

FIFTEENTH CENTURY LITERARY CULTURE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE  
TO THE PATTERNS OF PATRONAGE, FOCUSING ON THE PATRONAGE  
OF THE STAFFORD FAMILY DURING THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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Submitted for the Degree of Ph.D., September, 1985.

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to investigate the nature of the rôle played by literary patronage in fostering fifteenth century English literature. The topic is approached by means of a detailed examination of the books and patronage of the Stafford family.

The fifteenth century witnessed the "triumph of English" and its acceptance as a prestigious literary language; it was an age interested in literature. That interest frequently manifested itself in the patronage of new works in English. The patterns of patronage were altering in various ways, but the patronage of individual magnates still served as an example. The choice of one noble family as a focal point offered a "ready-made" and well-documented social group for analysis; in an allied field, historical studies have proved immensely informative. Similar studies are contributing to our understanding of fifteenth century literary history. The pattern is still incomplete, and there are several families worthy of and awaiting investigation.

The Staffords are such a family. They were known to have been involved in literary activity, including some patronage; they were

powerful; and they survived the fifteenth century, offering some scope for a search for family literary patterns and patterns of book-ownership and acquisition.

The background to this study is provided by the first three chapters, which discuss the Staffords' political and financial history, and the costs of book-ownership and patronage. The problematic nature of the evidence for their literary activity is discussed, followed by a survey of the books associated with the Staffords and their Bourgchier kin of the half-blood during the years 1372-1533. Various considerations arising from this survey are then set out. The patterns of Stafford and Bourgchier book-ownership and literary patronage are then compared with those discernible for some contemporaries, and established as a context for the creation of fifteenth century English literature.



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THANKS ARE ALSO DUE TO GRAHAM, WHO LIVED WITH THIS  
FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND AMANDA WHO TYPED IT.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to investigate the nature of the rôle played by literary patronage in fostering fifteenth century English literary culture. The topic is approached by means of a detailed examination of the books and patronage of a noble English family, the Staffords.

Fifteenth century England may not look like promising terrain in which to search for literary culture. There is a lingering tendency to view the fifteenth century as a period 'disinherited of literature',<sup>1</sup> 'the despair of most literary critics',<sup>2</sup> or - more generously - as some kind of hiatus between the glories of Ricardian and Renaissance literature, a 'shallow trough rather than an abyss in the history of English poetry'.<sup>3</sup> Yet it was also the century which witnessed the "triumph of English" and its acceptance as a prestigious literary language, largely thanks to the brave example of Chaucer, 'of wel seyinge first in oure language'.<sup>4</sup> Fifteenth century Englishmen - particularly fifteenth century English poets - may have had some difficulty in absorbing all the rich complexities of Chaucer's literary language, but they still attempted to follow where the master had trodden.<sup>5</sup> The fifteenth century fostered an enormous growth in the volume of works written in English, whose 'sheer bulk alone affords prima facie evidence of the interest of the century in the written word.'<sup>6</sup> Admittedly, not overmuch was exactly new, but it was new in English. As Pearsall puts it, 'Translation is the characteristic activity of the fifteenth century, as if English, coming late to the scene, had to absorb into itself a means of learning and learned writing before it could move forward.'<sup>7</sup>

Although we may not appreciate many of the unspectacular (and occasionally 'elephantine' results),<sup>8</sup> there was certainly a considerable amount of literary activity, and the processes which stimulated it are worthy of attention.

One of these stimuli was literary patronage. Bennett speaks of the fifteenth century as an age 'interested in literature',<sup>9</sup> and one of the ways in which this interest frequently manifested itself was in the patronage of new works in English - new works on old themes, often enough, but new works in English nonetheless. As Lucas points out, 'in terms of sheer volume English literary patronage reached a peak in the fifteenth century.'<sup>10</sup> It is not just the extension of literary patronage to works in English (as opposed to French or Latin) which is of interest, however, but changes in the patterns of patronage, and the rôle of the aristocracy as a source of patronage.

Prior to this period, medieval literary patronage in England seems to have followed a fairly regular pattern. In its simplest terms, the bare outline was usually as follows: the patron (for various reasons) wished for a piece on a particular topic, asked another person to write it, received the finished product, and possibly paid for it. The motivations persuading both parties to embark on this enterprise were, naturally, less simple. Why, for instance, did the patron want the item he commissioned? One reason might be the patron's wish for a work that presented particular kinds of information in a readily assimilable form, perhaps in the vernacular rather than Latin - his own reference book. This might be kept for his sole use, but probably some early patrons might be moved, like the fifteenth century Sir Miles Stapleton, 'to profyte hem þat schuld come after hym.'<sup>11</sup> Another good reason was provided by piety. This might result in a request for an edifying

devotional treatise on the "life" of a saint for whom the patron had a particular devotion, for instance: a "good work".<sup>12</sup> Again, the patron might have had an eye to others' benefit, and this was probably the case with works of entertainment too, since 'books were scarce and it was ordinary good manners to share their contents among a group'.<sup>13</sup> There may also have been complex motives of personal vanity involved. Literary patronage was a magnificent expression of the patron's literary good taste (and ability to afford the luxuries of 'fine living'),<sup>14</sup> particularly if the work was circulated with a handsome dedication that promised to confer fame on the patron.<sup>15</sup> One aspect of this was the patronage of an "ancestral romance", which reflected the glories of an (often spurious) ancestor's achievements on to the patron, and could be used for propaganda purposes.<sup>16</sup> This use of carefully directed literary patronage as propaganda is also a reminder that the patron could enjoy a certain amount of control over what was written, choosing the topic and perhaps selecting certain aspects for special emphasis: 'The lord paid the piper and was entitled to call the tune.'<sup>17</sup>

Another feature of the basic patronage pattern which provokes some questions is the patron's choice of writer. Acquaintance with the writer was perhaps the most usual reason for the choice; this could come about in a number of ways. Prior to the fifteenth century, the writer was probably most likely to come to notice through being a member of the patron's own household such as his chaplain or secretary, but might attract the patron's attention through performing similar functions in the household of a friend or relative. Members of religious foundations with which the patron was associated might also be

called upon for contributions.<sup>18</sup> Occasionally the writer might recommend himself, but such initiatives were less frequent.

So far the advantages have all seemed to be on the patron's side, but there were also some advantages for the writer in this transaction. The most obvious was the prospect of reward. Although one might expect financial reward to be the norm, there are not many English records of monetary payments in return for literary commissions, and of promised rewards being paid, as frank as William the Clerk's praise of

... sire Raul, son seignuor  
Por qui il fu en cest labor,  
Qu'il li a ben guerdone,  
Promis li a ben done,  
Ben li a covenant tenu.<sup>19</sup>

Possibly, disguised payment in such forms as an annuity, promotion, or the gift of a church living or a sinecure, was more common than a cash payment. There was also the less tangible prospect of political advancement through securing the patron's "good lordship". (The threat of having that "good lordship" withdrawn may also have served as a powerful inducement to comply with the patron's requests). Another potential benefit was the writer's introduction to a wider audience, and so to the prospect of wider circulation of his works and further commissions, if the patron recommended the book and/or the writer to his circle.<sup>20</sup> The spiritual satisfaction that a writer might derive from knowing that his edifying work was thus enabled to reach a larger audience would have been an added gratification. The Carthusian author of a fifteenth century Life of St Jerome reminded the Duchess of Clarence of her duties in this respect: the work had indeed been written for her, but so

that not oonly ze shulde knowe hit more

cleerly to ȝoure goostly profyte, but also  
hit shulde more abyde and turne to  
edificacion of other that wolde rede hit  
or here hit. Wherfore I desire þat hit  
shulde lyke ȝoure ladyshýp first to  
rede hit and to doo copye hit for ȝoure  
selfe and syth to latte other rede hit  
and copye hit whoso wyl.<sup>21</sup>

And it is just possible that some writers were pleased to be given the opportunity to write and so to indulge in the aesthetic gratification of words 'set with skill and chosen out with care'.

When the fifteenth century dawned, literary patronage, as outlined above, was the more or less exclusive preserve of the aristocracy of church and state. This was partly because such people were, by virtue of their position, likely to have had some education and to possess some degree of literacy - either the scholar's or cleric's "professional" literacy, the "pragmatic" literacy of men who had estates to run or functions in local or national administration to perform, or the "cultivated" literacy which demanded things 'delectable to heryn and to see',<sup>22</sup> and likely to wish occasionally for a new book to read or to have read to them. It was perhaps in larger part due to the fact that this elite with a 'literate mentality',<sup>23</sup> also possessed the coercive powers of money and feudal or clerical authority. Men usually 'durst not withsey',<sup>24</sup> the bidding of those

ki unt les rentes e le argent  
Kar por eus sunt li liure fait.<sup>25</sup>

Clerical superiors, whose 'prayer may be clepyd a comaundement',<sup>26</sup> were also usually sure of obedience. If the writer duly obliged - so

showing his 'tres entière affection' to his patron - he might ensure that the patron's coercive powers of money and rank were mobilised on his behalf, to publicise and protect his work, for 'soulz leur nom livres prennent quelque auctorité et cours'.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that the names under which 'livres prennent quelque auctorité et cours' were by no means exclusively male: although the patron has been referred to as "he" this is simply for convenience. Noble women played an important and active role in establishing the patronage of vernacular literature in medieval England, as elsewhere<sup>28</sup>: for instance, a sizeable proportion of the Anglo-Norman literature discussed by Legge was written for the great ladies of the land, who occasionally went to considerable trouble to secure the work they wanted.<sup>29</sup>

The pattern of English literary patronage as primarily a noble pastime, usually initiated by the patron, and resulting in the "bespoke book", was gradually altered and enriched by various new elements, and several changes became apparent by the time the fifteenth century is reached. One important feature is the diffusion of the "literate mentality" through wider reaches of society. The book-owning and book-bequeathing classes begin to include more of the country gentry and the haute bourgeoisie.<sup>30</sup> The growing market supported an increase in the commercial production of books, encouraged the production of cheaper books, multiplied the demand for copies of vernacular texts - whether for 'edification and profit' or 'edification and delight',<sup>31</sup> - and was to provide the early printers with a ready-made public.<sup>32</sup> This growing demand for literature both increased the circulation of extant texts and fostered the production of new works 'independent of personal patronage'.<sup>33</sup> The "gentleman amateur" as compiler or writer of books makes more frequent appearances, both the courtly côterie writer

personified by Roos and the serious-minded country gentleman writing for his family's or friends' edification represented by Quixley and Idley.<sup>34</sup> Another change is the apparent emergence of the writer as a public or publicised figure - which seems to have happened in the case of Lydgate, at least - and a corresponding shift of the focus of literary patronage from "household" patronage of a writer known to the patron towards "public" patronage, 'in the sense that individuals commissioned works from authors (and printers) who were known for these activities outside the immediate circle of the patron.'<sup>35</sup> Also, there was a shift away from aristocratic dominance of patronage; the gentry and bourgeoisie were not only buying books, they were also beginning to imitate their social superiors in dispensing literary patronage. Books were written for country gentlemen (like the Stapletons or the knight who 'causet' the Destruction of Troy to be made)<sup>36</sup> and city gentlemen acting either in concert (as did the Guilds which sponsored the Corpus Christi cycle plays and civic pageants and some of Lydgate's 'occasional' pieces, or the Puis which fostered poetic composition amongst their members)<sup>37</sup>, or alone (as, for instance, did Henry Barton, who pressurised a hapless fellow-Skinner into interminable translations of Arthurian romances, and the mercer Hugh Bryce, who sponsored Caxton's translation of the Mirrore of the World).<sup>38</sup> Another shift in the pattern of literary patronage was the growing tendency of writers to take the initiative in the patronal relationship, offering speculative dedications of their works as bait for the unwary patron (or patrons).<sup>39</sup> It seems that writers were actively seeking patronage as a rewarding and 'recognised way of promoting a poem or a poet'<sup>40</sup> just when patronage would appear to have become rather less desirable from a patron's point of view. With more vernacular texts in circulation, one of the



practical incentives to commission new works lost some of its force; however other motives remained, and could be played upon by patronage-seekers.

The rôles and significance of literary patronage in general and aristocratic literary patronage in particular were clearly altering during the fifteenth century. There is still debate over the respective importance of the court, the provincial nobility and gentry, and the bourgeoisie in the production and dissemination of literature, and the diffusion of literary culture. Yet it appears that, however culturally active the lower classes were becoming, it was still the 'cultured nobility' who 'set a secular example of literate culture that other laymen sought to emulate' - for good or ill.<sup>41</sup> The books the nobility bought and the works they commissioned,

Summe off knyghthod, summe of gentillesse  
And summe off loue & summe of parfitnesse  
And summe also off gret moralite,  
Summe off disport, includyng gret sentence  
... many a fressh dite,  
Compleyntis, baladis, roundelis, virelais<sup>42</sup>

still served as models (although, naturally, not the only models) for other readers.<sup>43</sup> Patronage by individual magnates was still looked up to, and looked for, as a desideratum, in spite of changing conditions. This was a major factor influencing the decision to approach the large and unwieldy general topic of fifteenth century English literary culture from the contextual standpoint of aristocratic literary activity, using the close study of the literary activity of one noble family as a guide, as an alternative to an approach starting from the literary texts. The study of manuscripts and readers, of the social and codicological

contexts of fifteenth century texts, has as much bearing on our understanding of fifteenth century literature as textual analysis.

The choice of one noble family as a focal point was governed by several considerations. The aristocratic family unit offered a convenient "ready-made", readily definable and well-documented social group for analysis. In an allied field, several historical studies based on the role of individual family networks and "affinities", such as those of Talbot, Bourgchier, Percy, Hastings and Stafford, have already revealed that such an approach can contribute enormously to our understanding of the social, political and economic history of the period.<sup>44</sup>

Although there was a danger that the family unit might impose

Superficial or coincidental cohesion and structure, for individuals may have literary interests independent of any family connection and by discussing them in the context of the family, revealing networks of associations might be missed,<sup>45</sup>

similar studies might serve to enhance our understanding of fifteenth century literary history - and, in fact, are already beginning to do so. However, although we now know much more about the literary involvements and behaviour of such families as the Beauchamps, the Nevilles, the Woodvilles, the Tiptofts and the Bedfords, the picture is still far from complete, and there are still several families worthy of and awaiting investigation.<sup>46</sup>

The Staffords are such a family. They have not been chosen at random from the ranks of the peerage as candidates for investigation in the course of this study: they were a rich and influential family (well able to indulge in book-buying and literary patronage) which survived

in unbroken male descent throughout the fifteenth century (no mean achievement). They were also already known, from information scattered through a variety of sources, to have owned a quantity of books and to have been involved in some literary patronage, and their long history seemed to offer plenty of scope for a search for family literary traditions, patterns of book-ownership and acquisition, and the potential effect on these of "upwardly-mobile" marriages.

It was therefore decided to assemble all the available evidence of Stafford literary interests, especially patronage, adding to it evidence available for the Stafford kin of the half-blood, the Bourgchiers, since this promised to provide some interesting comparisons. The nature and credibility of the evidence, and the problems involved, will be discussed in more detail later, but, in brief, the corpus of Stafford and Bourgchier books was compiled from two major sources. One was the surviving manuscripts associated with the Staffords and Bourgchiers: knowledge of their existence was gleaned from library catalogues, editions of texts and facsimiles of manuscripts, art-historical surveys, and the valuable historical studies of the Staffords and Bourgchiers by Drs. Rawcliffe and Woodger. However, the actual evidence each manuscript presented for Stafford or Bourgchier ownership proved extremely variable, ranging from scrawled names to full-blown heraldic displays, and each potential attribution had to be treated with great caution. The other source was provided by a range of documents which offered information of varying degrees of detail and reliability about the Staffords' and Bourgchiers' sometime ownership of books: wills, inventories, accounts, and literary dedications and colophons recording the commission or presentation of texts. Much of the evidence involves book-ownership rather than literary patronage,

but information about the nature of the books the Staffords and Bourgchiers acquired and circulated by means other than patronage, and the nature of their interest in books is necessary for an assessment of the significance of their involvement with literary patronage, and comparison with the literary activity of other family groups.

The background to this study is provided by the first three chapters, which discuss the political and financial history of the Stafford family, and the costs they would be faced with when buying books or dispensing literary patronage. The problematic nature of the evidence for such activity is then discussed, followed by a description of the books presumed to have been owned by the members of the main line of the Stafford family, their immediate kin by marriage, and their kin of the half-blood, the Bourgchiers, during the years 1372-1533, including the literary works commissioned by or offered to them. Various considerations arising from this study of Stafford and Bourgchier book-ownership are then set out. The patterns of the Staffords' and Bourgchiers' book-ownership and literary patronage are then compared with those discernible for some of their contemporaries, and the possible significance of such literary patronage and activity in terms of fifteenth century literary culture is considered.

## THE STAFFORD FAMILY 1066-1521

The family of Stafford took to itself the motto "Sovente me Sovenne" during the fifteenth century; its greatness then justified the assumption that it would - and should - be remembered.<sup>1</sup> Titular lords of Stafford since the Conquest, the Staffords had risen slowly but surely to the heights; by 1444 they were Dukes of Buckingham, Earls of Stafford, Hereford and Northampton, and Lords of Brecon and Holderness.<sup>2</sup> Royal blood flowed in their veins, they held land in twenty-two English counties, in Wales, and in France, and they enjoyed a very substantial income.<sup>3</sup> Through Fortune's 'changebyll chance'<sup>4</sup> they were to lose all this, but from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century they held a high place amongst the magnates of England. Their increasing landed wealth gave them powers of patronage and "good lordship" over a growing "affinity" possessed of potential political and military significance.<sup>5</sup> It also presented them with the means and the necessity of indulging in the largitas, the "magnificence" expected of the noble<sup>6</sup> - the conspicuous consumption, the plate and jewellery, the fine clothes and armour, the noble dwellings for this world and the next, the sumptuous tapestries and beds, the exquisite manuscripts, the troupes of musicians, the commissioned authors - which might contribute as much as the political and military activities of the house to ensure that the Staffords should be remembered.

The rise to power of the Stafford family was at first unspectacular. The branch of the Norman Tonei family which took the title "Stafford" profitted from the Conquest in terms of confiscated Midlands manors, even if William 'expressly withheld from Robert everything that might savour of earldom'. Also the Conqueror, mistrusting the Toneis' rebellious habits, ensured that their English estates were too scattered

to provide a financial or territorial basis for rebellion.<sup>7</sup> This was an inauspicious beginning, but the Staffords survived, settled down to English ways, bred sons and began to prosper. Their military and administrative abilities made them useful; sensible marriages made them richer.<sup>8</sup> The family became respectable and respected barons. It was by a brilliant manipulation of this 'usual combination of service and marriage' that Ralph, 2nd Lord Stafford, brought distinction to his family.<sup>9</sup> A contemporary of Edward III, Ralph assisted the young king in the overthrow of Mortimer,<sup>10</sup> and continued to serve the king with loyalty and panache, to their mutual benefit. The outbreak of the Hundred Years War in 1338 gave Ralph 'a splendid opportunity for personal advancement which he exploited to the full'.<sup>11</sup> Already experienced in the Scottish wars, he was 'active in almost every major engagement between 1340 and 1360,'<sup>12</sup> and a founder-member of the Order of the Garter. Higden describes him as:

homo quondam validus, fortis, audax,  
bellicosus, in armis strenuus; senio confectus  
et longo squallore maceratus .<sup>13</sup>

But although the emphasis is on Ralph the career soldier, he was also a diplomat, steward of the King's household, and Seneschal of Aquitaine - posts requiring a certain amount of intelligence.<sup>14</sup> Ralph also became Earl of Stafford with an annuity of one thousand marks, in 1351. This advance in status probably owed as much to Ralph's spectacular second marriage as it did to his military prowess. In 1336 he had abducted and married Margaret Audley, heiress through her mother of a third part of the great Clare inheritance and also of royal blood, and so a 'most desirable commodity on the marriage market.' Edward III protected his companion-in-arms from the Audleys' anger; by 1347 Hugh Audley had mellowed sufficiently to leave Ralph and Margaret the Clare inheritance.

Marriage proved extremely lucrative for Ralph; Margaret brought him lands worth much more than his own, at a clear two thousand pounds a year, and those lands included the marcher lordship of Newport and the great manors of Thornbury in Gloucestershire and Tonbridge in Kent. On a smaller scale, Ralph benefitted from his great-grandfather's marriage to Alice Corbet; if that worthy gentleman had been planning for the future he could hardly have foreseen that the £265.00 per annum from the marcher lordship of Caus would pale into comparative insignificance beside the great Clare-Audley inheritance. However, Ralph was probably very pleased to add that tidy Corbet legacy to his possessions.<sup>15</sup> The profits of marriage and of war thus began the 'conversion of the Staffords from lords in one comparatively limited region into lords with nationwide interests and responsibilities.'<sup>16</sup>

Ralph was not the only Stafford of his generation to prosper; his younger brother Richard had also carved himself a successful career out of the opportunities offered by the mid-fourteenth century. Just as Ralph was a senior member of Edward III's household and military organisation, so Richard became a senior member of the Black Prince's council and military organisation and of the first councils of Richard II's minority. Richard also married an heiress and founded a cadet branch of the Staffords; in the next generation it bore that fine flower Edmund, Bishop of Exeter 1395-1419, Keeper of the Privy Seal 1389-1396, and Chancellor of England 1396-99 and 1401-1403.<sup>17</sup> The Staffords had arrived.

Earl Ralph, through his old blood, new wealth and good connections, was able to arrange good marriages for his children. The daughters were contracted to suitable barons and marcher lords, taking handsome marriage portions with them; the sons were found brides amongst the children of Ralph's fellow-captains. Young Ralph, who predeceased his

father, married Matilda, daughter of Henry of Grosmont, Duke of Lancaster; had the young man lived a little longer, he would have been John of Gaunt's brother-in-law. Hugh wedded Philippa Beauchamp, daughter of Thomas, Earl of Warwick. McFarlane dismisses Hugh, who became the second Earl of Stafford, with the words 'in the history of his family he is chiefly notable as the father of five sons.'<sup>18</sup> His verdict is a little harsh. Hugh followed in the family footsteps into royal service. His service in the Black Prince's armies earned him a Garter and a place in Froissart's pages (although Walsingham was sceptical of his military capabilities); in spite of his court connections he was one of the twelve peers chosen by the Commons in the 1376 "Good Parliament" to assist them in 'amending the grievous defects of the realm', and was later chosen as a member of a reformed council. He was also one of the "sufficient men" selected to advise the young Richard II. In fact, as a solid elder statesman he played a 'prominent role in national affairs.'<sup>19</sup>

Earl Hugh's eldest son bade fair to follow his father and grandfather in a successful career; the young man was brought up in Queen Anne's household and was favoured by the King. Unfortunately he was killed by Richard II's unruly half-brother John Holland in a brawl which nearly disrupted Richard's 1385 Scottish expedition. The angry King promised redress, but soon forgot the matter; the stricken father went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and died on the return journey.<sup>20</sup> Hugh's children were well provided for; again, although his daughters married well, it was a son who made the most brilliant marriage. His heir Thomas wedded Anne, daughter of Edward III's youngest son Thomas, Duke of Gloucester and of Eleanor de Bohun. Richard II chose to cast Thomas of Gloucester in the role of "wicked uncle", but Thomas Stafford was on sufficiently good terms with his choleric but cultivated father-



in-law to intend accompanying him on a Prussian crusade. However, this promising young Stafford died childless in 1392. Gloucester was eventually granted, as a royal favour, the wardship of the next heir William Stafford, who also died young, and of Edmund, who was married to the widowed Anne of Gloucester. It was not long before Edmund lost father-in-law and guardian at one stroke; Thomas of Gloucester was murdered, probably with Richard's connivance, in 1397.<sup>21</sup>

Two years later Edmund, 'magnae probitas juvenis',<sup>22</sup> was one of the first of the substantial midlands nobility to join Henry of Bolingbroke on his return to England. His use to Henry might have been limited by his youth and lack of experience, but he had substantial estates (for the recruitment of men and ready money), and he could fight.<sup>23</sup> Fight he did; in 1403 he was 'i-slayne in the kyngys cote armure undyr his baner' at the battle of Shrewsbury.<sup>24</sup> The death of this brave and handsome young man was untimely, but it could have been more untimely still for his family; fortunately he had sired an heir, Humphrey, as well as two daughters. His widow, the dowager Countess, married once more, this time perhaps by her choice; she married without licence Sir William Bourghier, and by him had children as distinguished as those of her previous marriage. Humphrey's step-brothers included the Earl of Essex and the Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>25</sup>

Anne of Gloucester's successive marriages to the third and fifth Earls had marked 'the final step in the Stafford's ascent to the upper reaches of the English nobility.'<sup>26</sup> The Staffords were already wealthy and well-bred, but Anne brought with her even greater riches and royal breeding. She was no mean match when the Stafford family council sought her hand for Earl Thomas; unlooked-for deaths made her sole heiress of both her father's titles and estates and her mother Eleanor's half share of the substantial Bohun inheritance.<sup>27</sup> The first division and settle-

ment of the Bohun property between the heirs of Eleanor and Mary de Bohun gave the Staffords increased strength in the Welsh marches and consolidated their estates in the south-east and midlands. It was not an unmixed blessing, for Henry V, heir male of Mary de Bohun, claimed that his cousin Anne's revenues were greater than his, and demanded a re-partition. The Crown and the lawyers won. Anne was granted possession of estates which were in fact technically worth one hundred pounds per annum more than the Crown's Bohun lands, and Henry rid himself of a large liability. The Welsh lands he had exchanged, particularly Brecon, rarely, if ever, produced what in theory they were worth, and were to become a drain on the Staffords' resources. Anne's inheritance from her father also brought its problems. At first there was no inheritance, for Thomas of Gloucester had been attainted; although Henry IV reversed the attainder, and the estates were to be restored to Anne, many were encumbered by grants made to royal favourites, and recovery proved costly and difficult.<sup>28</sup> Yet in spite of difficulties in recovering her property, Anne was a very wealthy woman. In the 1436 income tax return, the dowager Countess, thrice a widow and enjoying two Stafford jointures and one Bourghier jointure as well as her inheritance, was reckoned to have a taxable income of £1,958.00 per annum, and Pugh and Ross suggest her income was in fact closer to £2,500.00 per annum clear.<sup>29</sup>

