontispiece, all in black-and-white, (presumably not at natural size, unstated) are of generally high quality. The rule-proving exception is the irredeemably bad image of fol. 259r of the 'Lindisfarne Gospels' (cf. Plate 4.2). Disappointingly, the in-text illustrations, tables, figures, line-drawings, etc. do not appear to be listed anywhere in the volume.

Part I, 'The Making of Books', contains ten chapters, each of varying length. The first, by Richard Gameson, is an account – long, detailed, technical – of the construction and appearance of British medieval books; the second, a study of scribes and scribal communities in Anglo-Saxon England, also from his pen. In the following chapters, the separate contributors have attempted to illustrate aspects of the distribution of script and decoration throughout large regions of Britain. Here many ways of research are opened for enquiry. Michelle P. Brown reviews the Insular hand, its origin and phases of calligraphic growth, while Helen McKee explores farther-flung script home-zones in areas of Wales, Scotland and Cornwall. The history of English vernacular script is discussed by Julia Crick, while that of Latin handwriting in England is dealt with in three parts: David Ganz discusses

script-reform and the phases of tenth-century Square minuscule; Rebecca Rushforth zooms in on the impact and adoption of Caroline script-forms; and Teresa Webber concentrates on post-Conquest scribes and scriptoria. While Nancy Netzer gives an account of gospel-books and other liturgical volumes which include Insular decoration, Nancy Edwards examines those books with decoration having connexions or possible connexions to Wales, and Richard Gameson discusses decorated books for which an English origin or provenance has been claimed or was possible from Alfred's reign until early Norman times. Michael Gullick's trailblazing study of old bindings from early British books brings this section to a close.

Part II, 'The Circulation of Books', contains three chapters, and is of critical importance because the accounts of the contributors included in it are so invaluable, providing as they do a firm basis for the study of the historical transmission of books to and from the British Isles. Rosamond McKitterick, with her splendidly clear exposition, reminds us what fresh results can be yielded by digging down deeply into the research of manuscript traditions and the transmission of texts within the Continent. Helen McKee, on the Celtic realms' rôle in the diffusion of books, has been able to trace out of (mainly) lost sources indications of manuscripts' wanderings through these regions. Finally, Richard Gameson himself charts the spread of books on both sides of the sea from Alfred's time until after the Conquest.

Part III, 'Types of Books and their Uses', contains twelve chapters. 'The book in Roman Britain' by R. S. O. Tomlin begins by asking from which periods and regions in Britain the book first of all emerged. Then, T. M. Charles-Edwards looks at its function in 'The use of the book in Wales, *c.* 400-1100'. In the following chapters, the individual contributors have attempted the classification of what books survive in their respective fields, in order to develop a picture of what types were read where and by whom in medieval Britain. The sequence follows a certain logic: Richard Marsden's survey of Latin biblical codices, 'The biblical manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon England' complements Patrick McGurk's, 'Anglo-Saxon gospel-books, *c.*900–1066'. As 'Liturgical books' by Richard Pfaff goes well with Barbara Raw, 'Anglo-Saxon prayerbooks', so 'Psalters' by M. Jane Toswell does with 'Music books' by Susan Rankin. Scott Gwara's study of 'Anglo-Saxon schoolbooks' is followed by that of the late Patrick Wormald who, with his clear and lucid prose, reflects on 'Lawbooks' of the Old English period. As a conclusion to this part, Simon Keynes offers a highly compressed account of the story of the Alfredian Common Stock and its tenth- and eleventh-century accretions, 'Manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'; and Donald Scragg offers an informative account of vernacular collections of poems and homilies, 'Old English homiliaries and poetic manuscripts'.

Part IV, 'Collections of Books' – an exciting section - contains twelve chapters, which by attempting to give bulk to the general stock of books known by this or that author between the fifth and the twelfth centuries, adds much of literary and historical interest for the period. For while the collections themselves have long been dispersed, the contributors have tried to show, on the basis of three kinds of evidence – surviving manuscripts, surviving inventories, and citations from

classical and patristic works – not only what books were known by a certain scholar, or group of scholars, but also what texts were available at a particular school or foundation of learning. Thus the contributors have been able to uncover the contents of a number of British medieval libraries, whose books have otherwise vanished without trace. Of early Irish books 'Patrick, apostle of Ireland' by David Howlett, is accompanied by Thomas O'Loughlin, 'The library of Iona at the time of Adomnán'. The study of the Anglo-Saxons' literacy practices, 'Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England' by M. R. Godden is followed by a series of case-studies on those books more or less certainly known by specific British authors: 'Aldhelm's library' by Andy Orchard; 'The library of the Venerable Bede' by Rosalind Love; 'The library of Alcuin's York' by Mary Garrison; 'The library of Cynewulf' by Fiona Gameson; 'King Alfred and his circle' by Rohini Jayatilaka; 'Ælfric's library' by M. R. Godden; 'The library of Byrhtferth' by Michael Lapidge; and 'Wulfstan of York' by Andy Orchard. The tale of two brothers and a well-stocked family library at Llanbadarn Fawr, 'Rhygyfarch ap Sulien and Ieuan ap Sulien' by David Howlett, brings the section to a close.