The dowager Countess's death in 1438 was to turn her son Humphrey Stafford from a wealthy man to a very wealthy man indeed. Few other magnates could match his estimated income of £5,000.00 per annum.<sup>30</sup> Humphrey's landed wealth and kinship to the King opened prospects of high position and a notable career as supporter-in-chief or trouble-maker-in-chief to the Crown.<sup>31</sup> From his youth Humphrey chose to live up to his family's tradition of loyal service to the King; he was in

his teens when he joined Henry V's army of conquest in France and was to die, full of years and honour, in the defence of Henry VI.<sup>32</sup>

Defence of Henry VI seems to have been one of Humphrey Stafford's guiding principles, for in his attachment to the King, he avoided committing himself to any of the factions responsible for the 'civil broils'<sup>33</sup> of Henry VI's reign until the Crown itself became the centre of a faction, and commitment to the King overrode any commitment to a political via media.<sup>34</sup> Henry VI was still a child when Earl Humphrey made his position clear. The King's uncle of Gloucester and Beaufort great-uncle were engaged in a constant and acrimonious squabble for "spheres of influence" which from time to time threatened to upset the relative stability achieved by the King's council during his minority. Both Humphrey of Gloucester and Henry Beaufort might feel they had claims on Humphrey Stafford's invaluable support. The Earl was kin to the Beauforts by his marriage to Lady Anne Neville, daughter of Ralph Earl of Westmoreland and Joan Beaufort, and there might well have been Beaufort influence behind Humphrey's nomination to the royal council soon after he came of age.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, Humphrey Stafford was also kin to the Duke of Gloucester, and had followed Henry V and Gloucester on French expeditions, which brought promotion to various high offices and a comté in France, and might have attracted him to Gloucester's aggressive foreign policy.<sup>36</sup> The Earl of Stafford, however, chose to tread a delicate path between the King's two noble and quarrelsome kinsmen; indeed in 1424 he was one of the mediators riding between Beaufort and Gloucester as they threatened to fight for the control of London. The next year he was appointed one of the arbitrators of their long-running quarrel.<sup>37</sup>

The frequent attempts at arbitration and reconciliation were perhaps symptomatic of a caretaker government's natural urge to sweep

unpleasantness under the carpet until the King was of an age to do his own housekeeping. Henry VI received an inheritance still intact when he assumed personal power in 1437, but already cracks were beginning to appear. The fortunes of war were turning disastrously against the English forces in France- there were no longer the resources of men or money to support those who said fight on at any cost, but Henry's known desire for peace at any price meant that the highest price would be demanded, and paid. By 1450 Henry VI had lost nearly all that his father had won; even the King's marriage to Margaret of Anjou in 1444 was a bad bargain. It led to the loss, rather than the gain - or even retention - of French territories, and it brought no permanent peace, only a temporary truce.<sup>38</sup> Humphrey Stafford was probably heartily disillusioned by the conduct of both war and peace; by the time the English shuffled out of France he was certainly out of pocket. Not only did he lose his comté of Perche, but his appointment as Captain of Calais in 1442, however honourable and full of responsibility, had cost him £19,395.00 which the government could hardly afford to repay, by the time he resigned the post eight years later. Yet he probably had little more sympathy for the court "peace party" which had thrown away the initiative and the chances of peace with honour, than he had for the "war party" whose unrealistic demands had delayed a peaceful solution.<sup>39</sup> However, Stafford did become involved in the "peace party's" attempts to prejudice the King against his uncle of Gloucester, its most outspoken and embarrassing critic. The first attack was indirect and played on the King's fears. In 1441 Gloucester's dangerously ambitious wife was accused of plotting 'by wicked means to frame our sovereign's fall'; Stafford was one of the lay commissioners at her trial for treasonable witchcraft.<sup>40</sup> Six years later the blow fell on Gloucester himself. Summoned to a parliament at Bury St. Edmunds, on

his arrival he was arrested; Stafford, as High Constable, was one of those sent to charge him with treason. Like a previous royal uncle of Gloucester, Duke Humphrey died in custody with suspiciously convenient suddenness; naturally there were whispers of death by unnatural causes. Whether or not Stafford carried any responsibility for Gloucester's death, he was rewarded for his pains by a present of the Duke's manor of Penshurst - a welcome addition to the Staffords' Kentish estates.<sup>41</sup>

The Duke of Gloucester had been a particularly irritating critic of English foreign policy; but if the government had proved inept in its handling of the French war, it was proving even more incapable of handling internal problems. As usual, radix malorum est cupiditas. A grossly overburdened Exchequer was labouring to finance an unsuccessful and unprofitable war. Yet Henry VI seemed to have little financial acumen; instead of husbanding resources and seeking a good return on investments, the susceptible King gave prodigiously and unconditionally to those who had his ear and poured into it their requests.<sup>42</sup> As a contemporary chronicler lamented, 'In this time the realm of England was out of all good governance, as it had be many days before, for the king was simple, and led by covetous counsel, and owed more than he was worth.'<sup>43</sup> The "covetous counsel" consisted largely of men of the royal household, a coterie of "new men" led by William de la Pole, steward of the household, and his 'false progeny and afynyte'<sup>44</sup>, and by members of the Beaufort "connection". These men redirected the channels of royal patronage to their own benefit; 'grants of estates, wardships, offices of profit and pensions, of gifts of money and remissions of debt' flowed to them and theirs.<sup>45</sup> Since there were fewer and fewer pickings to be had, the struggle for them intensified, and the lucky winners seemed always to come from a charmed court

circle. Such exclusivity was dangerous. If even Humphrey Stafford, with all his assets, could suffer occasional financial embarrassment,<sup>46</sup> others who lacked his resources and found their access to lucrative royal favours much restricted, were sure to resent the men who stood between them and a supplemented income.

The administration was falling under the baleful influence of such men, close to the King ; 'members of his household and personal friends' - who seemed to be usurping the advisory role of the council as well as swallowing 'a wholly disproportionate share of the royal patronage.'<sup>47</sup> The King's "natural councillors" amongst the magnates were pushed back by these "new men"; by the 1440's both Humphrey Stafford and his brother-in-law John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon were "less in the forefront of politics than they had been"<sup>48</sup>, and by 1449 an anonymous rhymster was claiming:

Northfolke

The White Lioun is leyde to slepe

Southfolke

Thorou<sup>z</sup> the envy of the Ape clogge

Fawkenberge

... The Fisshere hathe lost his hangul hooke

Warwik

... The Bere is bound that was so wild

Ffor he hath lost his ragged staffe

Bokyngham

The Carte nathe is spokeles

For the counseille that he gaffe.<sup>49</sup>

By letting the council fall into the 'grip of a small baronial faction'.<sup>50</sup> Henry VI let its administration, particularly its judicial functions, become discredited; there could be even less confidence than usual that

its decisions would meet current expectations of impartiality. Men had always sought "good lordship" from their superiors to maintain their quarrels over property or influence<sup>51</sup>, but the King himself was now no longer a disinterested party. To take a well-known example, a Paston, even when backed by the influence of the Duke of Norfolk could see little chance of success against a local bully-boy such as a Tuddenham or a Heydon when these men, the former a Keeper of the Great Wardrobe, the latter a commissioner of the peace, had the Duke of Suffolk's "good lordship" and he in turn had the King's.<sup>52</sup> Parliament had to remind Henry in 1450 that 'the honour, wealth and prosperity of every prince standeth most principally upon conservation of his peace, keeping of justice, and due execution of his laws.'<sup>53</sup> When due execution of the laws was not being done, men were increasingly inclined to take the law into their own hands; magnate quarrels, left unchecked, if not actually aggravated by partisan judgements or Henry's imprudent pardons, erupted into full-scale feuds. At one end of the country the Earl of Devon and Lord Bonville were forever bickering; at the other, Nevilles and Percies were at each other's throats.<sup>54</sup>

The corrupt and inefficient government's many failures eventually caused simmering discontent to boil over. Early in 1450 Bishop Moleyns Keeper of the Privy Seal and one of Henry VI's confidantes, was murdered by mutinous and unpaid sailors; William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who was identified with all that was rotten in the state of England, was impeached and subsequently murdered at sea as he left for banishment; the Kentishmen rose under Jack Cade.<sup>55</sup> Although Cade's revolt was mainly Kentish in character, and an expression of Kentish grievances, the rebels' second manifesto showed their concern for the 'end of abuse, illegality, and oppression, and a return to sound, time-honoured principles of good government' throughout the land. The return of the

dukes of York, Exeter, Norfolk and Buckingham to a central rôle in government was one of the remedies they proposed.<sup>56</sup> Buckingham was one of those sent to negotiate with the rebels, but his return to a central rôle did not take the form the rebels had hoped, perhaps, for his large reserves of manpower were used to stiffen the royal forces, and he was one of the commissioners of oyer and terminer sent to Kent after the revolt had been suppressed. However, Buckingham was a Kentish landowner not associated with the hated Kentish circle of "household men", and his appointment as commissioner and as Constable of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports was a belated recognition of the influence he could wield.<sup>57</sup>

The King might not have had much appreciation heretofore of his kinsman's counsel (however assiduously he tried to give it),<sup>58</sup> but he had some appreciation of Humphrey Stafford's values. For one thing, there was the large Stafford affinity, which could be drawn on in times of need; for another, there was Stafford's reputation as a loyal and reliable magnate. There was also Stafford's kinship to the Crown. There is some evidence that during the long years when Henry VI lacked a direct heir, there was an attempt to fortify the Lancastrian dynasty indirectly through the promotion and marriages of various royal relatives. The Beauforts and Hollands received dukedoms through their 'proximity of blood to the King', as did Humphrey Stafford, although his line of descent was from Thomas of Gloucester, younger brother of John of Gaunt; the two lines were linked by the marriage of the Stafford heir to Margaret Beaufort, niece of the Duke of Somerset. The house of York was, however, quietly ignored.<sup>59</sup> Charles VII of France was well aware of English dynastic manoeuvrings when he dropped plans for a marriage between one of his daughters and one of the Duke of York's sons, and turned his attention to a match between the recently bereaved



Dauphin and one of Stafford's unbetrothed daughters. The new Duke of Buckingham's prestige was evidently high.<sup>60</sup>

Cade's followers had called on Henry VI to make use of the four puissant dukes of York, Exeter, Norfolk and Buckingham - not Somerset - but this advice was ignored. It was the Beaufort Duke of Somerset who became, like Suffolk, a protégé of the Queen, and who dominated the Council as exclusively as Suffolk had ever done.<sup>61</sup> Richard Duke of York in particular had cause to resent his exclusion from power. Doubly and legitimately descended from Edward III, a peer of the 'trewe blode of the Reame',<sup>62</sup> his dynastic claims had yet seemed to weigh little in the scales against those of the Beauforts, Hollands and Staffords. His rights to a suitable position in the government of England and English France were frequently frustrated; even his urgent claims at the Exchequer were given low priority compared to Somerset's. As royal Lieutenant in Normandy he had been hamstrung by lack of funds while the council spent money it could not afford to give York, on fitting out an expedition to be led by the vainglorious Somerset.<sup>63</sup> By 1452, York, unable to communicate effectively with Henry VI in any other way, was driven to express his political frustrations and personal resentment of Somerset through force.<sup>64</sup> His followers faced a royal array at Dartford that spring; there was no battle, and the final outcome was Somerset's triumph and York's humiliation.<sup>65</sup>

However, York was by no means finished. In 1453 the King suffered a prolonged and complete mental collapse. He 'recognised nobody, understood nothing';<sup>66</sup> he would not even respond when first Buckingham, then the Queen, tried to present to him his long-awaited son, Prince Edward.<sup>67</sup> When the King's total incapacity could no longer be hidden, Queen Margaret sought to become regent, in the French style, but the council followed recent precedents and appointed a "Protectour and Defensour"

of the realm - Richard Duke of York.<sup>68</sup> During his protectorate York acted with sensible circumspection. After all, he had the backing of his Neville and Bourghier kin and the co-operation of Buckingham and other reasonable peers, while Somerset was safely out of the way; he had been appealed of treason and packed off to the Tower to await charges.<sup>69</sup> However, late in 1454 Henry began to recover, and a protectorate was no longer justifiable. Nor was the continued imprisonment of Somerset; Buckingham was one of those who had Somerset 'straungely conveied' from the Tower and saw him restored to favour.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, however unwilling Buckingham was to see York, Norfolk and the Nevilles 'alienated to the point of rebellion', as they would be by such blatant royal partisanship on Somerset's behalf, he could not prevent it happening.<sup>71</sup>

By the summer of 1454 York was again prepared to fight for what he wanted. In May he and his followers intercepted at St. Albans a royal cavalcade on its way to Leicester for a council of dubious purpose.<sup>72</sup> Some of Henry's more hot-headed peers were all for fighting the traitors at once, but Buckingham pressed for negotiations. He might have been playing for time, but he was probably also honestly convinced that York would prefer talking to fighting if given the chance. Appointed Constable in place of the inflammatory Somerset, Buckingham was qualified to follow a course midway between the opposing factions and perhaps attempted to do so.<sup>73</sup> He could not afford to hand over Somerset as York demanded but he knew that York had been misrepresented to Henry, for he admitted that York's 'peticions, requestes et demandes' had been withheld from the King and agreed that they should be handed to Henry for discussion. Buckingham was also aware of the bitter implications of civil strife, for he himself was in one camp, yet he was kin to all the leaders in the other; he begged Mowbray herald 'me recommanderez a mes

beaux freres d'York et de Salisbury a mon nepveu de Warrewyk et a mon frere de Norffolk... il a epousee ma seur."<sup>74</sup> However, as negotiations wore on the attitudes of both York and Buckingham hardened; the impatient Duke of York's men advanced and gave battle. The royal forces were 'out of their array';<sup>75</sup> the number of hand and face wounds suffered (Buckingham was wounded 'with an arowe in the vysage' and his son in the hand, and they were not alone),<sup>76</sup> suggests that the royal army had delayed arming until the last minute, trusting that hostilities would be avoided. The fighting was soon over, for its object was not the replacement of the King but 'an act of private revenge on a few prominent individuals',<sup>77</sup> for 'when the said Duke Edmund (Beaufort) and the lords were slain, the battle was ceased.'<sup>78</sup> York and the Nevilles submitted to the King and escorted him politely back to London. Buckingham went too, for in the interests of reconciliation he and his Bourgchier half-brothers had agreed to 'drawe the lyne' with York, although they had to be 'bounde by reconysaunce in notable summes to abyde the same'.<sup>79</sup>

York became Protector, but there were powerful forces ranged against him, in particular the intransigent Queen and the relations of the lords killed at St. Albans. By 1456 the 'grete and strong labourid' Queen<sup>80</sup> had regained control, and York and the Bourgchiers were required to resign their offices. 'If the Bourgchier brothers had indeed represented the spirit of accommodation between the Yorkist lords and the King's court, their moderation was now cast aside in favour of loyal and obedient servants securely attached to the King and Queen.'<sup>81</sup> Buckingham, it was said, 'takith right straungely that bothe his brethren arn so sodeynly discharged from ther officez of Chauncellerie and Tresoryship, and þat among othir causeth hym that his opynyon ys contrary to þe Whene's entent.'<sup>82</sup> His attempts at maintaining stability

had extended to preventing the Queen from harassing York; both he and the Queen were 'noothing wel plesid' with each other.<sup>83</sup> However, he made no trouble, and his attachment to the King led him to throw in his lot with the increasingly factious court.<sup>84</sup> The bond was strengthened by marriages; his second son Henry married Lady Margaret Beaufort, the recently widowed Countess of Richmond and mother of Henry Tudor, while Buckingham's daughter Katherine married John Talbot, heir to the second Earl of Shrewsbury, a sound Lancastrian.<sup>85</sup> Buckingham's commitment to the King gave the court party a theoretical numerical advantage and the confidence to move against York. Buckingham's decision might have had ulterior motives, for although technically very wealthy he was suffering some financial difficulties. However, 'his personal loyalty to Henry VI is likely to have been the chief consideration, combined with a conviction that the House of Lancaster would once more triumph over its enemies'.<sup>86</sup>

Buckingham's choice seemed to be vindicated by the success of the court party in 1459. York, and his Neville kinsmen the earls of Warwick and Salisbury, provoked into open hostility, were driven out of the country after a humiliating defeat at Ludford Bridge.<sup>87</sup> Buckingham received a grant of confiscated lands which would in time compensate for the debts owed him by the Crown. He also received charge of his sister-in-law Cecily, Duchess of York, left behind at Ludford - he is said to have kept her 'full straye and many a grete rebuke' until 'the fylde was done at Northe hampton.'<sup>88</sup>

The next summer Warwick and Salisbury swooped back from Calais and caught the royal army at a slight disadvantage at Northampton.<sup>89</sup> This time Buckingham was not prepared to negotiate; the 'peace-making duke'<sup>90</sup> had become 'sharp Buckingham',<sup>91</sup> credited with the undiplomatic words 'the erle of Warrewyk shalle nat come to the Kynges presence,

and yef he come he shall dye.'<sup>92</sup> The 'buk set up his hornes on hye', but it was 'þe buk was slayne and borne away', not the bear of Warwick.<sup>93</sup> Buckingham was killed beside the King's tent, and the King himself was captured.<sup>94</sup> 'Unimaginative and unlikable' Buckingham might have been,<sup>95</sup> but he had been a good and faithful servant to his King; 'in a list of notable casualties since 1447, drawn up in the reign of Henry VII, only Humphrey of Gloucester and the Duke of Buckingham are called "good":'<sup>96</sup>

Bitter dynastic struggles followed the battle of Northampton, in the course of which York claimed the throne and received a paper crown on his severed head, yet his son Edward was acclaimed as the fourth English king of that name.<sup>97</sup> The Staffords played a minor role in this phase of the "Wars of the Roses", for Duke Humphrey's heir was his grandson Henry, very much a minor. Henry was not entirely without powerful friends; his grandmother Anne might have been much about the Lancastrian court and godmother to Margaret of Anjou's son Prince Edward, but she was also aunt to the new King, and the kind of dowager to be reckoned with.<sup>98</sup> Her second husband, Walter Blount, Lord Mountjoy, was a useful man trusted by the King. Henry's great-uncles of the half-blood, the Bourchiers, were also influential - not every boy had an Archbishop of Canterbury as a great-uncle - and they too were close kin to the King.<sup>99</sup> The dowager Duchess and the Archbishop, Henry's guardians, bowed to the force of circumstances and sold the young Duke's marriage to the Crown, but bargained for custody of the Stafford estates, and did what they could to guard Henry's handsome inheritance.<sup>100</sup> Henry and his younger brother were brought up in the royal household - Edward's queen, Elizabeth Wydeville, received a handsome allowance for their upkeep, of which a tutor received a small portion - and at the ripe age of ten Henry was married to the Queen's sister Katherine.<sup>101</sup> In later years, his hostility to the Queen's sister was ascribed in part to the fact

that:

Cum enim adolescentior esset, sororem regine  
uxorem ducere coactus fuit, quam ipse propter  
genesis humilitatem suo coniugo idignabatur. <sup>102</sup>

Other peers were less finicky.<sup>103</sup> Henry was probably more resentful of the King's attempt to confine him to a ceremonial court role, whilst parvenus were advanced to positions of power,<sup>104</sup> for his family had been too powerful too long for him to accept meekly the denial of 'the employments and responsibilities which a man of his position might have expected.'<sup>105</sup> He received occasional royal favours, such as permission to enter his inheritance while still a minor, a grant of the royal manor of Cantref Selig in Brecon, the King's gracious agreement to act as godfather to Henry's son Edward.<sup>106</sup> However, he was excluded from commissions of the peace except in Staffordshire, from the Prince of Wales' council, from the Constablenesship, from the Lancastrian moiety of the Bohun estates to which he was heir.<sup>107</sup> Even though he contracted to follow Edward IV to France in 1475, he returned home for reasons unknown.<sup>108</sup> It was perhaps a combination of anger at his consignment to "political limbo", financial pressure, fear of a Wydeville-dominated future and personal ambition, which led Henry to commit himself to Richard of Gloucester after Edward IV's death.<sup>109</sup>

Within weeks of the King's demise Buckingham had joined Richard and enabled him to gain control of the young Edward V and his brother, to become an effective Protector, and, finally, King.<sup>110</sup> Whether or not his rhetorical skill played a large part in this sequence of events, his affinity (swollen by newly unemployed retainers of the recently executed Lord Hastings) certainly did.<sup>111</sup> There was a certain ironic suitability in Buckingham's role as master of ceremonies, with 'chief rule and devising' at Richard III's crowning.<sup>112</sup> He was well rewarded

for his indispensable help; Richard III was not only prepared to allow him the Constablership and the moiety of the Bohun inheritance he had craved, but a 'most spectacular delegation of royal authority, entirely without precedent'.<sup>113</sup> Duke Henry was made Chief Justice and Chamberlain of North and South Wales, and Constable, Steward and Receiver-General of all the Welsh crown lands; McFarlane calls him 'virtual ruler of Wales for life'.<sup>114</sup>

It remains a mystery why Henry should then have joined in a rebellion against Richard III. Whether he had quarrelled violently with Richard, or was prompted by an uneasy conscience or the persuasive tongue of Bishop Morton, or whether his 'ambition to play the leading rôle to which his resources entitled him' was an ambition which reached to the throne, Duke Henry joined a preplanned revolt.<sup>115</sup> A loyalist movement to avenge Edward IV's heirs was converted by Buckingham's aunt, Margaret Beaufort, and the dowager Queen, into a scheme for Margaret's son Henry Tudor to take the throne and marry Elizabeth of York. Buckingham was to lead a large Welsh contingent. Unfortunately both the weather and his tenants were against him; Buckingham was disliked in Wales as a 'sore and hard-dealing man', and could find few willing to fight for him. His forces melted away into the rain as Richard moved against 'the most untrue creature living', and the whole revolt collapsed. Duke Henry went into hiding, but was soon betrayed, and summarily tried and executed. His wife was taken to London and assigned a small pension; their young son was luckier and taken to safety by loyal retainers.<sup>116</sup>

On Henry VII's accession, the attainder on Duke Henry was reversed and his son Edward became the third and last of the princely Stafford dukes, heir to a rich but dangerous inheritance. Mathew describes him as 'like some great mastodon, heavy, slow-moving with a tiny brain',<sup>117</sup> which is rather unfair, for the Duke, educated by his

guardian, Lady Margaret Beaufort in the Burgundian tradition of "learned chivalry"<sup>118</sup> had his fair share of intellectual gifts. Unfortunately they did not include political tact. The Duke was indeed a 'survivor from an older feudalism',<sup>119</sup> with a vast countrywide network of estates at his disposal, while in his marital dispositions he looked not to the "new men" but to other noble survivors from an older feudalism - Northumberland, Westmorland, Abergavenny, Herbert, Hastings, Surrey, Salisbury.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, 'there ran in his veins the blood of that fecund sire, Edward III'.<sup>121</sup> Men felt that the Duke would make a 'ryall ruler' - something neither he nor the Tudor monarchs could ignore.<sup>122</sup> The Duke jousted and played tennis with the young Henry VIII, and perhaps shared his love of music and poetry;<sup>123</sup> both Tudors were prepared to exploit his sense of position when it could be expressed through a love of ceremony and display;<sup>124</sup> but neither would gratify him with the position of trust or the responsible role in affairs of state which he apparently desired.<sup>125</sup>

The Duke, 'urbane and cultivated',<sup>126</sup> and presumably an ornament to the court, managed to retain Henry VIII's favour until about 1518. This was in spite of his obvious dislike of Wolsey, his illegal retainer of a royal servant,<sup>127</sup> and a furious argument over the interest of the King's boon companion, Compton, and of the King himself, in Buckingham's sister Anne.<sup>128</sup> Unfortunately, royal favour was not lucrative. Duke Edward's income was theoretically huge, but his estates had suffered wasteful exploitation during his minority, and the Staffords' Welsh estates had been showing a sad decline in revenue for many years past.<sup>129</sup> Yet he was expected to live as magnificently as if financial facts matched the hopeful expectations of his rent rolls, and to 'spend without recompense, on a scale that even his fortune could not maintain.'<sup>130</sup> To keep up appearances, with the gowns of 'cloth of tusssew, tukkyd and



furryd with sabulles', and hats of 'goldsmyth worke', the feasts for hundreds, the train of retainers, the lavish entertainments, the new building in the latest style, the great marriages for the children, was extremely expensive.<sup>131</sup> Entertaining Henry VIII at Penshurst sent Buckingham's household expenses for the year up by £1,500.00, while the junketings of the Field of the Cloth of Gold set him back at least £3,000.00, for although he disapproved of the event he was not going to be outshone.<sup>132</sup> The Duke was forced to become 'despite his ancient blood, that thoroughly Tudor and "modern" thing, a rack-renting improving landlord'.<sup>133</sup> Buckingham's intense personal interest in his finances (as witnessed by his signature on many pages of accounts), was natural enough, but his harsh and pitiless exploitation of his resources lost him the loyalty of his tenants, even of his kinsmen, when he most needed it.<sup>134</sup>

By 1520-21, Henry VIII, an unwilling letter-writer, was writing by his own hand to Cardinal Wolsey, ordering him to keep watch on Buckingham and others 'whyche yow thynke suspect.'<sup>135</sup> To Buckingham's open pre-occupation with his royal descent and his criticism of Wolsey's expensive foreign policy,<sup>136</sup> his obvious wealth and powerful kinships, was added the evidence extracted from the Duke's own confessor, chancellor and cousin.<sup>137</sup> In this climate of suspicion, the Duke's withdrawal to his great manor of Thornbury and request for permission to raise a large armed escort to protect him from his recalcitrant Welsh tenants, suggested that he might be about to emulate his father's Welsh-based revolt. The Duke was summoned to London to face charges of treason. He came with quiet dignity, for it was clear that he would be found guilty: 'What he was said to have said and done were manifest treason and would have cost anyone his life in early Tudor England'.<sup>138</sup> Discussing the King's death was enough to bring about his own. None of

his kin or class raised a finger to help him; there was some popular dissent, expressed in verse and riots, fuelled by a belief that Wolsey was responsible for his death.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, Charles V of Spain declared that 'a butcher's dog has killed the finest buck in England'.<sup>140</sup> Yet Buckingham had in part brought disaster on his own head:

Buckingham died because his pride and ambition made it impossible for him to accept the passive role of satellite and courtier which had been forced on so many of his peers. He had failed to convince the King that his wealth, territorial power and royal blood did not constitute a grave threat to the established order, and the penalty was death. In retrospect, the succession of blunders occasioned by Duke Edward's inability to appreciate the delicacy of his position can be seen to have led directly to Tower Hill.<sup>141</sup>

As a contemporary versifier put it for him:

I never percevyd the tyme when I was well.<sup>142</sup>

HOW THE STAFFORDS COULD AFFORD PATRONAGE:  
THE FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE STAFFORD FAMILY

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Staffords had clearly risen from the ranks of the "comfortably-off" country baronage to join that small but privileged percentage of English society, the wealthy magnates who measured their incomes (and expenditure) in thousands, rather than hundreds of pounds.<sup>1</sup> A brief discussion of the Staffords' income and expenditure will demonstrate that the family could surely have afforded the expense of commissioning and purchasing manuscripts, even those of the "de luxe" class, if they so desired, and that they could equally well have afforded a suitable reward for the writer of a work dedicated to one of their illustrious line, whether that work was deliberately commissioned or a surprise speculative dedication. Apart from their intrinsic value, such objets d'art could prove to be a wise investment; they demonstrated the owner's wealth (and so his credit-worthiness and credibility), good taste, artistic, literary and personal "contacts", and, occasionally, interests.<sup>2</sup> They had a function as part of a magnate's "display"; if he had money, he showed it, and spent it. As McFarlane put it:

The quality that age most admired was called largitas, largesse; which may be translated 'openhandedness', though that does not perhaps sufficiently emphasize its ostentatious character, what the economists call 'conspicuous waste'. The greater part of the earnings of the nobility was neither hoarded nor invested; it was used to achieve a higher standard of luxury.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the profits might in fact be ploughed back into the lands from which they usually came.<sup>4</sup> The surplus sometimes went into items of similar solidity - such as bricks and mortar - for there were many things which reflected a man's standing in this world (and his hopes for his standing in the next). The grandeur of his dwelling-places and the sumptuous nature of their appointments, such as beds, hangings and plate; the size of his household and retinue, and the quality of its clothing; the richness of his jewels; the generosity of his hospitality; the prestigious marriages purchased for his children; the pious benefactions to family foundations, to fashionable shrines, to local church fabric-funds, to church and chapel furnishings: all these could show the quality of the man.<sup>5</sup> The Staffords indulged, in varying proportions, in most of these luxuries of the noble life.

Ralph, first Earl of Stafford, was the first of his line to enjoy the generous income which would support a lavish standard of living. His parents had left him a comfortable baronial inheritance worth a few hundred pounds a year; service in Edward III's armies brought with it the profits of war, a great marriage, and an earldom with its annuity. By the 1350's, he was probably worth £3,000 per annum, and more besides if the ransoms and plunder were plentiful.<sup>6</sup> Much of the upsurge recorded in the Staffords' fortunes derived from Ralph's clandestine marriage to Margaret Audley, great-grand-daughter of Edward I; Edward III countenanced this daring project and ensured that the girl's outraged parents were sufficiently mollified to leave their large estates intact to Margaret and Ralph.<sup>7</sup>

Marriage enabled Ralph to make several expensive gestures redolent of dynastic pride. His plentiful offspring were found noble marriages, at a cost of several thousand pounds; his daughters were betrothed to the children of fellow marcher lords, his two sons to daughters of

Ralph's great fellow-captains.<sup>8</sup> Money was also sunk into bricks and mortar; Ralph was given license to crenellate at Madeley and at Stafford, and it was at Stafford that he built his handsome modern castle, partly as a marcher defence, partly as a culmination of his family's long association with Stafford.<sup>9</sup> William the Conqueror had kept the royal castle of Stafford and an earldom from the grasping hands of Ralph's Norman ancestors; three centuries later the royal castle was in decline, Ralph had built his own, and the Staffords had become earls.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps in gratitude for his good fortune, Ralph put some of his money to pious use.<sup>11</sup> It is possible that he founded at least one of the Spitals in Stafford, more certain that 'bearing a venerable respect to the Order of Friars, Hermites of St. Augustine', he founded an Austin Friary in the town, for the benefit of many souls, including his own.<sup>12</sup> Ralph's brother Richard, successful on a more modest scale, married a local heiress, and founded a short-lived cadet branch of the Staffords. His younger son Edmund was started comfortably in the clerical life, and made a success of that; he became not only the first Stafford bishop, but also Chancellor of England.<sup>13</sup>

Ralph's heir Hugh, another Garter Knight and 'sufficient man',<sup>14</sup> has left fewer traces of his spending habits, although he is the first Stafford to leave any written evidence of possession of the luxuries of life - including books.<sup>15</sup> He indulged in a little land-purchase; as a captain and as an earl he would have had an appearance to maintain; and as a father he had a large family to marry creditably. The best-laid plans could go awry, and it was unfortunate that two of the families into which Hugh's daughters married became involved in forfeitures for treason. In spite of Hugh's careful provision, the Countesses of Kent and Suffolk were not so much to be envied, after all.<sup>16</sup> Earl Hugh's death on pilgrimage preceded his heir's marriage; it was the Stafford

family council which completed the negotiations leading to young Earl Thomas's splendid marriage to Anne, daughter of Edward III's youngest son, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester.<sup>17</sup>

The young Earl seems to have been on good terms with his awesome father-in-law, but he had little time - less than two years of married life - to absorb the cultivated atmosphere surrounding the literate, chivalrous, pious and irascible Duke Thomas and his wife Eleanor, heiress of the Bohun tastes for fine books and furnishings.<sup>18</sup> It was probably a good life while it lasted; the accounts of the Earl's receiver-general include payments to clerks, minstrels and heralds at Pleshey (one of Duke Thomas's favourite establishments), and to a goldsmith for the repair of a swan badge, and record the expenses involved in preparing for a crusade to Prussia.<sup>19</sup>

The next heir, William, lived long enough to inherit the title, but not to marry; his brother Edmund continued the family connection with the Duke of Gloucester first as his ward and then as his son-in-law, after marriage to the widowed Lady Anne. When Anne unexpectedly became sole heiress of both her parents, the Stafford income rose considerably.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, once again a Stafford earl had little time to enjoy his good fortune and the good things money could buy. Seven years after his marriage, the promising young Earl Edmund was killed at the battle of Shrewsbury.<sup>21</sup>

The widowed Countess, intelligent, well-educated and pious, as befitted a child of such parents,<sup>22</sup> and also extremely wealthy, has a place in McFarlane's gallery of formidable dowagers.<sup>23</sup> After her third marriage, to Sir William Bourgchier, she oversaw the upbringing of her two families, and the control of her large estates - for she had both her inheritance and two Stafford dowers (later a Bourgchier dower also) to manage.<sup>24</sup> The Countess Anne had plenty of money to run her house-

hold, indulge her literary and pious tastes, endow the sons of her third marriage and negotiate marriages for them, but she also had to pay for much expensive litigation. The recovery of her father's forfeited estates, and the partition of the Bohun inheritance with her cousin Henry V, took many years of legal wrangling, and kept many Stafford legal advisors in fees.<sup>25</sup>

The next Earl, Humphrey, had for many years the responsibilities of a great name and position without the income that should have supported them, for his mother held lands worth nearly £4,000 per annum, while poor Humphrey had only about £1,300 per annum to support his wife and family, and a military and political career. However, after his mother's death in 1438, Earl Humphrey became worth an estimated £5,000 per annum - certainly enough to support the dukedom conferred in 1444.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, Humphrey's income was estimated from over-optimistic valuations (or valors), particularly in the case of his Welsh estates, and the calls on his resources were increasing.<sup>27</sup> The Lancastrian government was drawing on his support, in terms of both money and men, to an extent which put it heavily in his debt and with little hope of repayment.<sup>28</sup> The troubled years of the mid-fifteenth century obliged Humphrey to maintain a large household and following; it is unlikely that his "affinity" ever numbered the two thousand mentioned in a Paston letter, but it was substantial, and if it did not absorb so large a proportion of his income as did the Earl of Northumberland's affinity, it was a troublesome expense.<sup>29</sup> Humphrey also had his "great household" to maintain in ducal style, and an establishment for his heir; after all, 'the household sought to advertise in unmistakable terms the wealth, power and influence of the Staffords'.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, we have little surviving evidence, most of it testamentary and most of it relating to Duchess Anne, of the trappings of Humphrey's ducal lifestyle, but if

the household cost about £2,000 per annum to run, there was presumably some expenditure on "display" as well as on wages and sustenance.<sup>31</sup>

Building does not seem to have been a major item in Humphrey's expenses on the noble life. McFarlane records the noble and costly piles raised by the "new men" of the fifteenth century, successful in the French wars or placed in the way of rich pickings by the Duke of Suffolk, but Humphrey Stafford did nothing so spectacular.<sup>32</sup> He acquired the useful little Warwickshire castle of Maxstoke in a land exchange with an impoverished neighbour, and signified his acquisition with a very handsome pair of gates.<sup>33</sup> He may also have financed some work on the chapel of Stafford Castle.<sup>34</sup> Yet he had so many castles and fine residences to his name that he had little need to build, nor perhaps could he afford to. Indeed, some of the Staffords' marcher castles began to fall into decay in the 1450's, for lack of maintenance.<sup>35</sup>

After the costs of maintaining a noble lifestyle for himself and his dependants had been met, Humphrey, like any other dynastically-minded magnate, was concerned to ensure that his children married into families able to support them in the style to which they had become accustomed. He had six children to betroth, an expensive business, for noble marriages did not come cheap, unless a double intermarriage could be arranged; there were portions to find for the girls and jointures to come down with on the sons' marriages.<sup>36</sup> A letter from Humphrey to Viscount Beaumont, shortly after Joan Stafford had married William, the Beaumont heir, showed that Humphrey was having difficulty raising spare cash to pay off instalments of her portion:

In gothe faith brother, it is so with me at this  
tyme I have but easy stuffe of money withinne me,  
for so meche as the seison of the yer is not growen,  
so that I may not plese youre seide gode brotherhode,



as God knoweth my will and entent were to do,  
and I had it.<sup>37</sup>

Partly through the Lancastrian government's financial and political ineptitude, partly through a decline in receipts from his Welsh estates, Humphrey was living above his income.<sup>38</sup> He was not the only magnate to do so; the Duke of York also had unproductive Welsh lands and large debts owing from the Crown. However, as Rawcliffe points out, York made a bad financial position worse, while Humphrey was a capable landowner who both warranted and enjoyed excellent credit, and had certainly not been driven to desperate financial measures by the time of his death.<sup>39</sup> His will made provision for the payment of debts (an unknown quantity), and for an unostentatious funeral (a mixture of piety and financial stringency?)<sup>40</sup> but the Duke also felt able to make some substantial pious bequests. A noble might well use pious display in this world to ease his passage to the next.<sup>41</sup> Lands were set aside to augment the number of canons at Maxstoke (his new castle had a college of monks attached) and also to augment the College at Pleshey (his grandfather's foundation) and its charitable works, and to provide it with its chapel. In return, masses and prayers were to be said for Stafford souls.<sup>42</sup>

Duke Humphrey's next heir was his grandson Henry, five years old. The dowager Duchess Anne, aunt of the new King, Edward IV, obtained favourable treatment in the matter of Stafford estates, few of which fell into the hands of royal "farmers", so that the financial consequences of Henry's minority were not as serious as they could have been.<sup>43</sup> The estates in Anne's custody were in fact run efficiently and profitably. However, the young Duke, although he was allowed to enter his inheritance early, entered the least productive part, particularly the Welsh and marcher lordships, for the richest lordships were in his mother's hands

as jointure.<sup>44</sup> His marriage could have brought no financial relief, for his bride was one of the Queen's portionless Wydeville sisters.<sup>45</sup> Rawcliffe suspects that the young Duke, an inexperienced landlord trying to make the most out of his recalcitrant Welsh lordships, had been overspending to an extent which the lands released by his grandmother's death could not counterbalance, and that his decision to join Richard of Gloucester was 'clearly influenced by the prospect of some rich reward'.<sup>46</sup> The reward duly came; Richard III granted Henry the moiety of the Bohun estates, to which the Staffords were heirs since the deaths of Henry VI and his son, and showered Welsh offices on the willing Duke.<sup>47</sup> In Richard's coronation procession, 'Buckingham's magnificence outshone everyone, his retainers all wearing the livery of the Stafford knot', but the cost of all this magnificence probably offset the financial benefits of Richard III's generosity.<sup>48</sup> Within months the glorious bubble had burst; Henry's rebellion and subsequent attainder scattered the Stafford estates.

Because of his long minority, the great Stafford inheritance had not long provided Duke Henry with all he could reasonably expect from it - a considerable income although not that postulated by the valors. Henry had profitted little from his close relationship to Edward IV; he received the occasional costly present, but few offices or lands.<sup>49</sup> How he spent his income is hard to trace. He had little time to become a builder,<sup>50</sup> and his children were too young at his death to have required the setting aside of marriage portions; presumably most of his money went on his household. His court upbringing, coupled with his own pride in his position, probably ensured that his domus magnificencie was suitably grand (and costly).<sup>51</sup> The cost of his household and retinue was further swollen when Edward IV's death cleared the way for Henry to assume a spectacular role in politics. Men flocked to the newly influen-

tial magnate as he backed Richard's bid for the Crown; 'never since the time of Warwick the King-maker, according to John Ross, had so many men worn a single badge'.<sup>52</sup> Such support was not purchased cheaply; neither his grandfather nor his son ever tried maintaining a following on such a grand scale.

The young Duke Edward was preserved from the wreckage of his father's fortunes; so, eventually were his estates, once the attainder on his father had been reversed by Henry VII.<sup>53</sup> That king was not particularly generously disposed towards a royal ward so rich and potentially so dangerous; heavy fines and recognizances ensured that he entered adult life under a financial cloud.<sup>54</sup> The young Duke, well taught by his guardian, Lady Margaret Beaufort, and her steward, Reginald Bray, did what he could to improve his income from land.<sup>55</sup> The household was reorganised for better economy; administrative reforms were carried through, and estate improvements; the Duke himself was directly involved in the management of his estates, as the memoranda prepared by his estate staff and the pages of accounts with his own signature bear witness.<sup>56</sup> Thrift was not incompatible with display; Duke Edward's immediate household was probably larger than his grandfather's, but better organisation meant that it probably cost less.<sup>57</sup>

Apart from the household, Duke Edward had the other usual claims on his income. His daughters had to be found financially sound and politically useful husbands; the outlay on his daughters made Duke Edward drive an extremely hard bargain for the marriage of his son.<sup>58</sup> Another conspicuous expense was on building, for Duke Edward, like Earl Ralph, was a bricks-and-mortar Stafford. Infrequently visited castles were indeed allowed to decay, but the Duke rebuilt his manor house at Bletchingley, adding to it 'an early example of that sixteenth century amenity of the rich, a long gallery for winter exercise';<sup>59</sup> and he

planned even greater things for his favourite Gloucestershire manor of Thornbury. It was to be a 'magnificent retreat where he could live in style and comfort', while the adjoining church was to be beautified and made collegiate.<sup>60</sup> During the years of building little expense was spared. Spacious ranges of service buildings, and a most handsome gatehouse, were begun; the state apartments were enriched with beautiful oriel windows of the very latest design; the ornate brick chimneys, expensive in themselves, were further enriched with costly moulded motifs; even the garden was to reflect the Stafford's magnificence, for one of the Duke's last recorded expenses was for the laying out of a knot-garden - in "Stafford Knots".<sup>61</sup> The house itself was probably well furnished; there are accounts for the purchase of at least one set of fashionable Flemish tapestries.<sup>62</sup> The Duke was also concerned with the mental furnishings of its inhabitants; he was willing to spend good money on the education of his family and dependants, providing them with good teachers and textbooks and access to his well-stocked library. The deserving and intelligent poor who came to his notice were also given educational assistance.<sup>63</sup>

Although the Duke was extremely careful with his money, he knew the value of magnificent display as a symbol of status. Generous hospitality and fine clothes impressed men; 'in this lethally competitive society he must impress men by his ostentation and attract them by his hospitality'.<sup>64</sup> Such entertainment was not necessarily costly; on the feast of the Epiphany in 1508 the Duke sat down five hundred and nineteen guests to dinner, and four hundred to supper, at a cost of twenty marks.<sup>65</sup> Fine clothes did cost rather more than fine food, but they could be re-used, and the Duke both enjoyed and exploited them. Careful budgetting and internal economies lay behind a series of the Duke's sartorial triumphs.<sup>66</sup> When Prince Arthur married Katherine of Aragon, Duke Edward's

costume of 'Needle work and set upon cloth of tissue, furred with sables' was said to be worth £1,500; a few years later the Duke's son shone in a magnificent royal retinue with his:

gown of cloth of tuissew, tukkyd, furryd with sabulles, a hatt of goldsmyth worke, and full of stons, dyamondes, and rubys, ryding apou a sorellyd courser bardyd with a bayrd of goldsmythes work, with rosys and draguns red.<sup>68</sup>

The expensive horses on which the nobles processed, jousted and rode to war had trappings as expensive and dazzling as their masters'; when Duke Edward accompanied Henry VIII to his 1513 meeting with the Emperor Maximilian, he was magnificent in purple, and his horse likewise,

his apparell and his barde full of antelopes and swannes of fyne gold bullion and full of spangyls and litell belles of gold mervelous costly and pleasant to behold.<sup>68</sup>

Such spectacular standards as Duke Edward set himself were not always easy to maintain, given the rather precarious balance of income and expenditure. Entertaining Henry VIII's court in style at Penshurst in 1519, and unwilling but magnificent participation in the festivities of the Field of the Cloth of Gold cost the Duke several thousand pounds on top of the usual expenses of his household.<sup>69</sup> The extra expenses, for which Henry VIII seems to have given no compensation, added to debts mounting a little too fast for comfort, but should have proved a temporary embarrassment. McFarlane believed that bankruptcy was staring the Duke in the face, but Rawcliffe points out that the Duke, on previous form, was quite capable of balancing the books in time. There was a major and long-term problem, the administration of

the Welsh estates to make them yield according to their capacity; it was the Duke's last attempt at direct exploitation of their resources which contributed directly to his downfall.<sup>70</sup>

Stone described Duke Edward as 'a man of towering strength, the like of which was never to be seen again', as one of the old nobility rooted in

his strategically located castles, his masses of retainers, his widespread territorial possessions, and his carefully cultivated patronage of the local gentry...his huge rent roll, his powerful connexions by marriage and his royal lineage.<sup>71</sup>

Mathew goes so far as to call him a 'mastodon'.<sup>72</sup> Yet Rawcliffe reminds us that although the Duke's patterns of expenditure were ostensibly similar to those of his ancestors, the emphasis was different. The men fee'd by his patronage were scholars, lawyers and clergymen rather than armed men; his building was for comfort as well as for defence; the Duke, 'urbane and cultivated', brought up in the Burgundian style of 'learned chivalry', also looked towards humanist educational ideals; and

if not ahead of his time, Duke Edward was clearly among the first English noblemen to whom the term "renaissance aristocrat" can properly be applied.<sup>73</sup>

## THE PRICE OF PATRONAGE

At a time when a skilled craftsman, such as a mason or a scribe, might expect to earn sixpence a day, when five pounds could maintain a chantry priest for a year, and ten to twenty pounds represented a knight's fee,<sup>1</sup> a manuscript book of any quality might well seem an 'extraordinarily expensive item'.<sup>2</sup> To a poor man, twenty pence could represent as large an investment of disposable income, time and effort in the acquisition of a text as the expenditure of twenty pounds by a richer gentleman.

All stages of a book's preparation and its subsequent maintenance involved expense, sometimes considerable; parchment (or paper), writing, illumination, binding, repair and refurbishment all had to be provided for, although the proportion spent on each process would vary considerably according to the book's contents and its destination in life.

Price units vary widely, with parchment priced by the skin or by the quire, writing costs by the leaf, quire, pecia or time, and decoration and binding costs by the complexity and quality required. As a rough guide, parchment cost about threepence for a quire of eight leaves (although the price varied according to size and quality); writing about three thousand words a shilling for the textura of most liturgical books, about six thousand words a shilling for the more current hand employed in university text-books, such as a group made for Peterhouse College, Cambridge, in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>3</sup> As for decoration, paraphs and simple capitals were priced - in pennies - by the score or the hundred.<sup>4</sup> The more expensive initials and border decoration, the multi-coloured champs, demi-vinets and vinets, were carefully counted and accounted for; the average price was probably in the same range as the fourpence per demi-vinet, twelve pence per 'hole vynet' charged to Sir

John Howard late in the fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup> A full-page miniature might easily cost as much as - or more than - the ten shillings charged for a full-page miniature destined for the sumptuous Lytlington Missal late in the fourteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Binding costs varied according to the predilections of the owner; the skin-covered boards provided for the group of Peterhouse texts cost two shillings apiece, while Westminster Abbey was charged 47s. 8d. for the binding of its showpiece Lytlington Missal, nodulis, broudura and all.<sup>7</sup> Henry VII, so often condemned as "miserly", was willing to pay no less than ten pounds to his librarian Quentin Poulet for 'claspes and garnyshyng of the Kinges boke'.<sup>8</sup> Books, as an expensive investment, were worth repairing; Exeter Cathedral spent several pounds of its library account on skins, string, glue and clasps needed for re-binding work in the fifteenth century,<sup>9</sup> while across the Channel, at the same period, Marie de la Tremouille paid five francs for the rebinding, regilding and cleaning of her grans heures and the addition of new sections to it.<sup>10</sup>

Recorded prices of books, both new and second-hand, range from a few pence to many pounds. At the expensive end of the scale cluster the great service-books. Usually large (expensive on skins), written in a handsome but time-consuming textura script, adorned with complex multi-coloured Calendars, garnished with at least coloured initials marking textual divisions, and provided with musical notation where required, they were naturally costly. The Lytlington Missal cost Westminster Abbey £34 14s. 4d.; Winchester in the fifteenth century had what must have been a splendid Portiphorium Magnum valued at twenty pounds.<sup>11</sup> Bibles, too, particularly those with glosses, might run to several volumes, and they were far from cheap. The Earl of March paid fifty marks for a Bible pro camera sua in 1374, and one of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester's multi-volume bibles was valued at ten pounds. His



two-volume English Bible, large, handsome and made specially for him, was valued at forty shillings.<sup>12</sup> A gorgeous Bible Hystoriaux en Fraunçois, captured in the French King's baggage at Poitiers in 1357, was snapped up by William, Earl of Salisbury for one hundred marks; he presented it to his wife, and she later directed her executors to sell it for forty pounds (which would have funded some generous pious benefactions).<sup>13</sup> Nor was it devotional works alone on which so much time, enterprise and money was expended. There are, occasionally, records of secular texts valued at a similar rate; Edward III paid one hundred marks for a book of romances to be kept in his chamber, and the Lord Mayor of London accepted a book of the romance of Alexander valued at ten pounds in satisfaction of a debt in 1381.<sup>14</sup>

These highly priced crème de la crème of book manufacture, floated on a layer of more modest productions. Not all service books were prohibitively expensive; there were plenty of poor religious foundations and parish churches whose requirements for liturgical texts were as pressing as those of their richer brethren, but who could not afford to pay high prices or rely on the chance benefactions of generous patrons.<sup>15</sup> Bell noted that missals could be obtained in the price range of two to ten pounds, antiphoners for five to ten pounds, which was more reasonable but still expensive.<sup>16</sup> The libri pro capella seized at Thomas, Duke of Gloucester's castle of Pleshey averaged four pounds at contemporary valuation, 'un large missale novel de velym bien escript & esluminez coverez de blanc quyre ove ii. claspes dargent endorrez' raising six pounds. Old psalters at Pleshey, of which there were several, were valued mostly in shillings rather than pounds; even one 'bien escript & esluminez ove claspes dargent endorrez' was valued at a mere 13s. 4d.<sup>17</sup> Portiphoria Antiqua in Winchester's collection were valued at one pound or less, compared to the twenty pound valuation set

on that new Portiphorium Magnum.<sup>18</sup> It is possible that such old, outmoded, superfluous but still serviceable volumes made their way on to the second-hand market, and provided another source of supply for those unable to afford high prices.