There are very few misprints in the volume, and those that do exist are minor. This volume may be characterized as a classic: the most detailed account of its subject that has appeared so far in print.

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ANNEKE B. MULDER-BAKKER, ed., *Living Saints of the Thirteenth Century: The Lives of Yvette, Anchoress of Huy; Juliana of Cornillon, Author of the Corpus Christi Feast; and Margaret the Lame, Anchoress of Magdeburg* (Brepols, 2011) ISBN 9782503520773 (hardcover); ix + 416 pages; EUR 95 excl. tax.

The translations contained in this volume represent the most up-to-date English editions of the *vitae* of three important holy women from the thirteenth century: widowed anchoress and mother Yvette of Huy (1158-1228); prioress, prophetess and recluse Juliana of Cornillon (1192/3-1258); and disabled anchoress Margaret the Lame of Magdeburg (ca. 1210-1250). Blossoming interest in new forms of female devotional practices in the period is testified by Brepols' publication of relevant volumes in the *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts* (MWTC) series, to which this current work also belongs (vol. 20). This publication complements earlier releases of the Middle English critical editions of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina the Astonishing, and Marie of Oignies (MWTC, vol. 23), and modern English translations of the *vitae* of Christina the Astonishing, Margaret of Ypres, and Lutgard of Aywières (MWTC, vol. 19). Scholarship of such texts founds on the significance of the *mulieres religiosae*, a heterogenous grouping of holy women who expressed their devotion both as lay women and monastics.

The translations are supple and engaging throughout, balancing accessibility of English idiom with academic precision. Footnotes provided are extremely useful, pinpointing Biblical references and intriguing particularities of

Latin *lexis* for further study. Appended to each translation is a chronology of key events in the protagonist's lifetime, and significant happenings afterwards. These timelines are most welcome, offering the reader a means to place *vitae*'s happenings in broader social and historical contexts.

Each translation is preceded by an interpretive essay on the given text. Barbara Newman's (Northwestern University) introduction to Juliana of Cornillon's biography deftly situates the saint in her specific socio-cultural milieu (146-175.) The saint is much studied due to her tireless promotion of the Corpus Christi Feast, a rite she prophesied via mystical vision. Newman's clear dissection of the particularities of the Feast and its institution provide excellent anchoring material for research on this topic (162-170). Discussions relating to the network of powerful clerics supporting Juliana (165-6), her support system of other religious women, and her staunch opponents (152-6) also show the intricate relationships in which the saint was embroiled. Moreover, such analyses point to the complexities of Juliana's life as holy woman, balancing spiritual power and ecclesiastical obedience. An appendix also contains translations of two other documents highly important to the study of Juliana's influence as a religious woman: the papal bull of Pope Urban IV to Eve of St-Martin in 1264 signalling the official adoption of the Corpus Christi Feast and the letter of Robert, bishop of Liège, establishing the Feast in his diocese in 1246 (298-302). Jo Ann McNamara's (Hunter College, City University of New York; sadly now deceased) introductory essay to the Life of Yvette of Huy amply delineates the key issues thrown up by the text (49-66). The unique positioning of Yvette, mother and widow, as an exemplarily pious 'manly woman' is well situated, as is her dislike of men and their sexual filth (50-54). Yvette's devotion to charity, the sick, and poor is also highlighted (60-66). Analyses of potential disobedience on the part of the saint, including her possible refusal to detail her visions to her confessor, are nuanced and subtly drawn (58). The translators' introduction to Margaret's *vita* grounds the biography briefly, highlighting central research questions, including suffering as a form of particularly female devotion (305-309). Compared to the other translations' introductions in this volume, this essay feels overly abbreviated, skimming over the surface of Margaret and her context. However, it does provide references to other relevant recent scholarship. In any case, the appearance of an English translation of Margaret's biography is significant. Margaret is under-represented in contemporary hagiographical studies. Most likely this is because of her *vita*'s omission from the *Acta Sanctorum* and the relatively recent appearance of a critical Latin edition in the early 1990s. The text's neglect plausibly also relates to a lack of widely available English translation. Gertrud Jaron Lewis (Laurentian University) and Tilman Lewis' translation of Margaret's *vita* in this volume thus responds to a significant gap and acts as a stimulus for interrogation of this frequently ignored text.