Textbooks, the domain of the university student and the studious cleric, tended to occupy this middling price range. In 1312, a Digestum vetus was sold privately for 22s. 6d; later Sempringham Priory seems to have been buying books second-hand, paying out one hundred shillings for a Bible concordance, twenty shillings for a miscellany of works by Augustine, Neckham and others, forty shillings for a Summa Confessorum.<sup>19</sup> A group of books destined for presentation to Peterhouse College, discussed by Bell, cost Master Dyngley between 42s. 7d. and 52s. 6d; the itemised bills on their flyleaves show that the writing was the most expensive unit, illumination (the bare necessities of paraphs and coloured capitals and the underlining of keywords) the cheapest.<sup>20</sup> The records of pledges for loans give some idea of current textbook prices. Allowing for the fact that sometimes values were inflated (to discourage pledging) or else set low (in case of forfeiture), and that loan lists do not give sufficient details of composite volumes, Bell reckoned the average values for some much-read texts. St. Gregory's Pastoralia could be relied on to fetch two to four shillings, the Historia Scholastica one pound to one pound ten shillings, De Civitate Dei one to two pounds.<sup>21</sup> A fifteenth century booklist on a flyleaf of Peterhouse College MS203, complete with what were presumably current valuations, reinforces Bell's conclusions; the range is from two shillings for a liber sintillarum to ten marks for Augustine super Iohannem, with a relatively obscure text, Acton super Evangelia, fetching eight marks, as much as a two-volume bible.<sup>22</sup> Students could sometimes obtain books second-hand; the goods of deceased scholars occasionally included un-

bequeathed books, which might be put up for sale, and from time to time duplicate copies or unfashionable texts would be cleared out from monastic libraries and put on the market.<sup>23</sup> A master or student could save even more money by copying a text out himself by the pecia system (often the only way of obtaining a text when hampered by shortage of copies as well as by shortage of cash).<sup>24</sup> Even so, his books were still a luxury. Chaucer's Clerk had a great need of rich friends if he aspired to a collection of 'twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed'.<sup>25</sup>

It is probably to this middling-to-expensive price range that the rather plain vernacular manuscripts of secular and religious texts belong which began to proliferate during the fifteenth century. Lydgate's Life of Our Lady, commissioned by Henry V, is a text whose many manuscripts fall mostly into this category.<sup>26</sup> They range in quality from poor through mediocre to good, and their owners ranged from gentry to (reputedly) Queen Margaret of Anjou.<sup>27</sup> Several manuscripts are extremely plain; parchment or paper, their decoration consists simply of pen-flourished capitals at textual divisions, the rubricating of textual apparatus, and the touching of capital letters with colour. Yet the great family of Bourghier was apparently not too proud to claim ownership of such a copy.<sup>28</sup> Some manuscripts rise to champ initials, demi-vinets or vinet borders at textual divisions; this probably added a few shillings to the total cost. A few manuscripts even run (or were intended to run) to miniatures; the survivors are not of the highest quality, and probably did not increase the costs out of due proportion.<sup>29</sup>

That gentlemen were prepared to spend a little in the pursuit of literary fashion, entertainment and edification, is suggested by what is known, for example, of the Pastons, the Knyvets and the Thwaites. Sir John Paston's "Grete Booke", as is well known, cost him twopence

a leaf for 'wrytyng of the Coronacion; and othir tretys of knyghthode', for the 'tretys of Werre', for 'Othea pistill', and for the 'Chalenges and the Acts of Armes'; 'De Regimine Principum' cost only one penny a leaf, which the scribe William Ebesham rightly thought it 'is right wele worth'. 'Rubrissheyng of all the booke' added another 3s 4d. to the total cost of twenty-seven shillings for this library in little of Sir John's interests. Yet Sir John owned more than this one book; his occasionally troubled finances had been stretched to acquire a 'Boke jn preente off þe Pleye off þe (Chess)', a 'boke off Troylus', some composite manuscripts of romances and poems (both edifying and entertaining); and several manuscripts still in 'quayerys' (spared the expense of binding), including Cicero and a 'Boke de Othea, text and glöse'.<sup>30</sup> The Thwaites and the Knyvets, two rather more respectable Norfolk families, seem to have been prepared to countenance similar, or even greater expense, when gratifying their tastes. Trinity College, Cambridge, MS 0.5.2. contains the fashionable Troy Book and Siege of Thebes in one section, the romance of Generydes in the other, the two parts probably united by a Thwaites-Knyvet marriage and given some extra decoration then. This book is provided with substantial illuminated borders and with miniatures, and clearly cost good money. Rearsall suggests that the numerous shields of arms served a similar purpose to a 'modern library stamp', and that the whole ensemble served as a 'symbol of social prestige for the rising Knyvet family, and thereafter a prized possession of the Thwaites'.<sup>31</sup> Money was worth spending in such a cause. In Trinity College MS 0.5.2. we find decorative commemoration of a marriage alliance not in a Book of Hours or a Psalter, but in a collection of secular texts. (On a more pious note, decoration added to another vernacular manuscript, but this one devotional, a copy of Nicholas Love's Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ, (National

Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 18.1.7) again served to commemorate a wedding. Added miniatures and shields (on a grand scale) raised the manuscript to a standard suitable for Edmund, fourth Lord Grey of Ruthin and Lady Catherine Percy, married in 1460<sup>32</sup>).

Books could be acquired even more cheaply than these comfortable gentlemen's comfortable libraries. The ownership of such cheap texts, valued at a few shillings, or even pence, was hardly confined to the poorer classes; most of the 'livres de divers rymances & Estoires' seized at Thomas, Duke of Gloucester's castle of Pleshey in 1397 were valued at less than twenty shillings. 'Un gros livre Fraunceys de Merlyn' was priced at 3s. 4d., 'la gest de Fouke filz Waryn' and 'Bartholomeus de proprietate rerum' at twenty pence. Even a volume noted as being 'tres bien esluminez' was rated at just 6s. 8d. These were second-hand values, and one suspects that some of the romances in particular, the Trojan and Arthurian stories and chansons de geste, may have been old family copies of a familiar kind, large, well-written, but plain, with little decoration beyond coloured capitals. They probably lacked even the simple miniatures of knights and ladies and battles such as those which enliven the Lancelot of Thomas's sister-in-law Mary (British Library MS Royal 20.D.IV).<sup>33</sup> Thomas's young relatives of Lancaster, who became even more celebrated bibliophiles, were taught to read from seven books of grammar bound together, bought for four shillings, and 'duobus libris de A.B.C.' costing 1s. 8d.; two branches of the royal family were certainly acquiring some of their reading matter cheaply, and so, presumably, were men and women less fortunate than they.<sup>34</sup> Parkes reminds us that although books were always, relatively speaking, a luxury, they might become a luxury poorer people could afford, for 'Increasing demand, better-organised production, cheaper handwriting and the introduction of paper' were leading in the long run to cheaper books.<sup>35</sup>

Even cheaper books could be acquired by those disinclined to afford the services of professionals, but literate and able to afford the time and effort involved in copying out desired texts for themselves, acquiring their exemplars presumably from friends and neighbours and collecting over a period of time items that took their fancy. So we find a fifteenth century Yorkshire gentleman, Robert Thornton, compiling a manuscript out of varied materials as they came into his hands,<sup>36</sup> a Lancashire gentleman copying out the Destruction of Troy and the Confessio Amantis (adapted to meet his requirements of the text) in the early years of the sixteenth century,<sup>37</sup> and one Humphrey Newton, a Cheshire gentleman, cramming his own poems and the Seying of the Nightingale into his "commonplace book".<sup>38</sup> It is debatable just how much of this "do-it-yourself" copying was done because of financial stringency, and how much from the necessity of catching a passing text while it was available and a professional scribe was not. Economy and expediency were probably combined in varying proportions on most occasions; economy probably weighed more heavily with needy English students in Italy,<sup>39</sup> expediency with men like the Spirlings of Norwich, father and son, the father a trained scrivener, who had a borrowed text of the Canterbury Tales in urgent need of transcription.<sup>40</sup>

The rates of pay for copying texts have come down to us in the form of occasional survivals in accounts and memoranda,<sup>41</sup> but the rewards for actually composing a work can rarely be traced. If the writer were a "free agent", the recipient might possibly be expected to make a donation sufficiently generous to cover out-of-pocket expenses and perhaps a little more besides.<sup>42</sup> As Green remarks,

it may be imagined that few authors would have been prepared to contemplate the considerable expense involved in the preparation of a suitable presentation

copy without a reasonable guarantee of some return  
for their investment.<sup>43</sup>

No wonder William Worcester was annoyed when Bishop Waynefleete ignored his attempt to present him with a copy of his translation of Cicero's De Senectute.<sup>44</sup> One hopes that Froissart fared better when he presented Richard II with a volume of his own poems,

illuminated, nicely written and illustrated, with a cover of crimson velvet with ten studs of silver gilt and golden roses in the middle and two large gilded clasps richly worked at their centres with rose trees.<sup>45</sup>

Surely the good canon and the widowed Christine de Pisan neither could nor would have afforded such handsome presentation copies of their works as they obviously did, without some hope of repayment from the crowned heads and aristocracy of Europe to whom they offered their writings. It seems their hopes were better founded than William Worcester's, but those in whom they put their trust were not always reliable.<sup>46</sup>

The expectation of some sort of ex gratia payment seems to have been prevalent even when the author was in orders, and so assured of some sustenance. Lucas points out that Abbot Whethamsted's payment for Lydgate's Life of St. Albon and St. Amphabell was well in excess of the most generous estimates of the cost of a presentation copy.<sup>47</sup> This was a commissioned work, however, and the commissioner had more of a moral obligation to be generous than the recipient of a speculative dedication. Capgrave found this out the hard way; he was probably lucky to have the cushion of his place in an Austin friary to support him when Duke Humphrey of Gloucester failed to respond (financially) to Capgrave's dedication of commentaries on Genesis and Exodus. Lucas estimates that even the presentation copies Capgrave wrote himself still cost several

shillings to produce, and those he had made professionally cost nearer one pound.<sup>48</sup>

If the author were a member of the dedicatee's household, as a cleric or secretary for example, it is quite likely that his writings, whether solicited or offered freely, were considered to be part of his job, and that his salary, board and lodging were considered to provide sufficient payment.<sup>49</sup> One suspects that Fastolf tried to behave in this niggardly way to Stephen Scrope and William Worcester.<sup>50</sup> But it is also possible that the recipient was as willing to pay for a household commissioned work of literature as for any other commissioned work of art, obtained from outside sources.<sup>51</sup> Even an uncommissioned work might be rewarded, if the recipient were sufficiently touched by the gesture or pleased by the contents. In such cases the writer might find his salary or annuity increased by a "bonus payment" or promotion, with gratitude expressed in pounds, shillings and pence. Writings commissioned from external sources were even more likely to require generous rewards. The commissioning of literature and the purchasing of books were expensive habits, requiring a sufficient income; at most stages of their career, and particularly in the fifteenth century, the Staffords had such an income.



## THE STAFFORDS' OWNERSHIP OF BOOKS

### (a) THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE:

The Staffords could certainly have afforded books; there is some evidence that they, their kin, and their friends did. This evidence comes from several sources: wills; inventories; documents such as accounts; "ownership" inscriptions in surviving manuscripts; heraldic devices and mottoes in surviving manuscripts; dedication pictures, written dedications and colophons. None of these sources is infallible.

Wills certainly have their uses in providing information about the ownership of books, but the information is often incomplete and frequently misleading, if not ambiguous. The descriptions of books bequeathed - even those frustrating "all my English books" bequests<sup>1</sup> - might well have been sufficient for executors confronted with the testator's whole "collection" from which to choose the appropriate volumes. However, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to identify precisely the texts bequeathed, so many centuries later. If by any chance the text itself can be identified, corroborative evidence is required in any attempt to locate the exact copy amongst any surviving manuscripts of that text.

Corroborative evidence from surviving manuscripts may also demonstrate that the testator actually owned a wider range of texts than the terms of the will might suggest. A volume might well contain several pieces but be named after the first or most important item in it.<sup>2</sup> Books could easily be passed on or promised during the testator's lifetime, and some might not have been thought worthy of mention in a document as serious as a will. The first reason may account for the survival of books belonging to Sir Thomas Chaworth and Anne, Lady Scrope which are not mentioned in their wills. Sir Thomas carefully allocated one Latin

and five English texts, and a group of service-books in his will. Yet two fine manuscripts both containing his coat of arms in their decoration (British Library MS Cotton Augustus A. IV of Lydgate's Troy Book and New York, Columbia University Library MS Plimpton 263, Trevisa's De Proprietatibus Rerum together with The Abbey of the Holy Ghost), show that he clearly possessed more books than his will alone would suggest.<sup>3</sup> Anne, Lady Scrope, according to her will of 1498, owned a quantity of liturgical books - a Psalter, primers, a missal, a 'booke of Prayers' - and also a mysterious 'Frenche boke' (contents unknown), together with the better-defined 'Frenche boke called the Pistill of Othea'. According to the evidence of a surviving manuscript, she also owned British Library MS Harley 4012, The Clensyng of Mannesowle with other English devotional writings.<sup>4</sup>

The second reason might account for the fact that 'Latin and devotional books probably are as much over-emphasised for testamentary purposes as vernacular and secular books are neglected'. Vernacular and secular books, often more cheaply produced than the handsome liturgical manuscripts, were perhaps thought literally not worth mentioning. Devotional books, edifying if not entertaining, 'were ideal gifts, since their use would simultaneously preserve the testator's memory and benefit his soul'.<sup>5</sup> Hence the large numbers of Psalters and Books of Hours given as heirlooms, and the service-books spread through the chapels and churches of the testator's acquaintance.

Inventories of household effects, and library catalogues, sometimes provide more useful book-lists. It is from inventories or similar lists that we derive the greater part of our knowledge of the books of Henry, Lord Scrope, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, Sir John Fastolf, Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lord John Howard, for instance.<sup>6</sup> Inventory lists are often more informative than the lists given in wills, although this

is not always the case - the inventory of John de Vere, thirteenth Earl of Oxford, for example, gives plentiful details of his handsome service-books but leaves us guessing about the nature of the contents of his 'chest full of frenshe and englisshe bokes'.<sup>7</sup> However, inventories usually do better than this, and provide useful information, such as the language, quality, condition, value, even the secundo folio of a text. Library catalogues provide similar details (although they frequently ignore the secondary contents of composite volumes) and may add useful information about a book's past history, such as the name of its previous owner or donor.<sup>8</sup>

Other contemporary documents, such as indentures and accounts, can also prove to be unexpected mines of information. Thus we know that John Stafford of Southwick, when Bishop of Bath and Wells, owned at least ten books because the agreement survives made between the Bishop and his Dean and Chapter, in which he promised them the ten books enumerated, retaining the use of them during his life. (That the same Bishop owned at least one other book, not mentioned in that list, is suggested by heraldic evidence).<sup>9</sup> Accounts, sometimes for the purchase of new books, sometimes for the repair of old, tell us most of what little we know about the books of Edward III and Richard II, and supplement our knowledge of the books of subsequent English monarchs and of lesser mortals.<sup>10</sup>

The evidence of wills and other documents, although incomplete and occasionally misleading, is at least some factual proof that at a given time a certain person had a certain volume in his or her possession. The evidence of ownership presented by surviving manuscripts is more ambivalent. "Ownership" inscriptions, for instance, are often difficult to assess. A "this is the book of..." type of inscription, carefully placed on a flyleaf, is reasonably definite, if a little scanty. It

implies possession, but, particularly in the case of a volume antedating the inscription by a "gap of time", it tells us little about how it came about, whether by inheritance, purchase or other means. Acquisition by gift is rather more likely to be recorded, and some ex dono inscriptions do imply gratitude on the part of the recipient; thus we know that William Montagu gave Thomas, Duke of Gloucester a copy of Brunetto Latini's Livre du Tresor and that Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick gave Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester a French translation of the Decameron, because the new owners had the gift recorded.<sup>11</sup> Records of family events, particularly the sequences of births and deaths added to the Calendars of Psalters and Books of Hours, locate a book in the hands of a particular family at a particular time, but again tell us little about how it reached that family. Mere signatures are even more fraught with difficulty. Carefully placed on a flyleaf, they may well be a deliberate and proud statement of possession, and a group of closely associated flyleaf signatures might suggest that the volume passed round a circle of family or friends, or acted as an album amicorum.<sup>12</sup> Scrawled in a margin, signatures can suggest anything from rather contemptuous familiarity with a book long in the household, to the "Kilroy was 'ere" kind of record of somebody who had the book temporarily in his hands but did not necessarily own it.

Heraldic devices and associated badges and mottoes might seem at first sight to offer more secure evidence for placing a manuscript in a family's possession, but again there are difficulties involved. If the shields, badges and mottoes form an integral part of the design of the page on which they occur, and there is no sign of overpainting, it is probably safe to assume that the manuscript was made for the person who bore those devices and wished to advertise the fact. From the 'boast of heraldry' it would be difficult to ignore Marshal Boucicaut's

ownership of his splendid Book of Hours, or Admiral Coëtivy's pride in his Hours; in a subtler fashion the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy made use of the decorative and significatory roles of heraldry in their sumptuous books.<sup>13</sup> Were it not for the generous and artistic sprinkling of shields in initials and border decoration, it would be next to impossible to associate the 'servus tuus Himfridus' of prayers in Oxford, Exeter College MS 47, Bodleian Library MS Auct D.4.4, and Vienna, National bibliothek Cod. 1826\* with Humphrey de Bohun, seventh Earl of Hereford, Essex and Northampton. The shields of this Humphrey and his noble kinsmen provide the evidence of ownership signally lacking in his will.<sup>14</sup> However, shields and devices could be - and often were - overpainted by those of later owners. This happened to the Coëtivy and Boucicaut Hours already cited; later owners might have equal pride in their newly acquired manuscripts, and Harthan suggests that in the case of liturgical manuscripts the alterations might also be made to ensure that 'divine favours... should be directed to present, not deceased, owners'.<sup>15</sup> Where the original devices can still be deciphered, the new devices may offer a fascinating insight into the passage of a manuscript from person to person, but where the obliteration is complete the earlier links in the chain are lost. We are often left with a discrepancy between the date of the manuscript and the date of its heraldry, and little or no knowledge of how the proud possessor had acquired his book. Nor is overpainting the only source of difficulty; devices could be added to pages they were never originally intended to grace. Shields squeeze into existing borders with more concern for the owner's pride than for the mise-en-page.<sup>16</sup> Again, they suggest the fact of acquisition without revealing its details. Deliberate imposition of heraldic devices, whether as part of the original design or as a late addition, does not seem to be symbolic of the pride of any particular social group. Both

the "upwardly mobile" and princes of the blood can be found scattering their heraldry through the pages of their manuscripts. The survival of a manuscript like Bodleian Library MS Digby 232 of Lydgate's Troy Book, with a once-blank shield left in a border and now containing the inked-in coat of the Vintner's Company, suggests that even customers who bought "off the peg" were expected to be armigerous.<sup>17</sup> The presence of heraldic devices, which seem to function as a glorious "library stamp", may be taken, then, to denote acquisition, but not necessarily commission of the manuscript in which they occur, and perhaps pride in its possession.

Dedicatory verses and colophons, and "dedication pictures" also come in various shades of reliability. Verses and colophons usually give useful information about the circumstances in which a work was produced, and suggest that the piece reached the dedicatee's hands as intended. Since the original presentation copy, attested by other evidence such as marks of ownership or a presentation miniature, does not always survive, this cannot be taken for granted. The fate of Martin le Franc's poem Le Champion des Dames is a salutary warning; he prepared as fine a copy as he could afford for presentation to that 'noted ... bibliophile' Philip the Good of Burgundy, but the Duke ignored it and his courtiers used the unfortunate volume as a footstool.<sup>18</sup> There are different problems when a work survives in several copies with separate dedications to different persons. Sometimes this is the result of political changes affecting the dedicatee or dedicator, which rendered the original dedicatee persona non grata; this may lie behind Gower's changes of direction in his Confessio Amantis or Rous's transfer of loyalty in his chronicle, for example.<sup>19</sup> On other occasions, multiple dedications might have been tried simply in the hope of multiple reward; Christine de Pisan seems to have done this, and so, by chance, does one

of her translators, Stephen Scrope.<sup>20</sup> Dedications do usually reflect a certain amount of self-interest; if they do not record details of an actual commission, they might suggest that the recipient was expected to have an interest in what was offered, or at least to be flattered by it, and disburse rewards accordingly.

"Presentation" miniatures of the author presenting his manuscript to his commissioner or his chosen recipient can be even more difficult to assess than their written counterparts. Partly because they sometimes represent little more than a visual cliché, convenient for the artist as a stereotyped embellishment, and partly because they may represent wishful thinking on the part of the author, there is no guarantee that a manuscript with a presentation miniature is the actual copy presented or that the presentation scene even took place.<sup>21</sup> Corroborative evidence, such as marks of ownership, inventory details or records of rewards, is required for greater surety. However, such miniatures testify to a feeling that the work in question was worth offering, and convey a sense of the milieu for which the book was destined, which was flattering for those who obtained copies. Dr. Lawton points out that :

since illustrations of presentation occur in non-presentation copies, other readers enjoyed the knowledge that their tastes were shared by someone else with the wealth and prestige to be a dedicatee.<sup>22</sup>

Sir John Fastolf seems to have seen no reason to have the scene of presentation and lines of dedication to the Duke of Berry changed or removed from his own copy of the Epître d'Othéa; what was good enough for Berry was good enough for him. It is from other evidence that we know Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 570 was his copy, and not Berry's.<sup>23</sup>

The various kinds of evidence offered by surviving manuscripts can be taken as a guide to ownership, and occasionally as a record of a

commission, but further evidence is usually needed for safe attribution of ownership. In a similar manner, the evidence proffered by wills and other documents needs to be backed by visual evidence if the text in question is to be located amongst surviving copies. Since both types of evidence rarely occur together, the attribution of manuscripts to members of the Stafford family and certain of their close kinsfolk is necessarily cautious.



## (b) THE SCOPE OF THE SURVEY:

Each member of the main line of the Stafford family, from Earl Ralph to Duke Edward, and certain of their immediate kin, who is known to have owned books or have been the object of a literary dedication, is represented in the following list. In the term "main line" are included the head of the family, his wife, and his siblings, together with their wives or husbands, in each generation. Cadet branches are usually followed for one generation; cadet branches which diverged from the main Stafford line well before the period covered by this survey, such as the various Stafford lines of Hooke, Blatherwycke, Grafton and Southwick, are therefore not given special consideration. Once a daughter has married out of the family, her own books and interests, and those of her husband, will be considered; those of her other relatives by marriage, and of her children, will not usually be brought into the discussion. When a son brings a wife into the family, however, the books and interests of her parents may well need consideration as representing an infusion of new tastes and styles. If the net were cast any wider it would draw in half the noble families of England, for by the fifteenth century most of them were more or less closely interrelated with the Staffords. One family, that of Bourgchier, is included as a special case, however. Anne, Countess of Stafford, took Sir William Bourgchier, Count of Eu, as her third husband, and her Bourgchier children and grandchildren were kin of the half-blood to the Staffords. Their choice of manuscripts and their literary activities provide a useful comparison and contrast with those of their relatives.

The manuscripts of each person considered are described. The evidence for ownership is discussed under the following categories: (i) wills; (ii) inventories; (iii) other documents; (iv) marks of ownership; (v)

heraldic devices; (v) dedication pictures, written dedications and colophons. An account is given of the manuscripts' artistic, scribal or textual affiliations, if known, and their implications. In the case of literary dedications, the relevant section is extracted. If the attribution of a particular manuscript is highly dubious, the description is kept more general and the evidence, such as it is, discussed briefly.

Since the ownership of manuscripts might be but one aspect of an interest in the good things of life (and of pride in the family's ability to afford and commission such things), some notice may be taken of a person's other known "cultural" activities, the tastes which kept goldsmiths and jewellers, embroiderers and tapestry weavers, architects, builders, glaziers and gardeners in profitable business, and had deserving children educated and pious foundations maintained, enlarged and beautified. When these inclinations were strong enough to provoke a Stafford to original composition, and the results still survive, these too are discussed.

(c) SURVEY OF THE STAFFORDS' BOOK OWNERSHIP 1372 - 1521:

1. Ralph, 1st Earl of Stafford

m. 1 Katherine Hastang

2 Margaret Audley

d. 1372.

No surviving MSS.

Putative ownership of MSS

Evidence of (ii) Inventory record: Ralph may have been the owner of 'a missal formerly of the earl of Stafford' found amongst the forfeited goods of Ralph's kinsman Thomas Beauchamp, 4th Earl of Warwick, in 1397.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript might have been given to the Beauchamps when Ralph's son Hugh married Philippa Beauchamp, Thomas's sister. However, since Hugh had also died by the time of Thomas Beauchamp's forfeiture, he would also have been referred to in the past tense, and it is possible that the missal was his wedding-gift to his brother-in-law.

Presumably the missal had some distinguishing features that marked it out as of Stafford provenance, for Beauchamp's other missals were differentiated by the colours of their bindings. It seems to have been a luxury liturgical manuscript of the kind which achieved "heirloom" status.

Other interests

Architecture: Ralph built himself a compact and stylish new castle at Stafford, which served the functions of a strategic fortification and a splendid symbol of the Staffords' enhanced status.<sup>2</sup>

Learning and Piety: Ralph seems to have funded at least two pious foundations, the chapel of St. Leonard by Forebridge beside Stafford and an Austin friary within the town.<sup>3</sup> He also 'appropriated' the earlier Stafford foundation at Stone, the priory dedicated to St. Wulfhad.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Beatrice Stafford

Daughter of Ralph, 1st Earl of Stafford and Margaret Audley.

- m. 1 Maurice, Earl of Desmond
- 2 Thomas, Lord Roos of Helmsley
- 3 Sir Richard Burley.

d. 1414.

No surviving MSS.

### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Will: Beatrice's will refers briefly to her chapel books amongst the other furnishings of her chapel:

residuum omnium vestimentorum, necessariorum, et librorum, et aliorum ornamentorum ad capellam meam pertinencium, volo quod distribuatur et dividatur ad usum ecclesiasticum, et ad diversa loca indigentia,<sup>5</sup>

### Other interests

Plate and jewellery: Beatrice's daughter-in-law Mary, who predeceased her, bequeathed Beatrice 'ii coclearia deaurata, et unum annulum cum 1e dyamand'. Beatrice's son William left his mother 'unum ciphum deauratum coopertum cum j. knop albo'. Beatrice herself left William by her will 'duas pelves argenti deauratas, unum ciphum argenti cum cooperculo, vocatum Fawconberge' - unfortunately he had predeceased her by a few months and never received her gifts. William's wife Margaret was to have 'unum ciphum argenti deauratum cum cooperculo, quem habui de dono Willelmi Domini de Roos filii mei'. Beatrice's daughter Elizabeth, Lady Clifford was bequeathed 'unam magnam peciam cum vij. peciis introclusis, vocatum magnum boll.' Beatrice's granddaughter Matilda Clifford was left 'unam peciam argenti deauratum cum cooperculo' (given to Beatrice by her son John) and 'unam pelvem argenti rotundam minorem pro camera mea, cum ewers argenti eidem pertinentibus'. Beatrice's

large collection of plate included several more fine cups, some of them engraved with birds and branches.<sup>6</sup>

Tapiserie, embroidery, etc.: Beatrice left some handsome altar furnishings and vestments to favoured churches. Her son William was to have received 'unum lectum integrum blodium cum tapetis pertinentibus, operatis cum albis rosis et armis de Roos et Stafford' - a handsome gift to remind William of his noble descent.<sup>7</sup>

Learning and piety: Beatrice made a number of pious benefactions in her will; during her lifetime she obtained a licence to found a chantry in St. Paul's Cathedral, where masses were to be said for the souls of her second and third husbands.<sup>8</sup> Beatrice's son William wished his children to be 'eruditi et docti in disciplina et gramatica' by one of the chaplains of the chantry he had established at Belvoir; he may have been following his mother's example or an older Roos tradition in this.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Joan Stafford.

Daughter of Ralph, 1st Earl of Stafford, and Margaret Audley.

m. 1. John, Lord Charlton of Powys.

2. Gilbert, Lord Talbot (d. 1387).

d. c.1397.

#### Putative ownership of MSS

The 'Rutland Psalter', now British Library MS Addit 62925:

Brief description:<sup>10</sup> the 'Rutland Psalter' is a large mid-thirteenth century psalter, with added prayers at the end, and extremely handsome.

Millar thought that it 'stands in a class by itself among English manuscripts, both in quality and the abundance of its decoration and in its style.'<sup>11</sup>

It is lavishly decorated, with a full-page Beatus initial, six more full-page miniatures, eight large historiated initials, one large illuminated initial, and a quantity of marginal drawings and grotesques amongst the border decoration. Some of the miniatures may have been pasted in. After f.112, the decoration is carried out on a less sumptuous scale; Millar suggested that the death of the original patron was responsible for this economy. The additions on ff.169-190, less well written, are decorated with three-line initials in gold and colours, and smaller initials in blue with red penwork decoration, and red with blue decoration.

History and provenance: Evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: Millar suggested, on the basis of an obit added to the Calendar in a mid-thirteenth century hand for 'domini Edmundi de Laci' that this Psalter was originally executed for Edmund Lacy, Earl of Lincoln (d. 1258) or a member of his family. Edmund Lacy was of the requisite 'considerable standing to have been able to commission such a book'.<sup>12</sup> The history of the psalter is then a blank until c.1356; the Calendar contains an erased obit for 'domini Ricardi Talebot domini de Irchenfeld

& castris godrici anno domini M<sup>o</sup>CCCLVI<sup>to</sup>, i.e. Richard, 2nd Baron Talbot, 1302-1356. His son Gilbert Talbot married firstly Pernel Butler, granddaughter of Humphrey de Bohun, 4th Earl of Hereford, and Elizabeth of England, and it is possible that the Psalter may have come to the Talbots by way of the Bohuns and Butlers, but there is no evidence for this. Richard was probably responsible for the addition of his father's obit, and it was probably his second wife Joan, née Stafford, who was responsible for the additions on ff. 169-190. These, in a late fourteenth - early fifteenth century hand, include the Hours of the Trinity and of the Virgin; 'Stella celi extirpavit'; Latin verses on the Seven Joys of the Virgin and 'ad ymaginem cruxifixum'; Bede's Prayer on the Seven Words; the Litany for the days of the week; the Office of the Dead; and prayers for 'Johannam famulam tuam' and the soul of her husband (now defunct). Several of these texts are familiar components of Books of Hours and suggest that an attempt was being made to adapt the Psalter for use as a combined Psalter and Book of Hours.<sup>13</sup> 'Johannam' was presumably the moving force behind these additions. The presence of the obit for Richard Talbot suggests that she was a Talbot lady, and Joan, née Stafford is the most likely candidate. The only other Joan who married a Talbot in the period when the additions were made, Joan of Gloucester, who married Gilbert, 5th Lord Talbot (d. 1418), predeceased her husband. The Talbots seem to have been in the habit of adding their names to earlier manuscripts; another thirteenth century Psalter at Belvoir contains the obits of the second and third Earls of Shrewsbury (1460 and 1473).<sup>14</sup>

The evidence is tenuous, but it suggests that Joan Stafford took an active, and perhaps pleasurable, interest in a beautiful early Psalter acquired in unknown circumstances by her husband's family, and made it peculiarly her own.

#### 4. Hugh, 2nd Earl of Stafford

m. Philippa Beauchamp, d. of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick,  
and Katherine Mortimer.

d. 1386.

No surviving MSS.

##### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Will: Michael la Pole, Earl of Suffolk (d. 1415)  
who had married Katherine, daughter of Hugh, bequeathed her:

unum parvum librum cum tabulis argenteis et deauratis cum  
uno diademate, qui nuper fuit comitis Staffordie, patris  
sui.<sup>15</sup>

The book was obviously handsome and expensive, and probably liturgical.  
It may have been Hugh's gift on the occasion of his daughter's marriage,  
subsequently transmitted as an heirloom.

##### Putative ownership of MSS

Evidence of (ii) Inventory record: see above, under "Ralph, 1st  
Earl of Stafford."

##### Other interests

Plate and jewellery: Earl Hugh made some last gifts of jewellery  
to his sisters and daughters in the codicils to his will. Hugh's sister  
Beatrice received 'a gold ring with a little diamond', while his sister  
Joan was to have 'a large gold ring with a karrect'. To his daughter  
Margaret went a 'large gold ring, with a great diamond set therein';  
Katharine was to have 'a fermail of knots' (the Stafford badge put to  
artistic use!); Joan was bequeathed a fashionable 'golden fermail with  
a heart'. Hugh's eldest surviving son, Thomas, was left a special re-  
membrance, Hugh's fine Italian chain-mail, French helmet, and 'sword  
made at Turenne which Sir Ralf Ferrers gave me'.<sup>16</sup>

Hugh's wife Philippa, who predeceased him, had made her own con-



tribution to the Staffords' fine stock of plate and jewellery. Her mother had bequeathed her a 'bowl with a cover';<sup>17</sup> her father gave her a covered cup, and:

an ouche called the Eagle, which the Prince gave me,  
all my pearls, and a cross made of the very wood of our  
Saviour's cross, a ring with an emerald, which my  
Countess bequeathed to me, another ring which she  
herself may choose, a set of beads of gold with buckles  
which the Queen gave me, the choice of one of my cups  
of gold, with the silver bowl, which I always used  
myself.<sup>18</sup>

Tapisserie and embroidery: Philippa's family also contributed to the Staffords' furnishings; her father left her the valuable gift of 'my best bed, with all the furniture'.<sup>19</sup>

Learning and piety: Hugh's will left complex instructions for his funeral arrangements if he died in England; it was to be celebrated with little pomp but with much generosity to the poor, and followed by many masses for the souls of himself, his immediate family, his benefactors and 'all Christians'. The codicil added before he left England on pilgrimage modified the programme, asking that three priests be found to celebrate masses for his soul, near the place of his burial, for three years after his decease.<sup>20</sup>

Like several other campaigners in the French wars, Earl Hugh seems to have come under the influence of Robert Waldeby, Austin friar and administrator of Aquitaine: like them, he was persuaded to found an Austin friary. Hugh's foundation was at Newport, and was the only Austin friary in Wales.<sup>21</sup>

5. Katharine Stafford, Countess of Suffolk

Daughter of Hugh, 2nd Earl of Stafford, and Philippa Beauchamp.

m. Michael de la Pole, 2nd Earl of Suffolk (d. 1415).

No surviving MSS.

Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills: Katharine's husband bequeathed her the 'parvum librum' described above, and also 'unum magnum primarium, habendum ad terminem vite sue'.<sup>22</sup> As often happened, the volumes mentioned in Michael's will are valuable liturgical books treasured as family heirlooms.

Other interests

Architecture, etc.: Katharine may have been responsible for the erection of the 'eminently beautiful' memorial to herself and her husband at Wingfield.<sup>23</sup>

6. Joan Stafford, Countess of Kent

Daughter of Hugh, 2nd Earl of Stafford.

m. Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent.

d. 1442.

Surviving MSS

Tokyo, Takamiya MS 8 (private ownership).<sup>24</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: first quarter of the fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: 1. Nicholas Love's Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ.  
2. 'a schorte tretys of þe hyzeste and moste worþi sacrament of cristes blessed body and þe merveyles ther off'.
- (c) Material: vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: Unascertained.
- (e) Number of leaves: 124 +i
- (f) Collation: 1<sup>4</sup>, then regular in 8's, Catchwords.
- (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: one bastard Anglicana hand.<sup>25</sup>
- (i) Decoration: the manuscript appears to be large and handsome, and carefully presented. A table of contents and a decorative hierarchy for textual divisions aid location of passages. Textual apparatus, such as references and comments, is placed in the margins, preceded by a paraph. The start of the text proper (after the Table of Contents) is signalled by a full vinet border,<sup>26</sup> consisting of bars of gold and colours from which short stiff sprays, dotted with stylized four-petalled, kidney-shaped or spoon-shaped flowers, and gold ivy-leaves, emerge at intervals. The corners break out into larger clumps of coloured ornament.

Major textual divisions are marked by demi-vinets,<sup>27</sup> consisting of a bar of gold and colours attached to a decorated initial; the bar breaks into feathery scrolls of coloured ornament and penwork sprays at top and bottom.

Secondary divisions are marked by champs,<sup>28</sup> sprays of penwork adorned with gold ivy-leaves, bell-flowers and coloured drops, springing from the decorated initials.

The overall effect of the ornamented pages is rich but rather stiff, similar to some of the early decorated copies of the Canterbury Tales.<sup>29</sup>

- (i) History and provenance; evidence of (iv) Marks of Ownership: At the conclusion of the text on f.124<sup>v</sup> is the inscription 'þis booke is zuyffyne to Alyse Belacyse : Be þe zuyfft of Iohane Countesse of Kentt'. The inscription, which begins with a fine penworked initial, is written in an anglicana hand similar to that of the text, and is probably the work of a trained scribe rather than Joan's writing. The only Countess of Kent named Joan during the fifteenth century was Joan, daughter of Hugh, 2nd Earl of Stafford and wife of Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent (Richard II's nephew). The Belacyse (or Belasis) family seems to have held lands in north-eastern England.<sup>30</sup>

There is some corroborative external evidence that Joan Stafford could well have been this manuscript's original owner. Her husband was the founder of Mountgrace Charterhouse in North Yorkshire; Nicholas Love, author of the Myrroure, was Prior of Mountgrace 1410 - 1421, and probably wrote the work there c. 1410.<sup>31</sup> A handsome copy of the Myrroure, such as this one certainly is, would have made a fitting gift for the founder's widow. Alternatively, Joan may have taken an interest in the literary productions

of her husband's foundation, and requested a copy of the Myrroure for herself. Later in the century, other noble laymen and women, such as Edmund, 4th Lord Grey of Ruthin and Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, seem to have followed her example.<sup>32</sup>

The inscription tells us that the Countess of Kent owned the Takamiya MS and gave it to Alice Belacyse; there is no other internal evidence to bolster the ascription to Joan Stafford, but external evidence supports it. What the inscription does not reveal is whether Joan acquired the book by gift or commission, but it suggests that she valued it enough to record the transfer of ownership.

Affiliations: Once the Myrroure had been approved for circulation by Archbishop Arundel in 1410, copies multiplied rapidly, and display 'a striking agreement among them with regard to form and quality', and textual accuracy.<sup>33</sup> Love's Myrroure was useful for countering Lollard attacks on the Sacrament, and as 'an enlarged and commented account of Christ's Life, in English' it could be recommended for use by all classes, both secular and religious. Dr. Doyle views the book as:

one of the best examples - and agents - of that broadening community of the pious reading public which is one of the most important facts in the literary and social history of England'.<sup>34</sup>

Countess Joan, whether by her own volition or persuaded by the gift, seems to have joined this 'broadening community'.

\* Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Will: Elizabeth, Dowager Countess of Kent, left Joan 'a small missal and a large legend'.<sup>40</sup> Neither volume seems to have survived.

2. British Library MS Cotton Vitellius F.VII<sup>35</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: early fourteenth century.
- (b) Contents: 1. French translation of the Ancrene Riwe.  
2. 'vn autre deuout et long tretitz' on the pains of purgatory and joys of heaven.  
3. 'vn autre tretitz mout notable de confort en tribulaciouns', a translation of 'De xii utilitatibus tribulationis'.  
4. 'vn lyure que est appele le pastrel seynt Gregoire'.  
5. 'diuerses oreisouns et meditaciouns'.<sup>36</sup>
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins. x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins. (22 x 16cm). (Largest surviving leaf: MS badly fire-damaged).
- (e) Number of leaves: 164.
- (f) Collation: Probably in 12's, but certainty impossible because of fire damage.
- (g) Layout: Double column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: One scribe for text, writing a neat textura hand. Table of contents added later in a different, current hand
- (i) Decoration: The book was, before damage, a neat, modest piece of work. Rubric was used for paraphs, headings, and underlinings; two line initials in red or blue, and champs of red with violet penwork, or blue with red penwork, mark minor divisions. More important divisions are signalled by larger initials in blue or red with intricate penwork infills in red or violet.

History and Provenance: Evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: on f.164, a badly damaged leaf, otherwise blank, are the remains of a fifteenth century inscription: "...m duchesse de Gloucestre du doun d(e)... Kent ...plesance. Al en vn'. The Duchess of Gloucester in question was the notorious Eleanor Cobham, whose motto was 'Al en vn' and whose husband Humphrey began building the palace of 'Plesauce' at Greenwich in 1433<sup>37</sup>. They were living there when Eleanor was accused of sorcery in 1441. The manuscript was apparently given to Eleanor by an earl or countess of Kent, and between 1433 and 1441 the only candidate for the role is Joan Stafford, dowager Countess of Kent. From the date of the manuscript Joan must have acquired it second-hand, by gift, inheritance or purchase. In this context it may be worth noting that Joan's ancestresses included a fourteenth-century anchoress, Katherine Audley, and Maud of Clare, who may have been the owner of British Library Ms Cotton Cleopatra C.VI, one of the earliest copies of the English Ancrene Riwe.<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to find a version of the Ancrene Riwe still circulating amongst noble laywomen in the mid-fifteenth century, and making an acceptable present from one noblewoman to another.

Affiliations: There was another independent translation of part of the Ancrene Riwe into French, which survives in a manuscript of similar date, Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.14.7. In this case, however, the translation was incorporated into a longer treatise, rather than remaining as a separate item. The 'tretitz mout notable de confort en tribulacions' was a French translation of a popular and widespread Latin work, which was also twice translated into Middle English<sup>39</sup>; the Cotton Manuscript clearly provided a useful compilation of durable devotional literature in accessible vernacular translations.

\*

7. Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter

Younger son of Sir Richard Stafford of Clifton (brother of Ralph, 1st Earl of Stafford) and Isabel Vernon.<sup>41</sup>

Doctor of Civil Laws (Oxford) by 1385; Bishop of Exeter 1395; Keeper of the Privy Seal (1389 - 1396); Chancellor (1396 - 1399, 1401 - 1403); d. 1419.<sup>42</sup>

Surviving MSS

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson c. 606.

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Late fourteenth - early fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: De Speculo Regis, ascribed to Archbishop Simon Islip, Second Recension.<sup>43</sup>
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 7 x 5 inches (18 x 13 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: i + 33 + i
- (f) Collation: Apparently i + a - c<sup>12</sup> (c wants 8, 10, 11 - stubs remain).
- (g) Layout: Single column prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: one neat anglicana hand.
- (i) Decoration: Headings are written in blue, rather than the more usual red ink, and the ensemble is very handsome. The volume opens with a full border, composed of bars of gold and colours, adorned with fleurons in blue, rose, crimson and scarlet, and penwork sprays touched with green. The four corners consist of shields surrounded by coloured fleurons (see below). Offsets suggest that f.34 (in the current foliation) once adjoined a page adorned with a similar border. Textual divisions are marked by gold initials on blue or rose grounds, from which spring small champs of penwork sprays. Paraphs are of gold with violet penwork.



History and provenance; evidence of (y) Heraldic devices: The shields in the border of f.1<sup>n</sup> are those of Edmund Stafford and his kin: Stafford, Stafford differenced with three martlets sable, and Stafford differenced with a bordure azure semee of six mitres or (the arms found on Bishop Edmund's tomb). The fourth shield has been obscured. The shields form an integral part of the border design, and point clearly to Bishop Edmund as the owner of the book, and probably its commissioner.

Later in the fifteenth century the MS. was in the hands of Robert Sandes, who wrote 'Constat Roberto Sandes constat' on f.33<sup>r</sup>. ' - Saunders' was a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, 1479 - 1486,<sup>44</sup> a foundation of which Bishop Edmund was a generous benefactor; it is possible that he gave the MS. to the college library, or to his cathedral, which later passed it on to the college.

Affiliations: The Speculo Regis seems to have circulated in two recensions during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (and on into the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries - two of the ten surviving manuscripts are post 1500).<sup>45</sup> The Rawlinson text is of the second recension. It appears to be the most handsome, which suggests that Bishop Edmund had a fondness for fine books and liked even his working texts to look attractive.

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills: In his will Bishop Edmund mentions books bought at a sale of goods forfeited by the late Thomas, Duke of Gloucester:

Item volo quod omnes libri quos habui ex empcione de bonis quondam domini Thome ducis Gloucestrie vendantur et precium inde receptum per executores meos pro ipsius ducis anime ac mei et omnium fidelium defunctorum

animarum salute et pios usus distribuator.<sup>46</sup>

An annotated copy of part of the Essex Escheator's account now in the Staffordshire County Record Office,<sup>47</sup> reveals that Bishop Edmund purchased some of the books which had graced the ducal chapel at Pleshey. (Unfortunately, and most tantalisingly, the document does not include the duke's secular books, except for a marginal note that Geoffrey Colet, clerk, had bought himself the 'Dicta poetarum' and the 'Speculum humane saluationis', and a brief final note that Innocent had bought 'ii liures de launcelot' and a Polychronicon - all items which can be traced in the 'Liures de diuers rymances et Estories' recorded in the full inventory).<sup>48</sup> The bishop treated himself to a fine three-volume Bible and a large new missal. It is possible that the bishop, as Chancellor, had been offered a choice of Duke Thomas's books, for several other books, together with a selection from the fine tapestries and beds, were bought by other government officials. (It was interesting to discover that they often paid more than the valuation; Bishop Edmund gave £10 for the missal valued at £6, for instance.)<sup>49</sup>

Edmund left his cathedral a 'magnum missale' in his will.<sup>50</sup> His executors assigned four of his books to Exeter College, Oxford in 1422. In 1457 the college was paying for their rebinding.<sup>51</sup>

Evidence of (ii) Inventory records: An inventory of Exeter Cathedral goods made in 1506 notes that Bishop Edmund had given a Manual, two Antiphoners, two Graduals, a book on the offices of a Bishop, and a three-volume Bible.<sup>52</sup>

Evidence of (iii) other documents: Bishop Lacy's Register recorded that his predecessor gave Exeter College, Oxford 'books for divine service in its Chapel...and books for the library', and that Edmund's executors had also been generous to the college.<sup>53</sup>

Own writings: New College, Oxford, MS 179, which appears to be a

lawman's working copy of useful texts, contains, amongst other items, 'Edmund Stafford, doctoris Juris Civilio, Repetitiones in Digestorum' - clearly some of the fruits of Bishop Edmund's training in the law.<sup>54</sup>

#### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery: In his will, Bishop Edmund left Exeter Cathedral 'ii pelves meas cum armis deauratis'. The Archbishop of Canterbury received 'unam ymaginem argenteam deauratam figuram beate Virginis Marie'; William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, was given 'unum ciphum deauratum cum suo cooperculo cum litteris x. insculptum', Edmund's nephew Thomas was to have 'unum ciphum argenteum cum coopercula Archer nuncupatum'.<sup>55</sup>

The 1506 inventory of Exeter Cathedral goods records some gifts of plate from Bishop Edmund:

alia crux argentea et deaurata cum magno pede, cum iij leonibus, cum rosis amelatis, cum xxij margaritis; supportata cum iij columnis, cum Crucifixo, Maria et Johanne, de dono Edmundi Stafford quondam episcopi ... due pelves argentee et deaurate cum armis Edmundi Stafford in fundo, ex dono ejusdem.<sup>56</sup>

Tapiserie and embroidery: Edmund's nephew Thomas received:

unum lectum de serico videlicet coopertum tam cum testura, celura, curtinis et tapeto ac costeris pro camera, aulam meam cum armis patris mei inbraudatum.<sup>57</sup>

Exeter Cathedral was given some fine sets of vestments:

- i. casula rubea cum ij. tuniculis ac toto apparatu de panno aurea, cum galeis albis coronatis cum viridibus coronis vocata Stafford Sewte, ex dono ejusdem, 1e orfreis de opere acauli
- ... j. principalis capa ejusdem panni cum orfreis de opere acauli, ex dono ejusdem
- ... ij. cape ejusdem panni et secte, cum blodio orfreis de leonibus et hyndes aureis

... j. capa, ij. tunicule ejusdem panni et operis per totum, cum  
ij. stolis, iij. fanonibus, iij. amictis et tribus albis, cum  
paruris ejusdem panni.<sup>58</sup>

Architecture, etc: At Exeter Cathedral Edmund was responsible for most of the building work on the cloisters (now gone); his main surviving work was carried out in the Cathedral's Magdalen Chapel.<sup>59</sup> In that chapel lies his 'truly splendid alabaster effigy', with an 'elaborate canopy'; the tomb was adorned with figures of prophets and shields commemorating Stafford friendships and alliances. Bishop Stafford may have been responsible for the glazing of the East window of the chapel; his figure is seen in the centre light, kneeling in prayer, while a label bears the prayer 'Sancta Maria Magdalena, intercede pro me'. Edmund also founded a chantry to pray for the souls of his King and his kinsmen.<sup>60</sup>

At Oxford, Edmund's contribution to Exeter College for work on the chapel, hall and west gate cost him two hundred marks.<sup>61</sup>

8. Anne, Countess of Stafford

Daughter of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester and Eleanor de Bohun.

- m. 1. Thomas, 3rd Earl of Stafford.
- 2. Edmund, 5th Earl of Stafford.
- 3. Sir William Bourgchier, Count of Eu.
- d. 1438

Putative Ownership of MSS

(a) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson, c. 711

Brief description: This plain fourteenth century volume of Miraculi Christi and Expositiones super libros. Vet. et Noy. Test. bears the inscription 'liber M. Thome Graunt, emptus per eundem in domicilio domine Anne comitisse Staffordie'. Master Graunt was probably that Herefordshire Thomas Graunt noted by Emden who became Senior Proctor of Oxford in 1430, later Precentor of St. Paul's.<sup>62</sup> The handwriting and the general tenor of the inscription accord with those in other manuscripts of Graunt's, such as Oxford, Oriel College MS 55 and British Library MS Addit. 22572. Presumably Graunt acquired the Rawlinson MS whilst in Countess Anne's household, but what position he held there (if any) is not known. Nor can one tell how the manuscript came to be available to him; it may have been sheer chance that he acquired it whilst domiciled with the Countess.

- (b) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 39: See under "Sir Thomas Bourgchier.

Sometime Ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills:

- (a) Anne's mother Eleanor de Bohun bequeathed her 'un livre beal et bien enluminee de legenda aurea, en Frauncois'.<sup>63</sup> This was probably a copy of the translation from the Legenda Aurea by Jehan

de Vignay c. 1333-1334 (which seems to have been much more popular than Jean Belet's translation, also fourteenth century).<sup>64</sup> None of the surviving copies of Vignay's text seems to have been Eleanor's. In view of the marriage of two of Anne's grandsons to Beaufort heiresses, there is a temptation to identify British Library MS Royal 19.B.XVII, (dated 1392 by its colophon) with Eleanor's gift; this handsome French manuscript has an inserted flyleaf bearing the Beaufort arms and badges (red roses and port-cullises) and the motto 'me sovent sovant'. However, this evidence can only be taken to suggest that this book was a valued Beaufort possession by the mid-fifteenth century, not that it came to them through Eleanor and Anne.

- (b) In 1400/1 the Countess was bequeathed a primer by John Torell, citizen of London. He also bequeathed her sister Isabel, a nun at Aldgate, his psalter, which suggests that he had some connection with the family, although its precise nature is unknown.<sup>65</sup>

Evidence of (vi) Literary dedications: According to John Shirley, Lydgate wrote his Invocation to Saint Anne 'at the commaundement of my Lady Anne Countesse of Stafforde' (Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 59.f.44<sup>v</sup>). Since Shirley seems to have had privileged access to information about the circumstances in which Lydgate composed, this evidence of Countess Anne's literary tastes is not to be discounted. However, the Ashmole MS was written by Shirley when he was extremely old, and he does not give this choice detail with his other copy of the Invocation (in British Library MS Addit. 16165), so this evidence is not completely reliable.<sup>66</sup> Nor does Lydgate provide any internal evidence for Anne's commission, although on other occasions he was only too pleased to let his patrons be known.<sup>67</sup> Yet the dedication is plausible enough; Lydgate did not name all his

patrons, after all, and Shirley, even if he did concoct the colophon from a failing memory, might have had some reason. He clearly felt that it would give the poem a suitable cachet. Lady Anne was noble, pious and well-educated, had presented another poet (Benedict Burgh) to his first living,<sup>68</sup> and was quite likely to have commissioned a poem on her "name-saint" from the current laureate. We should perhaps let Anne bask in the reflected glory - such as it is - of the Invocation.