A canon of twenty-seven thirteenth-century saints' Lives from the southern Low Countries is provided, offering a useful starting point for research (43-5). Groupings organised by gender and religious activity (holy laymen/women or nuns/monks) offer insight into the variance of the *corpus* at a glance. Indeed, Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker's (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen) general introduction

emphasises the importance of reckoning with the inherent differences between the lives of the holy laity and those in ecclesiastical institutions (3-5; 1-42). This 'diversity,' she argues, is often marginalised in recent scholarship in favour of a focus on monastics, and must be explored to its fullest. It is essential to unpack the term *mulieres religiosae*, carefully discerning typology and authorial methodology. Mulder-Bakker provides three broad subsets of *mulieres religiosae*: *(1)* holy virgins and beguines (10-18); *(2)* holy matrons, widows and holy knights (18-21); *(3)* anchoresses and hermits (21-27). In each instance, the author provides synoptic mini-essays with many examples of individuals fitting her classifications drawn from her canon. These sections function as sharp analytical overviews, essential reading for researchers seeking a starting point with the material. Given the book's broader focus on three female religious biographies, Mulder-Bakker's concentration on material relating to female individuals is natural, though these pages also contain brief discussions of holy men. Further, Mulder-Bakker highlights instances of mobility between categories, ensuring her taxonomy fits the fluid nature of the religious lifestyles under discussion. For example, Mary of Oignies, Odilia of Liège, and Yvette of Huy were all widows and entered anchorholds (19, 21) – thereby variously positioned in sets *(2)* and *(3)*.

Mulder-Bakker urges scholars to recognise the texts as definitively not 'historically trustworthy' biographies, but instead carefully selected and shaped excerpts with varying claims to authenticity (5). James of Vitry utilises the term *fragmenta* in his prologue of the *vita* of Mary of Oignies to signify circulating stories relating to a saint (29). Mulder-Bakker draws on Vitry's terminology to explain a tripartite production process: the saint's body and actual life (relics), which generate stories about the saint (*fragmenta*), then concretised by authors into hagiography (*exempla*) (29-30). Crucially, an *exemplum* is glossed specifically as a story which re-occurs in the instance it is read or spoken: *vitae* reanimate saints and thus ultimately coincide with the saint's corporeal remains and relics, offering traces of real presence (30). Mulder-Bakker argues that these *vitae* are not, *sensu stricto*, hagiographies. None of the texts were intended to promote the saints for canonisation, and all focus on the experiences of women living salvation very much in the contemporary world (30-2). For this reason, she maintains that rather than bearing the label *vita*, such a text should be identified as *Liber Vitae* (book of life) (32-3). Again, James of Vitry's vocabulary inspires Mulder-Bakker, as he proclaimed that Ur-beguine Mary of Oignies 'read' to her community from 'the book of life' through her manner of existence (33). There is a dearth of references to intended audience within the works, though most extant manuscript copies are found in male monasteries (37-42). Cistercian abbeys such as Wahlberg and Sint-Truiden welcomed men and women from the urban centres on feast days. In this monastic setting the lay urban folk were exposed to the *vitae* and such vital, exemplary narratives played into their own religious development and self-fashioning (40).

With such attention paid to the constructed-ness of the texts themselves, greater attention to detail regarding the precise composition of the canonical corpus would be most welcome. Inclusion in Mulder-Bakker's corpus depends on fulfilment of the category of Latin *vitae* composed shortly after the death of late

twelfth- and thirteenth-century religious men and women of the Southern Low Countries (6-8). Despite some deliberation on selection criteria and the canonical *vitae*, comments here are unsatisfying as to important issues regarding other scholars' consideration of *vitae* either within or outside of such a canon. The inclusion of Margaret of Magdeburg is unconvincing, seeming primarily to fit the editor's desire for the text's inclusion in the volume. Though she lived in the thirteenth-century and lived a holy life, Margaret did not live in the region of Brabant- Liège (6). Her biographer, as Mulder-Bakker points out, refers to beguines in the text and there is evidence the work had an audience in the medieval Southern Netherlands (6, 33) However, Friar Johannes uses the example of the beguines to point out Margaret's superior religiosity, not simply to group her in with them (388). Margaret is not included in other canons of female biographies of the period, including that provided by Walter Simons in his 2010 chapter 'Holy Women of the Low Countries: A Survey' (647-8). Nor is she included in *City of Ladies*, Simons' seminal study of beguines in the medieval Low Countries from 2001. Additionally, more analysis of variances within the canonical corpus more generally would be enlightening. For example, Mulder-Bakker includes Alice of Schaerbeek and Odilia of Liège in her canon, whereas Walter Simons explicitly excludes the former (*Cities of Ladies*, 170n.9) and Margot H. King and Ludo Jongen's 2007 bibliography (online, via *Monastic Matrix*) elides the latter in groupings of thirteenth-century female hagiographies from the region. Nevertheless, this work is indispensable for scholars of thirteenth-century female devotion in the Low Countries, whether as an entry-point to the field generally or for specific analyses of the given saints.

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