The Invocation to Saint Anne is one of Lydgate's longer verse prayers. As well as his customary prayer by the Saint's attributes for succour, he added a modesty topos requesting the 'first moeuer' to

Destille adoun þy gracious Influence  
in to my brest þat dulle is for rudenesse,  
Of holy Anne some goodly word expresse. (5 - 7)

Although he begged for some drops of 'l'icour aureate', the result is not overpoweringly aureate. Together with the Invocacioun to Saint Denys and the Prayer of St. Thomas (these two also apparently written on request),<sup>69</sup> it is indeed in higher style than his other verse prayers, but, as Pearsall remarks, this group forms the 'least interesting' of Lydgate's religious poems.<sup>70</sup> Designed for practical use in particular circumstances (such as devotional recital before an altar or at home) their limited scope seems to have given Lydgate little challenge to provide more than the basic requirements. Yet he was, as usual, fulfilling a need, and if the Countess of Stafford wished for a poem on her sainted namesake she could have done worse than go to Lydgate for it.

If Anne possessed a copy of the Invocation, it was most likely as an unbound quire, the kind of manuscript most susceptible to loss and damage, and the only record now is Shirley's transcripts,

### Other Interests

Tapiserie and embroidery: The splendid orphrey now attached to a chasuble in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, formerly dated to c. 1474,<sup>71</sup> is now dated c. 1398-1420 by that Museum, and presumed to have been made for Countess Anne. The cross-shaped orphrey is embroidered in a running pattern of branches, leaves and columbines; in the middle of the cross are the arms of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, with the shields of Clare and Stafford, and the stem bears the shields of Clare, Bohun, Miles of Gloucester and Thomas, Duke of Gloucester. The shields are supported by swans and branches tied together with Stafford knots. This lively embroidery, redolent with the heraldry of the Stafford-Gloucester marriage, is a rare survivor, and it suggests that Countess Anne's chapel furnishings were almost as splendid as the rich collection forfeited by her father, vanished long ago.

Plate and jewellery: Anne's family interest in the legend of the 'Knight of the Swan', and use of the swan as a badge and ornament<sup>72</sup> is witnessed by a gift from her uncle. In 1383 John of Gaunt presented her with a pair of basins with collars and swans engraved on the rims and blazoned with her father's arms.<sup>73</sup> Her first husband, Thomas Stafford, was perhaps the proud wearer of a swan badge; his receiver-general paid a goldsmith for the repair of such a badge.<sup>74</sup> She and her Stafford husbands were brought up in luxurious surroundings, glittering with plate and rich with embroidered hangings (many of them incorporating the swan emblem in their decoration); no trace of her own tastes in these things survives, in the form of objets d'art or testamentary descriptions, but she certainly had her own stock of plate, inherited or purchased, for she made Llanthony Priory at least one gift of



silver vessels.<sup>75</sup>

Learning and piety: The household of Anne's parents was also lavishly provided with books, suitable for both edification and entertainment. Anne appears to have been educated and literate; her mother's bequest of a Légende Dorée and Anne's choice of a poem by Lydgate suggest the kind of material she appreciated. Anne was for many years in correspondence with the Prior of Llanthony (a house patronised by the Bohuns) sending him a mixture of family news and the latest politics.<sup>76</sup> She and members of her family were received into the Priory's fraternity, and in 1433 she was planning to donate several 'riche worth and notable ornamentes' to it.<sup>77</sup> She also wished to be buried there with her third husband, in the tomb she had 'do mad'.<sup>78</sup> Her pious interests were not confined to Llanthony; she was also generous to her parent's foundation at Pleshey.<sup>79</sup> When the young Benedict Burgh was brought to her notice, she presented the scholar and poet to his first church living.<sup>80</sup>

When her time came, Anne composed her testament 'in English tonge, for my most profit, redyng and understandyng';<sup>81</sup> like her father she expressed herself in English rather than French when death approached.<sup>82</sup>

8(a) Eleanor de Bohun, mother of Anne, Countess of Stafford

Daughter of Humphrey de Bohun, 7th Earl of Hereford, and Joan Fitzalan.

m. Thomas, Duke of Gloucester.

d. 1399.

Surviving MSS

National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS. 18.6.5

Technical description:

- (a) Date: c. 1385-1399.
- (b) Contents: Calendar; Hours of the Virgin with Hours of the Cross; Penitential Psalms and Sarum Litany; Litany of St. Anselm; Prayers and Confession for a lady (later additions); Office of the Dead; Commendation of Souls; Psalter of St. Jerome; Prayers; Private Devotions at Mass; Psalter; Canticles; Athanasian Creed; Private prayers; late fifteenth century prayers and notes on flyleaves.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 9 x 6 inches (23 x 15 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: ii + 148 + ii.
- (f) Collation: ii + 1<sup>6</sup>, then regular in 8's except quires h<sup>4</sup> and s<sup>6</sup>.  
Some leaves wanting. One full set of quire signatures in brown ink, two partial sets in red.
- (g) Layout: Double column prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: One neat textura hand
- (i) Decoration: This handsome volume is richly decorated. One-line initials are of blue with red, red with violet penwork, very elegantly done. Two-line initials are of gold on alternate blue and rose grounds, from which spring champ sprays with gold ivy-leaf

motifs; three and four-line initials are of blue and rose patterned with white, on gold grounds, with similar champs modified by the addition of coloured daisy buds. Major textual divisions are marked by three, six, seven or eight-line decorated initials accompanied by full vinet borders. Some of these initials are infilled with interlaced branches of coloured vineleaves and strapwork. The others are historiated,<sup>83</sup> containing miniatures with subjects taken from the usual sets employed in the decoration of Books of Hours and Psalters.<sup>84</sup> The first miniature, of prophets proclaiming 'Ecce virgo concipiet & pariet' is a more unusual subject, and so too are the choices for 'Dominus illuminatio mea' and 'Dixit Insipiens'.<sup>85</sup> All these large initials, historiated or decorated, are accompanied by rich vinet borders, consisting of narrow bars in gold and colours, adorned with strapwork bosses, grotesque "masks" in red and blue, dragons, and coils of coloured vineleaves, and breaking out into balanced sprays of various stylized leaf-forms in red and blue, "pseudo flowers", daisy-buds, and penwork sprigs with gold trefoils. Each border selects a different combination and layout of motifs, giving variety to the pages. The palette used for the miniatures is similar - dark blue, rose, vermilion - enriched with some use of tan, dark green, and mauve.

- (i) History and provenance; evidence of (iv) Marks of ownership: The first clues to original ownership appear in the prayers on ff. 66<sup>r</sup>-68<sup>v</sup>, which are for one 'Alianore' and also for 'patris mei Humfridi', Richard II, and a Bishop Robert (Braybrooke),<sup>86</sup> and in the request on f.138<sup>v</sup> for God to look kindly on 'famule tue Alianore'. These names are written in by the original scribe, in the appropriate places, although at one point (f.139<sup>r</sup>) he apparently had trouble remembering that the prayer was for a lady, and at another (f.67<sup>r</sup>)

that she was 'Alianore'. An erased inscription on f.148<sup>v</sup> clarifies which 'Alianore' was involved: 'C(est livre) feust a Alianore (bohun duc)hes(se) de Gloucestre le quel ele f(i)st escrire'. Thus the volume was not only Eleanor's, but of her own commission some time after she became Duchess of Gloucester in 1385. Her statement of ownership was to have been supported by heraldic decoration as emphatic as that in other Bohun manuscripts;<sup>87</sup> on both f.14<sup>r</sup> and f.65<sup>r</sup> seven-line initials were designed to have a shield in their infill decoration, and on f.16<sup>r</sup> the vinet bar border breaks into cusped quatrefoils which were supposed to carry shields. These were never completed.

By the mid-fifteenth century the volume was in the hands of the Tyrrel family, whose births and deaths between 1445 (James Tyrrel) and 1507 (Christopher Tyrrel) have been added by a variety of (presumably) Tyrrel hands. How the Advocates MS. passed from Bohun to Tyrrel ownership is not known; several of the Tyrrrels commemorated were royal councillors and keepers of royal castles,<sup>88</sup> and could have acquired the book during one of their periods of attendance on royalty, perhaps as a private gift or else by purchase.

Affiliations: Eleanor's fine Psalter has strong artistic links with several other surviving manuscripts. In some ways the style of the historiated initials is a development from that of earlier "Bohun" manuscripts made for Eleanor's father and passed to her sister and herself. That stupendous group of manuscripts includes: Oxford, Exeter College, MS 47, Psalter (Humphrey's); Vienna, Nationalbibliothek MS 1826<sup>\*</sup>, Psalter (Humphrey's, later Eleanor's); Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 38-1950, Psalter (Humphrey's); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4.4, Psalter and Hours,

British Library MS Egerton 3277, Psalter (both Humphrey's then later Mary's); Schloss Pommersfelden MS 2934, fragment of a Book of Hours (Humphrey's); Copenhagen, Royal Library MSS Thotts. saml. 547, Hours (Mary's) and Thotts. saml. 517, La Vie de Ste Maria, Ste Margeurite et Ste Madeleine.<sup>89</sup> Related manuscripts, also of a liturgical and devotional nature, include Oxford, Keble College MS 47 and Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 188.<sup>90</sup> Eleanor's sister Mary also owned British Library MS Royal 20.D. IV, an early fourteenth century French copy of Lancelot du Lac, some of whose handsome illuminations have been replaced by later additions with Mary's arms.<sup>91</sup> The main group of Bohun manuscripts has a distinctive artistic style, combining in various proportions elements of the earlier fourteenth century "East Anglian" style, traces of Italian influence, and signs of some French or Flemish influence also, and this "Bohun" style seems to have affected English book decoration for about a quarter of a century.

Eleanor's Psalter, c. 1385-1399, is particularly close to some more nearly contemporary manuscripts whose style derived from the earlier "Bohun" manuscripts. The closest link is with the work done by 'Hand C'<sup>2</sup> in the huge Carmelite Missal being made during the 1390's (British Library MSS Addit. 29704-5, 44892).<sup>92</sup> This competent but slightly old-fashioned artist may have worked in the atelier responsible for Eleanor's Psalter, so close is the likeness between 'C's' initials in the Carmelite Missal and the initials in Advocates MS 18.6.5.<sup>93</sup> British Library MS Addit 16968, at least for the first four quires, could derive from the same source.<sup>94</sup> 'Hand C' was most strongly influenced by the older "Bohun" style, but he also shows some awareness of and influence by contemporary developments as exemplified by Westminster Abbey's Lytlington

Missal, c. 1383-4, Eleanor's Psalter shows some influence from the Lytlington Missal likewise, and also from the Liber Regalis (Westminster Abbey MS 38, c. 1382-3).<sup>95</sup>

The border decoration in Advocates MS 18.6.5, besides displaying similar elements to the Lytlington Missal - particularly the strap-work ornaments, sprays of daisy buds, and sprigs of "pseudo-flowers" - also links Eleanor's Psalter to other contemporary manuscripts, such as Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.11.7 (taken by Millar as a "typical" early fifteenth century English manuscript),<sup>96</sup> her husband's English Bible (British Library MSS Egerton 617-18), and even the Hengwrt MS of the Canterbury Tales. Both border and miniature styles suggest that Advocates MS 18.6.5 was a product of a metropolitan atelier in which older styles were mingling with newer fashions. Eleanor seems to have ordered the best quality work available.

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) wills: (a) Eleanor herself may have managed to save some books - perhaps her own - from the wreckage after her husband's forfeiture. She bequeathed several in her will; to her son Humphrey went a combination of edifying texts and family heirlooms:

Un Cronike de Fraunce en Frauncois, ove deux claspes d'argent, enamayles ove les armes de duc de Burgoign  
Item 1 livre de Giles 'de regimine principum'. Item un livre de vices & virtues, et un autre rimeie del 'histoire de chivaler a cigne' tous en Frauncois. Item un psautier bien et richement enlumines ove les claspes d'or enamailles, ove cignes blank & les armes de mon seignour & pierre enamailles sur les claspes, & autres barres d'or sur les tissues en maner del molets, quel psautier me fuist lesses de remeindre a mes heirs & ainsi de heir en heir avaunt dit.<sup>97</sup>

There were several copies of 'de Regimine Principum' and books of "vices and virtues" at Pleshey; Millar suggested that Oxford, Exeter College MS 47 may have been the Psalter bequeathed to young Humphrey.<sup>98</sup>

To Eleanor's daughter Joan was bequeathed:

'un livre ove le psautier, primer, et autres devociens, ove deux claspes d'or, enamaillez ove mes armes, quele libre jay plus usee'.

This may have been Advocates MS 18.6.5.<sup>99</sup> Anne was given the above-mentioned 'livre beal et bien enluminee de legenda aurea, en Frauncois'. To Isabella, a nun in the house of the Minoreesses without Aldgate, went a selection of useful and devotional texts:

un bible de Frauncois en deux volumes, ove deux claspes d'or enamaillez ove les armes de Fraunce.

Item un livre de decretals en Frauncois. Item un livre de meistre histories. Item un livre 'de vitis patrum' & les pastorelx Seint Gregoire. Item psautier veil tanque a la nocturn de 'Exultate' gloses de la primer, 'Domine exaudi' tanque a 'omnis spiritus laudet dominum', & sount les dites livres en Frauncois.<sup>100</sup>

The 'pastorelx Seint Gregoire' could have come from Pleshey; some of the other books could have come from the Gloucesters' London house, where the books kept included a Meistre des Istories, the remnant of a Psalter with French glosses, a Psalter and Primer, and a French Bible.<sup>101</sup>

(b) Isabel of York, Eleanor's sister-in-law, bequeathed her a psalter with the 'arms of Northampton' (an earldom bestowed on Eleanor's grandfather William).<sup>102</sup>

#### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery: Isabel of York also bequeathed Eleanor 'my tablet of gold with images'; Eleanor's Fitzalan uncle left her

'a small tablet of gold with a crucifix within, "et la corona-  
 cioun en la summite, et enamaillez dehors". According to her  
 will, her favourite possession was a crucifix.<sup>103</sup> As Goodman  
 points out, many of the items forfeited by Gloucester had probably  
 come to him from his father-in-law, and it is almost impossible  
 to distinguish between items acquired as marriage gifts or as  
 part of the Bohun inheritance, and items deliberately commissioned  
 by Thomas and Eleanor.<sup>104</sup> From the evidence of the inventory of  
 Thomas's goods, Eleanor was, until 1397, surrounded by rich plate  
 and furnishings, some of it her choice or her inheritance, but it  
 is no longer possible to say which items were hers.

Tapiserie and embroidery: The same problem applies. It is  
 possible that Eleanor brought

un blanc Sale de tapicerie oeuvrez de les armes  
 de Roy Edward & de ses filtz ovesque bordurez de  
 rouge & noir palez & poudrez de signes & les armes  
 de Herforde,<sup>105</sup>

with her as a marriage gift, since it bears the arms of both fami-  
 lies, but it could have been a later joint commission. Some of  
 the lovely bed hangings and rich vestments - particularly those  
 'poudrez de signes'<sup>106</sup> - may also have come to the Gloucester house-  
 hold through Eleanor,

Architecture, etc.: Eleanor and her husband were responsible for  
 the foundation of a college at Pleshey, of which the buidings were  
 begun under their supervision.<sup>107</sup> Eleanor's tomb in Westminster  
 Abbey is decorated with a memorial brass of simple elegance, 'a  
 fine brass of an extremely English kind'.<sup>108</sup> Her figure, in simple  
 widow's robes, is depicted beneath a graceful pinnacled canopy  
 (similar to the canopies painted in her family's manuscripts) set



unobtrusively with her arms and bearing a swan badge in the spandrel of the central gable and in the bottom fillet of the inscription.

Learning and piety: Eleanor's family had some pretensions to literary patronage; her father was the dedicatee of the Latin political "prophecies" ascribed to John of Bridlington, while her great-uncle commissioned something much more amusing, a translation of the French romance Guillaume de Palerne for the benefit of those 'þat knowe no Frensche, ne never underston'.<sup>109</sup>

Eleanor's will suggests that she was capable of making a carefully considered choice of books, and that she was intimately acquainted with the contents of some of those she bequeathed. She seems to have shared the same serious and pious tastes as her husband, and joined with him in making generous gifts to Westminster Abbey and other religious houses, and in founding a new college at Pleshey. She retired to her daughter's house, the Minoreesses without Aldgate, and later died there.<sup>110</sup>

8(b) Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, father of Anne, Countess of Stafford

Son of Edward III and Philippa of Hainault.

d. 1397.

Surviving MS

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 316

Technical description:

- (a) Date: c. 1394-1397.
- (b) Contents:
  1. Higden's Polychronicon.
  2. Continuation to Polychronicon, including partial account of 1376 "Good Parliament".
  3. Walsingham's Short Chronicle of English History 1328-88.
  4. Higden's tract "Ars componendi sermones".
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 14½ x 10 inches (37 x 25 cm).
- (e) Numbering of leaves: ff + 186.
- (f) Collation: 1<sup>8</sup> (one leaf wanting), then regular in 12's, until disturbed at f.151 (see below).
- (g) Layout: Two column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: one anglicana formata hand for the text, some annotations in a second hand.
- (i) Decoration: MS Bodley 316 is a handsome but not particularly luxurious copy of the ever-popular Polychronicon. It is neatly written, and arranged for clarity, with a table of contents and running titles. Paraphs are alternately red and blue, and the initials starting each new book are red with blue penwork and blue with red. The start of the text proper on f.8<sup>r</sup>, after the table of contents, is adorned with an elaborate full border; bars of

gold and colours are adorned with scrolls of vine leaves and strapwork, and small, rather stiff sprays of trefoils and kite-shaped leaves in shaded blue and crimson. In the centre of the bottom border is a shield (argent, a cross sable) held by two angelic grotesques. Columbine flowers surround them. The opening initial is historiated, containing a depiction of the "Mercy-Seat Trinity" to which a monk in the bottom left corner seems to be praying.<sup>111</sup>

History and provenance: Evidence of (iv) Marks of Ownership: on f.2<sup>r</sup> is the inscription 'Orate pro Thome duce Gloucestr<sup>e</sup> qui me dedit huic cantarie sive collegie (sic) Sancte Trinitatis infra castrum de Plecy'. The painting of a monk praying to the Trinity bolsters the written inscription. Presumably Thomas ordered this book for presentation to his beloved new college at Pleshey; it is a handsome copy of a useful text, and would have been a welcome gift.

Affiliations: The same scribe copied British Library MS Harley 3634, ff. 137-63, chronicle material designed as an extension to the Polychronicon. These leaves were to have formed part of the Bodleian MS, but were rejected. It appears that the compiler of MS Bodley 316 began one continuation to the Polychronicon, but discarded it in favour of the 1328-88 chronicle. He could not remove the first chapters of the rejected continuation without cutting into the last quire containing Polychronicon material, so left that quire intact and cobbled a link to the replacement chronicle at f.151<sup>v</sup>, changing the catch-word to fit. The section that now forms BL MS Harley 3634 ff.137-63 was incorporated into a fresh chronicle compilation, and given a beginning and an end. Thompson suggested that this complicated adjustment was made to

remove unflattering references to John of Gaunt, Thomas's brother.<sup>112</sup> Galbraith, however, pointed out that the excised portion was less compromising than the part left behind, and that another compiler had little compunction in re-using the discarded quire. His own, more plausible suggestion, was that the Bodleian compiler found his intended text was going to be on a larger scale than he wanted, and substituted the 1328-88 chronicle as inconspicuously as possible (which, fortunately, was not inconspicuously enough to evade the eagle eyes of Thompson and Galbraith).<sup>113</sup>

(2) Bodleian Library, MS Douce 319

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Early fourteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Brunetto Latini's Livre de Tresor, a compendium of 'la nature dou monde' (f.1<sup>r</sup>).
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 12 x 8½ inches (30.5 x 21.5 cm).
- (e) Number of leaves: 218 (222 in current faulty numbering)
- (f) Collation: 1<sup>8</sup> 2-22<sup>10</sup>.
- (g) Layout: Two column prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Neat continental text hand.
- (i) Decoration: The manuscript is carefully set out, with numbered chapter headings and a table of contents. Minor divisions are marked by handsome red and blue penworked initials. More important divisions are given historiated initials, some with champs attached; the initials signify, on a very simple level, what follows. For example, the initial introducing a 'livre daristotes qui parole des vices & vertues le quel translata maistre brunet latin de latin en romans' contains a small picture of a teacher (Aristotle or Latini?) pointing to a book on his lectern, watched

by a group of his pupils. The table of contents includes some interesting diagrams, one of them a mappamundi. Pächt and Alexander describe the decoration as being Italian but in the French style.<sup>114</sup>

History and provenance: evidence of (ii) Inventory records: this volume may very well be the 'livre en Fraunceys appellez Tresor' valued at iii.s., in the inventory of Thomas's goods.<sup>115</sup>  
(iv) Marks of ownership: an erased inscription on f.222<sup>v</sup> supports this ascription:

Ceste livre est a Thomas duc de Glouc. Comte dessex  
( & de Buk) ... del don le comte de Sarum monsire  
Will. de Montague.

Thus Thomas was not responsible for the manuscript's inception, but the Earl of Salisbury evidently felt that it would make an acceptable gift, and Thomas appreciated it sufficiently to record his acquisition of the book. It was a mine of useful information, treating as it did

de la naissance de toutes choses & de vices & de  
vertues & de la flor de philosophie cest de theorique  
de pratique & de logique, (f.1<sup>r</sup>).

- and its tone fitted in well with some of the other volumes in Thomas's library, the books of "vices and virtues", the volumes of De Proprietatibus Rerum, even the book called 'Maundevylle' (with which it shares a natural interest in sciopodi and the like).<sup>116</sup>

### 3. British Library MS Royal 19.B.XIII

Technical description:

- (a) Date: First quarter of the fourteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Roman de la Rose.
- (c) Material: Vellum.

- (d) Dimensions: 12 x 8½ inches (30.5 x 21.5 cm).
- (e) Number of leaves: 144.
- (f) Collation: iv + 1 - 11<sup>12</sup> 12<sup>8</sup>.
- (g) Layout: Two column, verse.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Early fourteenth century bookhand, probably French. Corrected. Some guides for the rubricator remain, e.g. f.23<sup>r</sup>. Catchwords and some quire signatures remain.
- (i) Decoration: The text is prefaced by two full pages of illumination, each page containing a two-compartment miniature. The first page (f.3<sup>v</sup>) has Cupid enthroned, with a kneeling lover struck by one of his arrows, occupying the upper half; in the bottom half are four ladies - queen, lady and two nuns - struck by Love's darts. The second page shows more suppliants, in two tiers, all carrying scrolls with amorous mottoes. Twenty-two smaller miniatures, occupying ten to twelve-line spaces, punctuate the text, beginning with the classic subject of the Dreamer in his bed.<sup>117</sup> This miniature is accompanied by a handsome bar border, with the bas-de-page populated by a merry procession. The miniatures are in a handsome linear style, the figures coloured in scarlet, blue-grey, rose, pale green and blue, and set against chequered backgrounds; they are probably the work of a French artist. The miniatures are concentrated in the Guillaume de Lorris section, with three-quarters of them occurring in the first thirty folios.<sup>118</sup>
- "Verse paragraphs" are marked by two-line initials in gold on blue and crimson grounds. The names of speakers and other characters are marked in rubric.

History and provenance: Evidence of (i) Inventory record: this may be the 'livre de mesne volum de la Rimance de la Rose' priced at vj.s. viij.d. in the inventory of Thomas's library.<sup>119</sup> (iv)

Marks of ownership: on f.2<sup>r</sup> is the inscription

'Ceste livre est a Thomas fiz au Roy duc de Glouc.  
achates dez Executours monsire Ric. Stury'.

Stury had been in the household of Princess Joan, Richard II's mother, and was subsequently one of Richard II's chamber knights; he was a friend of Froissart.<sup>120</sup> His court position may explain both his possession of this most courtly of texts (at least in the de Lorris "Lovers' Bible" part) and Gloucester's ability to acquire it from Stury's executors; he may already have seen and admired the book and decided to buy it when the opportunity arose. It was well worth buying. It seems a little surprising that Thomas chose to buy this volume, handsome as it is, second-hand, rather than have his own copy made; perhaps he was economising, or perhaps an earlier copy of his own had worn out and needed replacing. His purchase does suggest an active interest in the acquisition of texts, and this was a text much used for courtly pleasure, as a mine for 'social and literary plunder',<sup>121</sup> and also as an encyclopaedia.

4. British Library MSS Egerton 617-618

Technical description:

- (a) Date: 1394-7
- (b) Contents: The Bible, in English, (early Wycliffite version)<sup>122</sup>  
in two volumes. Incomplete: begins at Proverbs.
- (c) Material: vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 17½ x 12 inches (44.5 x 30.5 cm).
- (e) Number of leaves: (i) 244, (ii) 177.

- (f) Collation: In 8's, with several losses.
- (g) Layout: Two column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Large scale 'rather thick' textura.<sup>123</sup>
- (i) Decoration: Both volumes are lavishly decorated. Verses are marked by single-line initials, chapters by larger initials of gold on blue and crimson grounds attached to champs consisting of sprays with trefoils in blue, crimson and gold, daisy-buds and golden balls attached. The Biblical books are given full vinet borders; seven-line initials of gold on coloured grounds, infilled with leaf and flower tracery, are attached to bar borders in gold and colours. Gold sprays curl across the bars, adorned with leaflets, daisy-buds, gold balls with pen flourishes, and stylised flowers in "spoon" and "kidney" shapes. The corners erupt into strapwork bosses, while in the centre of the bottom bar the foliage may grow into a grotesque "mask" in red or blue. Kenyon describes the style of decoration, common in English books of the late fourteenth - early fifteenth century, as one of 'great taste and beauty'.<sup>124</sup>

History and provenance: Evidence of (ii) Inventory record: Thomas of Gloucester's library included 'un bible en Engleys en ii. grantz livres ... pris xls.'<sup>125</sup> (iv) Heraldic devices: the remains of a mutilated border on I, f.2<sup>r</sup> carry the shield 'Quarterly France ancient and England, within a bordure argent'. These were the arms borne by Thomas, Duke of Gloucester (his nephew Humphrey, a later Duke of Gloucester, bore the same arms but with France modern). The shield appears to be contemporary with the rest of the decoration (which seems to have been added about the same time as the manuscript was being corrected, for on I, ff.18<sup>r</sup> and 88<sup>r</sup> the ornament makes allowances for the addition of omissions from the text).



It seems more than likely that this was the two-volume English Bible Thomas, Duke of Gloucester is known to have owned.

Affiliations: Doyle remarks that 'these full English bibles are not common and must have been very costly', and Thomas of Gloucester's two-volume Bible has few companions. His nephew Thomas of Lancaster was the owner of another handsome "early version" in one volume, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Bibliothek, MS Guelf. Aug. A.2, with illumination in a slightly later style.<sup>126</sup> Decoratively, Duke Thomas's Bible is characteristic of the best luxury decorative style of late fourteenth century England, and is akin to a number of manuscripts, including his wife's Psalter.

Putative ownership of MSS

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 264:

Brief description: This lovely book, containing the Romance of Alexander (in Picard French) copied and illuminated c. 1338-1344, an extract from an English Alexander romance and Li Livres du Graunt Cam (in French), these added c. 1400, seems to epitomise "romance".<sup>127</sup> The first section is lavishly and beautifully decorated; historiated initials and miniatures abound in the text, and the margins are enlivened with scenes from the romance and from daily life. The second and third sections were added about fifty years later, possibly because of their community of interest; they too are copiously illustrated, by "Johannes" and his atelier.<sup>128</sup> Two full-page miniatures by the same artists were added as a frontispiece to the original section, perhaps to link the various parts together, or perhaps to replace a lost or damaged frontispiece.<sup>129</sup>

Evidence of (if) Inventory record: it has been suggested, on the basis of the entry 'un large livre en Ffraunceis tresbien esluminez

de la Rymance de Alexander & de les avowes al poun pris xvj.s. viij.d.' in the Inventory of Thomas's library, that the first section of MS Bodley 264 is the volume in question.<sup>130</sup> However, although Thomas of Gloucester was probably fond of the Alexander romance (as were many of his peers) and owned at least two other copies, and although he would probably have loved dearly to own MS Bodley 264, the evidence that he did so is extremely tenuous. The Bodleian manuscript could equally well have been the 'book of romance of King Alexander in verse, valued at 10.1' obtained from John Salmon, burgess of Bruges, by William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, c. 1381-1382. He acquired his book as satisfaction of a debt.<sup>131</sup> In fact the earliest known owner of MS Bodley 264 was Richard Wydeville, Lord Rivers, who bought it in London in 1466.<sup>132</sup>

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (ii) Inventory records: the inventory of goods at Pleshey belonging to Thomas, Duke of Gloucester at the time of his arrest in 1397, divides his books into two sorts, 'Libri pro capella' and 'Livres de divers rymances & Estories'.<sup>133</sup> The 'libri pro capella', thirty-nine in all, cover the usual range - Bibles, Missals, Antiphoners, Graduals, Legends, Psalters and Pontificals - with some miscellaneous items such as 'un livre del service du salutacion Marie & Elizabeth'. Large and small, new and old, some 'bien escript & esluminez', some 'sanz couverture', but most of them handsomely bound (one was 'embroudez de signes'), their value ranged from xx.d. for some of the old Psalters to ten pounds for a three-volume Bible. The mixture of old and new suggests that some of the books were inherited and some commissioned for use in the chapel of Thomas's favourite castle. The 'livres de divers rymances & Estories' cover a fairly wide

range. Some, despite their classification, are liturgical in character, and presumably included here because they were in the vernacular and could be used for private devotions - the 'bible en Engleys', and 'les Evangelies glosez en Engleis'. Literature for edification was certainly well represented: there were saints' lives; histories - Livy, Chronicles of French, English and Papal history; natural history of the De Proprietatibus Rerum sort; books of useful information - English statutes, legal text books, 'un veil quayer fysike'; and books of 'moralite' - Egidius Colonna's De Regimine Principum, and two treatises on the vices and virtues. Literature for entertainment also had its place. Arthurian legends, the Troy story and the Alexander romances were represented by several copies apiece; there were also tales of heroes of a more recent French and Anglo-Norman past, such as Godfrey de Bouillon, Tancred, Bevis of Hampton and Fulk Fitzwarin. Two medieval "best-sellers" were represented, Boethius (in French) and the Roman de la Rose. Traces of a courtly environment survive in 'j. large livre de Tretes amoire ux & moralitez & de carolles fraunceis bien esluminez'. Values ranged from fourpence to forty shillings. The books found in the Duke of Gloucester's London house, possibly a more personal collection, covered a similar range to the Pleshey library; there were liturgical books - Bibles in French and Latin, Psalters, Missals, a Primer - and a Legenda Aurea; history in the form of a French book of 'Meistre des Istories' and Vitas Patrum; and romance in the shape of an expensive copy of Godfrey de Boilon.<sup>134</sup>

The inventory made after another forfeiture for treason, that of Henry, Lord Scrope of Masham, executed in 1415, reveals that the Duke of Gloucester had given him a 'portifory', still treasured by its recipient.<sup>135</sup>

Own Writings: Thomas took his post as Constable of the Realm seriously, and he compiled a treatise on the order of battle in the Court of Chivalry, which he addressed to Richard II. This codification seems to have been much needed; it was translated into English, and copied into the "great books" of Sir John Astley and Sir John Paston.<sup>136</sup>

#### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery: Thomas had plenty of valuable plate at Pleshey, but the description in the inventory is minimal. The goods at London are more fully described; they included two 'bacyns' silver-gilt in the 'swages' with the Duke's arms between two swans, a silver 'hanap', covered, with a swan on the pommel, and a set of white silver-gilt 'chaundell', the 'swages' being on swans.<sup>137</sup>

During his lifetime, the Duke of Gloucester and his wife had given the Abbot and convent of Westminster handsome items of plate, and the Duke is painted in St. Alban's Abbey's Benefactors Book (British Library MS Cotton Nero D.VII, f.110<sup>r</sup>) holding his gift to that house:

*monile aure circulare in cuius medio cignus  
albus ales quasi ad uolandum expansis habentur  
& in circuitu moniles saphiri cum unionibus  
pulcherrime sunt locati.*

When Thomas's nephew Richard II married Isabelle of France, Thomas gave the bride a golden eagle adorned with precious stones, and a golden crown with eight fleurons.<sup>138</sup>

Thomas also seems to have owned some panel-paintings, although of little value; he had a diptych and three triptychs 'des dyverses ymages'.

Tapisserie and embroidery: The inventory shows that Thomas's

dwelling at Pleshey was plentifully provided with wall-hangings. Some were pious in character, representing the life of Our Lady, Judith and Holofernes, the Holy Sepulchre, angels with scrolls 'ove scriptures de Ihu miserere', and Saint George. Others were more chivalric, such as the hangings of 'Justes de pees' and the set 'de blu aras ove garters jaunez', or chivalric-romantic, such as sets based on Charlemagne and Godfrey de Bouillon stories, or depicting 'la bataille entre Gamlayn & Lancelot' or 'le storie de Geras filtz au Roy de ffryson coment il fust fait chevalier pur fair darmes'. Some, such as the sets of an 'assaut fait as Dames en un Chastel', of 'ymagerie & ove rolez Amy & Amors', and 'de contenances damors', sound a note of courtly dalliance - and the piece 'dun descomfiture dun Wodewose & dun Leoun' sounds delightful. The complete set of room-hangings worked with the arms of King Edward and his sons and "powdered" with swans and the Hereford arms sounds like a wedding present.<sup>139</sup> The London house also had some rich hangings; some were powdered with shields, others had 'golden swans and wings on a black field' or 'swans of Cyprus (Cipre) gold on a red field'.<sup>140</sup> Out of such riches Thomas had selected one of his two best pieces of arras as a gift to his brother John of Gaunt on his return from Spain.<sup>141</sup>

The Duke of Gloucester possessed an equally luxurious collection of embroidered bed-hangings. The most valuable, a set in blue satin worked with golden garters, was priced at a stupendous 'ciiij<sup>xx</sup> ij li. iij s.' Others were bright with roses and flowers, 'papagayes' and griffons; the 'wodewoses' reappear, jousting on horseback. (These last may have been the gift of Bishop Hatfield).<sup>142</sup>

Even the cheaper worsted bed-hangings were gaily coloured and embroidered with flora and fauna.

Duke Thomas also owned a magnificent collection of vestments and altar furnishings, used in his chapel. The materials were rich and costly - red cloth of gold, 'Sarzinet blanc raiez dor' - and further enriched with embroidery. Some had 'scriptures de Jhesus Xpi' or other scrolls, some had 'Tabernacles' or 'ymages', some were powdered with griffons, swans, garters, birds, lions, or the Duke's arms. Some probably came from the Bohun inheritance, others such as the set with 'les armes de Henaud & Dengleterre' and the set with leopards mouthing 'Ich magh net', probably came from Thomas's parents. Another set, with 'cerfs blanc gisantz en chapellett dor' was perhaps a tribute to Thomas's sister-in-law Joan of Kent or her son Richard II. There was even a special set for the use of visiting bishops. In his lifetime the Duke had given similarly rich and costly vestments to Westminster Abbey.<sup>143</sup> As with all the Duke's belongings - it is difficult to tell which were inherited and which acquired of his own volition.

Goodman suggests that Thomas absorbed the Bohun tastes (along with their heirlooms) and that he and his wife 'prolonged and enhanced the canons established by her father', so that the goods in the inventories represent a fusion of Bohun tastes with Thomas's own.<sup>144</sup>

Architecture: Thomas's and Eleanor's foundation of a college of secular priests at Pleshey was speedily established once they were given license to found it in 1394. The building work made good progress; when Richard II came to Pleshey in 1397 to arrest Thomas, he was moved to admiration when he saw the newly and magnificently rebuilt church.<sup>145</sup>

Thomas was also responsible for some defensive building work, this time at the former Bohun castle of Caldicot in the Welsh Marches; the great gatehouse and 'Woodstock Tower' were begun by him. His

interest is commemorated by a carved quatrefoil panel with 'Thomas' on it, formerly one of the lower stones of the entrance-arch. There was another "foundation stone" with 'Alianore' on it at the base of another building.<sup>146</sup>

Music: Thomas seems to have had some liking for music; there was a blind harper in his household, and his London house had an organ and tapestries of musical angels.<sup>147</sup>

Learning and piety: Thomas and Eleanor were generous members of the confraternity of two great abbeys, Westminster and St. Albans, and co-founded a new establishment, their college at Pleshey. Thomas also took an interest in the houses of Meaux, Malvern, Barking and Walden, and had a high regard for the house of the Minoreesses without Aldgate, where his daughter was professed. A recluse in his village of Kneeshall was provided for. Some of this might have been 'perfunctory gestures to convention and fashion' but Walsingham credited the Duke with a 'sincere piety' and Walsingham was rarely inclined to give credit when it was not due.<sup>148</sup> What can be inferred of the Duke's tastes and habits suggests that he was a pious and literate man, with a healthy regard for the good things of this world and the next.

9. Anne Stafford, Countess of March

Daughter of Edmund, 5th Earl of Stafford, and Anne of Gloucester.

m. 1. Edmund Mortimer, 5th Earl of March (d. 1425).

2. John Holland, Duke of Exeter (d. 1447).

d. 1439.

No surviving MSS.

Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (vi) Literary dedications: Lydgate composed his

Legend of Seynt Margaret at Anne's request; its proem includes the  
lines

... Remember, O virgyne, vpon that other side

On hir that caused, oonly for thi sake

Thyn holy lyf me to compile and make, -

My lady Marche Imene, whiche of entente

Yafe firste to me in commaundement

That I shulde considre welle and see

In Frensshe and Latyne thyn holy passyoun

Thi martirdam and thi virginite

And thereof make a compilaçyoun

(66-74) <sup>149</sup>

Dating makes Anne, née Stafford, the most plausible candidate for  
'lady Marche'. No presentation copy or personal copy seems to  
survive. <sup>150</sup>

Anne seems to have wished for something stylish from the  
"laureate", (following in her mother's footsteps), that combined  
literary fashion with piety. Something stylish she certainly got:  
the poem begins with an extended prologue, with modesty topos,  
explication of the saint's name, and plea for divine help (including  
the lines above, which explain the origins of his sudden need for



an infusion of 'aureat lycoure' (56)]. The saint's life follows, in similar vein. Lydgate seems to have eschewed the strong narrative line and rough vigour of his ruder predecessors,<sup>151</sup> for the decorous pleasures of the "rhyme royal" stanza, complex syntax and contemplative tone. The effect is rather subdued, lacking light and shade; as Pearsall remarks, 'Lydgate's sense of decorum gives dignity, but it means of course that everything comes out the same'.<sup>152</sup> 'The same' in this case is not such a bad thing, however; Lydgate's Legend may lack excitement, but its dignity, decorum and conventionality were probably eminently suitable for its destination.

Although no manuscripts belonging to Anne are known to survive, her first husband seems to have had a taste for rather expensive books. In 1413-1414 he bought a 'book' for one pound, and in 1415 spent twenty pounds on two missals, twelve pounds on a breviary, and (more economically) eightpence on a roll of 'seven psalms'.<sup>153</sup> He was also a musical amateur, who played the harp. Her second husband also had a taste for expensive liturgical books, like those which furnished his chapel.<sup>154</sup> Anne's life seems to have been lived in a cheerful, moderately pious and cultivated milieu; her commission from Lydgate is all that we know of her tastes.

#### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery; etc.: Anne bequeathed her brother Humphrey 'the playne cuppe of gold late made wit myn armes in the topp'.<sup>155</sup>

10. Humphrey Stafford, 1st Duke of Buckingham, 6th Earl of Stafford

Son of Edmund, 5th Earl of Stafford and Anne of Gloucester.

m. Anne Neville, daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland and Joan Beaufort.

d. 1460.

Surviving MSS

1. Oxford, Balliol College MS 236<sup>156</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Mid-fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Higden's Polychronicon, with additions from Tynemouth's Historia Aurea.<sup>157</sup>
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 18½ x 12¾ inches (46.5 x 32.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: i + 311.
- (f) Collation: Regular in 8's. Catchwords, signatures.
- (g) Lay out: Two columns, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Neat text hand.
- (i) Decoration: Minor textual divisions are marked by red or blue initials; chapters begin with blue capitals enriched with red penwork. All the Books (except Book IV) are dignified with ornamented initials; the first has a partial border on three sides attached to it, the others have champ sprays of conventional foliage. Mynors describes this volume as 'the largest extant copy, and one of the most handsome, of the Polychronicon'.<sup>158</sup>

History and Provenance; evidence of (iv) Marks of ownership: On the flyleaf is written 'Policronicon ex dono ducis Bokyngamie avunculi subscripti episcopi' followed by 'Liber domus de Balliolo in Oxon' ex dono Willelmi Gray Eliensis episcopi'. Traces of original foliation show that the flyleaf was part of the volume

from the start, probably part of a missing table of contents. The latter part of the inscription is one of the standard formulae employed for noting Gray's gifts to his college;<sup>1159</sup> presumably Gray noted his uncle's gift when he donated the volume to Balliol in his turn. "Uncle" was the simplest way of describing the relationship between Humphrey Stafford and William Gray. Gray was a younger son of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton and Alice Neville; Alice Neville was the half-sister of Humphrey's wife Anne (and also his cousin).<sup>160</sup> Gray, as an intelligent younger son, with another useful uncle on his father's side (the Bishop of London), chose the Church as his livelihood, and rose to become Bishop of Ely.<sup>161</sup> His elevation to the bench of bishops was preceded by a period of study, in Cologne, Florence, Padua, Ferrara and Rome; Gray is noted as one of the earliest English "humanists".<sup>162</sup> He was an avid collector of books, and his impressive library was given to Balliol. It was part of this collection that his uncle Humphrey's gift reached Balliol. As a basic history, the Polychronicon would have had its uses for Gray and other scholars, and was probably an acceptable present. It is not known how or when Humphrey acquired Balliol MS 236; it could have been a spare copy from the Stafford s' stock of books, or a special purchase, bought "off the peg" or through a specific commission. The unusual size, and handsome decoration, suggest that it was probably a special order; Humphrey Stafford could afford to be indulgent towards an intelligent nephew destined for a useful Church career. There seems little reason to doubt the flyleaf attribution; the information seems to have come from Bishop Gray, who knew where his books came from.

Affiliations: Out of the hundred or so manuscripts of the Poly-

chronicon which survive, the Balliol manuscript is probably closest in character to Cambridge University Library MS Dd. viii. 7, which shares the same text, a composite of the Polychronicon (C/D version) and Tynemouth's Historia Aurea.<sup>163</sup>

2. St. John's College, Cambridge MS H.5(208).

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Mid-fifteenth century (post 1444).
- (b) Contents: The Epistle of Othea translated by Stephen Scrope from Christine de Pisan's Epître d'Othéa.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 11½ x 8 inches (28.5 x 20.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: ii + 61 + ii.
- (f) Collation: ii + 1-7<sup>8</sup> 8<sup>6</sup> + ii (one leaf lacking).
- (g) Lay out: The work consists of one hundred chapters, each consisting of a verse 'Texte' with prose 'Glose' and 'Allegorie'; the verse is centred but the prose extends to the margins. This format echoes that established for the French text.<sup>164</sup>
- (h) Number of scribes, script: At least one 'calligraphic bastard secretary hand' was involved; both Buhler and Doyle note that its appearance changes noticeably,<sup>165</sup> and Dr. J. Griffiths is inclined to believe that three hands may be involved.<sup>166</sup> The general appearance is uniform and handsome; the elegant continental style script is of a kind which appears in several French and English manuscripts of the second half of the fifteenth century, such as Bodleian Library MS

- (i) Decoration: The headings ('Texte', etc.) are in rubric, preceded by paraphs alternately gold with black penwork and red with blue. Each of these sections begins with a two-line initial, gold on a coloured ground.

There are six miniatures in the first part of the book, copying the "short sequence" used in some manuscripts of the French original.<sup>167</sup> The first miniature, on f.1<sup>r</sup>, is a "presentation picture"; the translator, shown as a youngish man, kneels and presents his book to an older man seated on a splendid chair. Several other men stand in the vicinity. This page has a handsome vinet border in Franco-Flemish style (although the decorator was probably English - there is a note on f.61<sup>v</sup> totting up 'vi. payentis, iic. champis vj. iii c. paragraffis v'). The ground is of fine pen-drawn sprays with gold balls and ivy leaves, dotted with acanthus fleur-  
ons in blue, crimson and green. The next five miniatures illustrate the first five "story-moments" in the text:<sup>168</sup> Othea presenting her Epistle to Hector; Temperance (a lady adjusting the workings of an elaborate clock); Hercules, Theseus and Pirithous attacking Hades; Minos in Judgement; "Percyvalle" (so in text) rescuing Andromeda. These five miniatures are painted in semi-grisaille; the figures are in shades of grey, but the backgrounds are coloured.

History and provenance: Evidence of (vi) Literary dedication and Presentation miniature: The evidence for Humphrey Stafford's actual ownership of the St. John's MS is less certain than the evidence that he was the recipient of one dedication of Scrope's text. In the St. John's MS Scrope makes a gift of his 'litell laboure' (Pro1. 24) to the

... excellent prynce of wisdom,

Full myghti duke, vertuouſ of custom,  
Redoubted Humfray, coſin to the Kinge  
Of Englande, to whom longeth myche thinge,  
Duke of Bokyngham he is with hole ſovne,  
Erle of Herford, Stafford and Northamtovne. (prol.6-11).

The Duke is credited with being a 'lover of wiſedom' and a potential ſource of 'grete largenes' (Pro1. 12, 13). Since theſe lines are a direct translation of Chriſtine de Pisan's polite dedication addreſſed to the Duke of Berry, they ſhould not be applied too rigorouſly to the Duke of Buckingham. Moreover, Buckingham was not the only recipient of a dedication of Scrope's text. It ſeems that Scrope made his translation at the 'commaunderment' of his ſtepfather Sir John Faſto1f (a verſion represented by Longleat MS 253),<sup>169</sup> and ſubſequentlŷ tried to extract more profit from his work by re-dedicating it to the powerful and wealthy Duke of Buckingham. A third verſion, in New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M 775, (a compilation of various texts owned by Sir John Aſtley),<sup>170</sup> preſerves a third dedication of the Epistle, this time to a 'hŷe princesſe'—a catch-all dedication which would have let Scrope teſt the 'grete largenes' of a number of noble ladies.

Buckingham's daughter Anne may have come into this category; ſhe bequeathed 'my boke with the piſtilles of Othea' to her ſiſter-in-law Lady Margaret Beaufort in 1472.<sup>171</sup> This may have been a copy of the French original, or her father's copy of Scrope's text, or her own copy of Scrope's text with a 'hŷe princesſe' dedication.

Whether the original owner of the St. John's MS was Humphrey Stafford or not, the book had come into the poſſeſſion of the Bremschet family by the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>172</sup>

It is unfortunate that there is no corroborative evidence, in the form of heraldic devices or Stafford ownership inscriptions, to support the contention that this copy was Humphrey Stafford's. Although the French presentation miniature has been adapted to show a male author, the recipient is simply a great nobleman, and not necessarily Humphrey Stafford. Even the dedicatory lines present some difficulties, for if, as Dr. J. Griffiths once suggested, they are in a different hand, it seems that a space was left while Scrope - or somebody else - hastily re-wrote the lines. Doyle remarks that the quality of this manuscript, with its careful preparation, elegant script, and notable miniatures, is 'very compatible with its being the dedication copy'.<sup>173</sup> So too is the fact that it is the only completed manuscript containing the Othea alone; the other two contain additional material. Whether this was the manuscript presented to Humphrey or not, it bears witness to the fact that somebody (and that somebody was probably Scrope) felt that Humphrey was a good choice of recipient for a vernacular translation of a most fashionable French work.

Affiliations: All three surviving manuscripts of the Epistle are closely related textually, but unique errors suggest that none was copied from any of the others; each might have derived independently from a Scrope holograph.<sup>174</sup>

The script of the St. John's MS is very similar in appearance to that of Fastolf's copy of the Epitre d'Othea (one of several manuscripts copied by one Ricardus Franciscus between the 1440's and the 1470's),<sup>175</sup> although Dr. Doyle suggests that it is in fact even more like that of London, Lambeth Palace MS 263, a copy of Lord Rivers' translation of the Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers made for Edward IV in 1477.<sup>176</sup>

The St. John's MS has a complex set of artistic relationships. The iconography of the miniatures corresponds with that of the "short cycle" of six miniatures devised for Christine's Epître with her advice and approval. (The "long cycle", adding a full series of miniatures to the first six, was also approved by Christine).<sup>177</sup> The "short cycle" was not necessarily chosen as an economy measure; some of the "long cycle" manuscripts such as Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 421, are cheaply illustrated with unbordered pen-and-wash drawings, while "short cycle" manuscripts such as Paris, Bibliotheque National MS fr. 848 (a very early copy) and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 570, are far more lavishly presented. It was perhaps under the influence of MS Laud misc. 570 (formerly Fastolf's) or its "sister-manuscript" from which Scrope is thought to have worked,<sup>178</sup> that Scrope's text was planned to appear with six miniatures. The St. John's copy is the only one with six miniatures extant, but the Longleat manuscript has spaces for miniatures in the right places, and the Morgan manuscript (damaged) has three miniatures left in the appropriate places and probably once had six.<sup>179</sup> The miniatures in the St. John's Epistle follow closely the iconography of the miniatures in MS Laud misc. 570, the work of the "Fastolf Master", a French artist of the Rouen school.<sup>180</sup>

The artist of St. John's College MS H.5 seems to have been the master who illuminated two other high quality manuscripts, the Abingdon Missal made for Abbot Ashenden of Abingdon in 1461 (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 227 with Trinity College MS 75) and Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 16, a fine Chaucerian miscellany made for John Stanley of Hooton c. 1450.<sup>181</sup> This master may have been one William Abell, a "lymnour" based in London in the mid-fifteenth



century, whose particular speciality seems to have been charters and cartularies.<sup>182</sup> Even if Abell and the "Abingdon Missal Master" were not one and the same man, they both display a characteristic linear, heraldic style whose angularity contrasts sharply with the earlier fluid "International Gothic" style and the naturalistic style developing in the Low Countries. It was perhaps a workshop "house style"; similar features appear in the work of two closely associated artists, one who worked on British Library MS Royal 2.B.I, a selection of psalms chosen by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (d. 1447), and on a patent of arms granted to the Drapers' Company in 1439, and another who illustrated the latter part of the so-called "Beaufort Hours" (British Library MS Royal 2.A.XVIII) and three vernacular texts - a copy of Love's Myrroure (National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 18.1.7) made for Edmund Grey of Ruthin and Lady Catherine Percy c. 1450; a lavishly illustrated copy of Lydgate's Troy Book, made for a member of the west country family of Garent; and a fine copy of a Chronicle of England (Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 733), original owner unknown but later in the hands of George Neville, Lord Bergavenny.<sup>183</sup> The workshop seems to have catered for a range of patrons, bourgeois - mercantile, gentle and noble, and was quite capable of fulfilling adequately a commission for a presentation copy, even when the destinaire was so lofty a figure as the Duke of Buckingham. The choice of artist was presumably made by Scrope or by an agent acting on his behalf; the Duke was a passive recipient.

#### Putative ownership of MSS

Holkham Hall MS 24, the "Knightly Psalter": see under "Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham."

### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery: Presumably Humphrey owned more than the cup bequeathed him by his sister (see above, 'Anne Stafford, Countess of March'), but if he did, the evidence has vanished.

Architecture, etc.: Buckingham's will provided for the building of a chapel attached to the church of the family foundation at Pleshey.<sup>184</sup> During his lifetime he may have subsidised the building of the tower of the castle church of St. Mary, Stafford; one of the shields carved on the tower once bore the impaled arms of Stafford and Neville.<sup>185</sup> Humphrey's contribution to Maxstoke Castle has fared better. He had acquired the castle in a land exchange with Lord Clinton, and commemorated his acquisition with a pair of handsome gates, ornamented with ironwork. His arms, impaled with Neville, appear as part of the ornament, supported by antelopes; his badges of the Stafford knot and burning wheel-nave also feature in the design.<sup>186</sup> Any work that he had done at Penshurst was not so obviously marked as his.<sup>187</sup>

Music: Buckingham paid annuities to several musicians, including a minstrel, harper, and trumpeters.<sup>188</sup>

Learning and Piety: Rosenthal thought that Buckingham was both conventional and penny-pinching in his piety, but Buckingham's charitable gifts were quite generous, given the probable state of his finances by the time of his death.<sup>189</sup> He gave one hundred marks' worth of land and rents to the Dean and Canons of his free chapel at Stafford during his lifetime; in his testament he made provision for a cash gift of one hundred pounds to enable Maxstoke College to buy lands to support another canon, and also for the purchase of land worth one hundred marks to enable Pleshey to support three more priests and six poor men.<sup>190</sup> He also wished a

chapel to be added to Pleshey's collegiate church. Humphrey also made a gift of land to his grandfather's foundation at Newport, which had suffered badly during Glendower's rebellion, and needed assistance.<sup>191</sup>

11. Anne, First Duchess of Buckingham

Daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, and Joan Beaufort.

m. 1. Humphrey Stafford, First Duke of Buckingham.

2. Walter Blount, Lord Mountjoy.

d. 1480.

Surviving MSS

1. New York Public Library MS Spencer 3 (the 'Wingfield Hours')<sup>192</sup>

Technical Description:

- (a) Date: Mid-fifteenth century (c. 1424-1480).
  - (b) Contents: Hours and Psalter.
  - (c) Material: Vellum.
  - (d) Dimensions: 11 x 8 inches (28 x 20.5 cm.).
  - (e) Number of leaves: i + 106 (Hours) + 133 (Psalter).
  - (f) Collation: First section in 6's and 8's, one 10; second regular in 8's (some losses)
  - (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
  - (h) Number of scribes, script: Two textura hands (one in each section).
  - (i) Decoration: The Hours are adorned with single-line initials decorated with penwork and larger initials attached to demi-vinets consisting of bars of gold and colours breaking into penwork sprays, gold ornaments, and coloured trefoils and "pseudo flowers". There are also several half-page miniatures accompanied by full borders, consisting of an inner gold bar and wider "baguette" coloured and decorated with white-line ornament, and an outer border of penwork with gold motifs, acanthus "fleurons", flowers, "pseudo-flowers" and grotesques. The Hours were probably made in England, but under foreign influence, and do not seem to be of the highest quality.<sup>193</sup>
- The decoration in the Psalter seems to have been intended to harmonise with the format of the decoration in the Hours, although differ-

ent artists were employed. In the Psalter's full borders, the inner bar has been widened to incorporate larger motifs of flowers and leaves and Stafford knots and wheel-naves. In the outer borders, the pen-drawn tendrils almost disappear under a riotous profusion of grotesques, "pseudo-flowers", large sprays of daisies, cornflowers, roses, columbines and carnations, and assorted livestock - including a cat and mouse, peacocks, parrots and butterflies. The miniatures themselves are of higher quality than those in the Hours. Striking figures (especially the Fool in the 'Dixit Insuper' miniature) loom large against landscapes busy with peasants and hunters, rivers alive with shipping, and rather continental-looking castles, churches and towns peeping out from folds in the hills. If this section was produced in England, it was under strong foreign influence; perhaps foreign or foreign-trained artists were involved.<sup>194</sup>

- (j) Binding: Sixteenth century, possibly French, done for Richard Wingfield.<sup>195</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (v) Heraldic devices: The Hours shows no indication of ownership; there are no heraldic devices or owner's inscriptions, and the prayers are for an unknown 'michi famulo tuo N.' In the Psalter, however, heraldry is used to make an emphatic statement of ownership. The Stafford knot is woven into bar borders and interlaced into initial stems, and the Stafford badge of the wheel-nave is found in initial infills, bar borders and outer borders (where once it bursts into flowers instead of the more usual flames - II, f.38<sup>r</sup>). The wheel-nave was well-known as a Stafford badge, and a mid-fifteenth century poem refers to the Duke of Buckingham by his device of the 'Carte nathe'.<sup>196</sup> Antelopes with golden collars and chains leap from the tops of bar borders or

recline upon them; swans with similar adornments rise from the tops of wheel-naves strategically placed in the bar borders. Both beasts were used as "supporters" by the Staffords, who inherited this usage from the Bohuns.<sup>197</sup> The motto "Mercy and Grace" winds on scrolls through some of the borders; it probably belonged to the owner of the book.

The heraldry, an integral part of the decoration, places the Psalter firmly in Stafford hands, and other evidence suggests whose. The prayers in the Psalter are all for a lady, who is described on f.128<sup>r</sup> as 'famula tua Anna': the most likely Anne is the Lady Anne Neville who married in 1424 Humphrey, Earl of Stafford and subsequently Duke of Buckingham. That the Psalter was made for her, rather than her daughter Anne (the only other Anne Stafford of the main line during the mid-fifteenth century) is suggested by the manuscript's reappearance in Wingfield hands in the sixteenth century. Duchess Anne's grandson Henry married Catherine Wydeville; after his death she married Sir Richard Wingfield, and it was perhaps his son or grandson who had the volume rebound. It seems quite likely that Duchess Anne gave her Psalter to the Stafford heir.<sup>198</sup>

It appears that the Psalter was made specially for Anne, Duchess of Buckingham, but it is not certain how the Hours and Psalter came to be attached to each other. James suggested that the Hours was a "shop-copy", and this seems likely; there was a thriving trade in Books of Hours.<sup>199</sup> Perhaps Anne wished for a Book of Hours to be bound with her own Psalter; perhaps the Hours were in the family already, and the Psalter was made to fit.

Affiliations: The Hours, although probably made in England, show signs of French and Dutch influence in their decoration.<sup>200</sup> The Psalter is probably of similar origins. Rather unusually, it is

the border decoration which links this Psalter to a network of other manuscripts, through the traces of one artist's influence. Mrs. Kathleen Scott has recognised the work of this artist, whom she calls the 'Caesar Master', in a group of manuscripts: Vatican Library MS Chigi H VII 215; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 42-1950; Modena, Bibl. Estense MS Ital. 78; Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana MS 952; Vatican Library MS Lat. 4681; and Windsor, Eton College MS 102. These manuscripts, their contents of a more or less "humanistic" nature and written in "humanistic" script (some of them in England), display a mixture of Italianate and Northern mannerisms in their teeming borders,

a fusion of an Italianate use of border space, roundels, putti, heavy acanthus, background work, and initials with northern - perhaps Flemish, Netherlandish, or German - types of realistic foliage and grotesque figures, including playing-card motifs.<sup>201</sup>

The "Caesar Master" made his mark on English workshops:

either the master artist... arrived in England with an assistant who remained and worked in a very similar style from model sheets containing the master's motifs, or else the Caesar Master trained a native artist until the foreign style was fully absorbed.<sup>202</sup>

The Spencer MS is one of a group of manuscripts made in England which show the direct influence of the "Caesar Master's" style in their luxuriant borders, including New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS 9, the "Berkeley Hours" (a visually stunning manuscript worked on by a number of border artists, including perhaps the "Caesar Master" himself, and of miniaturists, including the "Fastolf Master");<sup>203</sup> Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 56 (Hours);

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 10, f.43 (Nova Statuta); British Library MS Addit. 27924 (Hours); Cambridge, Massachussets, Harvard University, Houghton Library MS Widener 2 (Hours); and British Library MS Harley 1275 (De ludo scaccorum). Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 302 may also belong to this group.<sup>204</sup> The "Caesar Master's" motifs, particularly his angry peacocks, large sprays of roses, and grotesques, are mixed with English elements in the borders of these manuscripts. At a slightly later stage the "Caesar Master's" style filtered into a clearly-definable workshop through the work of another border-artist, christened the "owl artist" by Mrs. Scott for his use of a characteristic owl (and other motifs) borrowed from the "Caesar Master's" repertoire. The "owl master" and his English assistant worked together on British Library MS Harley 2887 (Hours); London, Lambeth Palace MS 186 (Psalter); Cambridge, University Library MS Ee.iv.37 (Peter Idley's Instructions); and Bodleian Library MSS Bodley 283 (the Mirrore of the World) and Rawlinson poet. 223 (first quire, Lydgate's Troy Book).<sup>205</sup> At a further remove, the "Caesar Master's" influence still appears on odd leaves of another group of manuscripts: New York Public Library MS 63 (Missal); British Library MS Arundel 99 (Troy Book); Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 16 (Hours); Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.ii.7 (Hours); Philadelphia Museum of Art MS 45.65.7 (Hours); and possibly Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vit. 17-4 (Plato's Phaedon etc., in Spanish).<sup>206</sup> The Spencer Psalter is thus locatable in a large group of manuscripts, made in England, which show the influence of one notable border-artist. The "Caesar Master" left his traces on English manuscript production, directly and indirectly, for a period of twenty to thirty years; the Spencer Psalter is an early example of his effect on English workshops.



Putative ownership of MSS

1. Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 203

Brief description: This little manuscript, one "booklet" of twelve leaves (twenty-four pages in later pagination), contains three verse pieces: The Nightingale, "Prouerbiu Scogan" (Chaucer's Trouthe) and "Prouerbiu R. Stokys", 'Se meche sey lityll and lerne to suffre in tyme' (ascribed to Lydgate by Stow).<sup>207</sup> Although it is so small, two scribes worked on it, both using an anglicana script with some legal features.<sup>208</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (vi) literary dedication:

This is the only one of the three surviving texts of The Nightingale to retain all its dedicatory stanzas. After the Prologue, the Corpus MS contains a handsome dedication to the Duchess of Buckingham:

Go lityll q(uayere An)d swyft thy prynses dresse  
Offrynge (thi) selfe wyth humble reuerence  
Vn to the ryght hyghe and myghty pryncesse  
The Duches of Bokyngham and of hur excellence  
Besechinge hyre that of hure pacyence  
Sche wold the take of hure noble grace  
amonge hyre bokys for the asygne a place  
  
vn to the tyme hyr ladyly goodnesse  
luste for to call vn to hyr high presence  
Suche of hyre peple that are in lustynesse  
ffresschly encoragyt as galantis in prime tens  
Desyrous for to here the amerous sentensce  
of the nyghtyngale and in there mynd embrace  
Who fauoure moste schall fynd in loues grace

Comaundyng them to here with tendrenesse  
 Of this youre nyghtingale the gostely sence  
 Whos songe and deth declaryd is expres  
 In englyshe here ryght bare of eloquence  
 But notheles consydred the sentence  
 all loue unlaufle I hope hit wyl deface  
 and freschly luste oute of there hertis chace  
 meued of corage by vertu of the sesoun  
 In prime tens renoueled yere by yere  
 Gladynge euery hart of veray resoun  
 When fresch may in Kalendis can apere  
 Phebus ascendyng clere schynyng in his spere  
 By whom the colde of wyntyre is exlyd  
 And lusty sesone this newly reconcylede.

(ff.1<sup>r-v</sup>, 11. 1-28).

The dedication is clearly aimed at a Duchess of Buckingham. The hands cannot be dated closely enough to be of much help in determining which Duchess of Buckingham is meant, but a further textual reference is of help. At lines 330-333 the poet laments the recent and untimely death of Henry, Duke of Warwick. This young man died in 1446; presumably the poem was composed soon afterwards, and at that time the Duchess of Buckingham was Anne Stafford, née Neville, aunt of the late lamented Duke. She had been elevated to the rank of Duchess in 1444, and, in the way of things, became a Dowager Duchess in 1460 when her husband was killed at the Battle of Northampton. After 1460 a distinction might have had to be made between the Dowager and the new Duchess of Buckingham, Catherine Wydeville, wife of Anne's grandson Henry; besides, there is no reference to the lamentable ducal death which would presumably have affected

Duchess Anne even more than that of her nephew. This suggests that the poem was composed c. 1446-1460.

The author hoped that his work would find a place in the Duchess's library, but whether he hoped for financial reward, as well as the spiritual rewards accruing from the work's reception and use, is not known. One hopes that the Duchess proved generous, as she could well afford to be. Whether the Corpus text is the copy actually intended to find a place among the Duchess's books is debatable. Its plain appearance would not debar it from that place; contents might be valued as highly as appearance, and the humble gift of a poor man who could afford nothing better might be just as acceptable as a lavishly produced volume from someone with money to spare.<sup>209</sup> However, the unfinished state of the manuscript (spaces left for coloured capitals were never filled), and the contemporaneous inclusion of other texts (however apposite) suggest that this may not be the actual volume given to Anne, but its exemplar, perhaps, or a private copy made from either the exemplar or the Duchess's copy.<sup>210</sup>

The indications (such as they are) of the 'late and dilute' dialect of the Corpus text, do not bring us much closer to the circumstances of The Nightingale's composition and presentation. Professor McIntosh suggests that its few peculiarities place it in south-western Staffordshire or southern Shropshire. Since occasional features from other dialect regions crop up, it seems that it is 'probably one of those difficult two-layer texts wherein the underlying layer is not very different from the scribes' own'.<sup>211</sup> The Staffordshire-Shropshire features could then derive from scribes, exemplar, or both sources. There is a temptation to place the author of the text represented by Corpus MS 203 firmly in the heart-

lands of the Stafford authority, perhaps in the Stafford household itself, as secretary or clerk. However, the hints offered by the text are really too vague to support this supposition, particularly since we cannot tell just how close the Corpus text is to the original, and how many scribal "layers" lie between the Corpus text and the author. His text was certainly intended for use in the Duchess's household, but we cannot place either the author or the Corpus manuscript there for certain.

The other texts included in the Corpus manuscript add a little to the complexities of its provenance. Chaucer's Trouthe is here called 'Prouerbium Scogan', perhaps in confused recollection of Scogan's quotation of Chaucer's Gentillesse in his Moral Balade or Lenvoye de Chaucer a Scogan. 'Se meche' was ascribed (like many other pieces) to Lydgate, on the authority of Stow, but in the Corpus manuscript it is called 'Prouerbium R. Stokys', and Carleton Brown preferred this more difficult ascription.<sup>212</sup> 'R. Stokys' has so far defied identification. The texts arrived in this manuscript by a fairly common process; when the booklet was being prepared the scribes erred a little on the safe side in estimating the space The Nightingale would require, and three blank leaves were left, crying out to be filled. In this case, it was the original scribes who did the filling. Both Trouthe and 'se meche' circulated in a number of manuscripts,<sup>213</sup> and so were fairly easily accessible, while their form and didactic tone fitted them for use as pendants to the main item, so in they went.

Affiliations: The Nightingale is an English translation of a poem called Philomela, which the translator found 'in latyn... in a boke well versed'<sup>(108)</sup>. This was not John of Hoveden's well-known Philomela, but a shorter piece of the same name ascribed to Bonaven-

tura in the Middle Ages, although it was probably the work of John Peckam, Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>214</sup> The Latin poem tells how the nightingale sings to the poet, not of love but of her death, which draws closer with each canonical Hour. The Nightingale is interpreted as standing for Christ and also for the Christian soul, and the canonical hours are also explained and meditated upon. The English translation follows this structure closely, although the Old and New Testament themes it ponders at each Hour differ from those in the Latin original, and it adds an extra comparison with the ages of Man. So, at Aurora, or Matins, the English poet considers the morning of the world - the Creation, the Fall of Lucifer, the Fall of Man; how man is born to sorrow and should consider every morning the sins of his youth; and the Hour of Christ's Betrayal (120-196). It is a satisfying structure, and the poet managed to combine clarity with passion in his lyrical expansion of his Latin model. That model was widely available (it survives in over thirty manuscripts in its original form, and passed into several vernacular translations).<sup>215</sup> Like another work ascribed to Bonaventura, of even greater popularity and pervasiveness - the Meditationes Vitæ Christi (source of Love's Myrroure) - the Philomela, in smaller compass, combined passages of clear, edifying narrative with more lyrical outbursts, stirring the reader to affective contemplation. Like Love's translation of the Meditationes, which appealed to a cluster of noble ladies, the anonymous English Nightingale should have had the ready acceptance in a lay household that it craved for itself. The work was suitable for application in any such establishment - Duchesses did not hold a monopoly of lay piety - and its exclusive dedication to the Duchess of Buckingham may represent no closer concern than that of an educated man hoping to profit from his talents.

Yet the Duchess's will, with its request to set 'all pomp and pride of the world apart' at her funeral, and its bequests to the monks of Syon and the Charterhouses of London and Sheen,<sup>216</sup> suggests that she might have shared in the pious tastes of her sister of York and daughter-in-law of Richmond, and that the author's hopes for her reception and use of his poem were not ill-founded.

The Nightingale seems to have found the wider audience its poet had wished for it (hoping that it 'in englysh... were notified/ To all that lusty are it for to here', 110-111), beyond Duchess Anne's household. It survives in two other copies. The first is in British Library MS Cotton Caligula A.II, a well-known miscellany, the bulk of whose contents are tail-rhyme romances (more or less edifying) and groups of shorter religious, instructional and didactic pieces, several of which are "refrain" poems ('Allway fond to say the best' is a fair example.). Guddat-Figge notes that the manuscript was quite carefully produced, and that its order was planned with some consistency, even though, as McSparran notes, it probably began life as at least two booklets, ff. 3<sup>r</sup>-13<sup>v</sup> and ff. 14<sup>r</sup>-139<sup>v</sup>.<sup>217</sup> The Nightingale makes its appearance after two popular didactic poems by Lydgate (Stans Puer ad Mensam and The Churl and the Bird), a clump of romances (Sir Eglamour, Octavian Imperator, Sir Launfal and Libeaus Disconus) and two short religious paraphrases. It is followed by a group of "refrain" poems and another cluster of romances (verging more or less closely on the saint's life) - Emare, Ypotis, the Sege of Jerusalem, Chevalere Assigne and Isumbras - interspersed with religious lyrics. Sadly, The Nightingale has lost its beginning- its starting-point, 'commaundyng hem, etc.' is clearly acephalous, and forms the third dedicatory stanza in the Corpus text. Since care was taken to begin new items on a new page

(or new column) it seems that the Cotton text once possessed a full dedication and the prologue; two stanzas plus the prologue would have neatly filled the lost preceding verso. We can only guess now whether this version also once bore the lofty dedication to the Duchess of Buckingham, or whether, like Scrope's Othea, it sought favours in various high places. In this context, the presence of the unique copy of Chevalere Assigne in the same manuscript is particularly tantalising; it is a rumbustious, semi-alliterative English re-working of the Swan Knight legend so dear to the Bohuns and their Stafford heirs. Had this also filtered through to a London bookshop from the Stafford household?

The Nightingale appears in a strikingly different context in the Cotton manuscript, but it is not one in which it is woefully out of place. It might seem something of a rara avis at first, amongst the 'unpretentious', 'simple and unsophisticated' romances, being as it is 'most carefully constructed' and 'highly artistic'.<sup>218</sup> Yet, even if some of the cheery romances err on the side of 'bold bawdry', they are generally pious in tone, and some are close enough to saints' lives to surround The Nightingale in an aura of piety. Even closer to The Nightingale in tone are the explicatory religious poems and the didactic pieces aimed at inculcating the principles of a good life. McSparran suggests that the volume as a whole made a good little family library, 'intended to provide for the amusement and edification of a household' - and The Nightingale is certainly edifying.<sup>219</sup> How it came to be included in a manuscript designed for a more general public than the Duchess of Buckingham's household remains a mystery. MS Cotton Caligula A. II seems to have been the product of a London shop;<sup>220</sup> perhaps the exemplar of Duchess Anne's copy, or an exemplar taken from it, made

its way into circulation and so to the shelves of this presumed London bookshop. Judging by the popularity of The Nightingale's Latin original and of vernacular translations of that and other works of contemplative piety, an English translation of the Philomela had a large potential audience. It seems that once the Duchess had her copy, The Nightingale spread its wings and reached that wider audience. Watermark evidence and the presence of a poem which originally had precise reference to Lord Cromwell and is presumed to have been adapted after his death in 1454, suggest that the Cotton manuscript was made in the 1460's.<sup>221</sup>

The third manuscript dates from the end of the fifteenth century, and shows how far The Nightingale had migrated by then. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. misc. c. 66, the "Capesthorpe MS", is the "common-place book" of a comfortably-erudite Cheshire gentleman, Humfrey Newton (1466-1536).<sup>222</sup> About 1500, he compiled a family cartulary, and in with a provincial landowner's copies of deeds and records, he bound a provincial landowner's collection of poetry. Most was his own work, in the form of trial runs later worked up into poems, and complete poems, of which a large portion are epistles to his wife, complete with fashionable acrostics, and a few are "love-adventures". 'The style of his love poems, albeit rustic, follows the current fashions of the late fifteenth century!'.<sup>223</sup> One poem is particularly interesting for its alliterative vocabulary and its echoes of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; the "alliterative revival" seems to have survived well into the sixteenth century in north-western England.<sup>224</sup> Along with his own pieces, Newton included some others which had taken his fancy: 'gode prouerbis to set in þe bordere of þe halle'; Advice to Purchasers of Land; the gnomic tag 'When feith failes in prestes sawez'; Richard of Caistre's hymn;



and The Nightingale. An index preceding the poems (probably not made by Newton) mentions a 'vera fabula quam Johannes Lydgate faciebat' (f.92<sup>r</sup>) which could be taken as referring to The Nightingale. However, since no other text of this version is ascribed to Lydgate, and the index also refers to a 'De Regimine' which is now missing, the Lydgate item could have been another poem, now lost. When Humfrey wrote the poem out, he entitled it 'Philomena... ffabula'. He seems to have copied his text fairly carefully; except for a misplaced line and one shifted stanza, it corresponds closely with the other two texts. However, it is missing the dedicatory stanzas; it begins deliberately at 'Meued of corage by vertew of the season', the first point at which a start could be made without the dedication and without making a nonsense of the opening. The reasons for this omission are debatable; either Humfrey's exemplar had shed those stanzas, accidentally or on purpose, or Humfrey decided they were irrelevant and left them out. How he came by the poem in the first place is a mystery. Since it seems to have been circulating in the Staffordshire-Shropshire region in the 1450's, in London by the 1460's, it could have migrated north-westwards by 1500. Humfrey's parish-church was unusually well-endowed with educated parish priests, and his family was friendly with the Booth family that had two archbishops to its credit, so he may have acquired his copy through clerical acquaintances.<sup>225</sup> His own Cheshire dialect masks any dialectal traces of his exemplar's origin.

That Humfrey, once acquainted with the poem, should have decided to include it in his own collection, is not particularly surprising. As in the Cotton miscellany, The Nightingale finds itself in rather strange company, at first sight - estate matters, tracts on wine and palmistry, and love poems which suggest Humfrey had been listening

to the 'amorous sentensce' rather than the 'gostly sense' of the nightingale's song. Yet The Nightingale does have a hymn for company, and it can take its place with the other items as a reflection of a country gentleman's concerns: the getting of land, the getting of a wife, the maintaining of a comfortable life in this world and the hope of a comfortable life in the next. The Nightingale would suit such a man in his more reflective moments, as it would suit its other recipients.

That there was a desire for such a text is made evident by the fact that The Nightingale was not the only English translation of the Philomela. There is another version, A Saying of the Nightingale, which can more definitely be ascribed to Lydgate. Both Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.20 and British Library MS Addit. 29729 (Stow's collection) state that the 'seying of þe Nightinale' was 'ymagyned and compyled by Lydegate daun Johan þe monk of Bury'. The Trinity manuscript is a Shirley codex; Stow's collection is based on it; and the third copy of this version, in British Library MS Harley 2251, is also derived from Shirley's material. Since Shirley knew better than most what was by Lydgate and what was not, it seems reasonable to accept this ascription. The Saying is very different from The Nightingale; it takes the same starting-point in the Philomela's spiritual interpretation of the nightingale's song, but abandons the tight organisation and 'precise and pointed allegory' of the Philomela and The Nightingale in favour of a more accumulative, associative meditative effect, a kind of "stream of consciousness". As Pearsall describes it, 'it sprawls, picks up ideas and allusions in passing'.<sup>226</sup> It is a different kind of encouragement to meditation than that offered by The Nightingale, but the object behind both poems was probably the same. It was perhaps just an

accident of time that the Duchess of Buckingham did not receive two dedications of two translations of the Philomela.

2. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS nouv. acq. lat. 3145 (formerly a Yates Thompson MS)<sup>227</sup>

Brief description: The Hours of Jeanne de Navarre is an exquisite fourteenth century volume from the workshop of Jean Pucelle, an example of the best Parisian work of the 1330's.<sup>228</sup> Three fifteenth century leaves bound in at the start of the book consist of two pages of prayers in Latin with French rubrics (one to St. Sebastian for protection from the plague), and a third leaf with a miniature 'by an inferior artist, probably English' of a lady kneeling before the Holy Trinity and the crowned Virgin.<sup>229</sup> The lady wears a gown quartered in blue and red, an ermine-lined mantle, and a rich head-dress. From her mouth issues a scroll with the words "Mercy and Grace".

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices, etc: The motto "Mercy and Grace" appears in one of the borders of the Wingfield Hours and Psalter (II, f.68<sup>V</sup>), which belonged to Anne, Duchess of Buckingham. Yates Thompson noted the coincidence, but wisely did not assert that the leaves bound in with the Paris manuscript must once have been part of another manuscript belonging to the Duchess.<sup>230</sup> That remains a possibility, but there is far too little evidence. Nothing is known of their provenance, or how they came to be bound with the beautiful Hours of Jeanne de Navarre. They were certainly part of that volume by 1621, when the book was examined in the library of the Convent of the Cordelières in Paris, a house with many connections with the French royal family.<sup>231</sup> Books, artists and patrons migrated between England and the Continent, and it is possible that these three leaves might once have been part of

a volume prepared in France for the English market (which either remained unbought in a French bookshop or came back to France at a later date), or was made in England and carried to France later. Given the many problems of provenance involved, it is probably safest to assume that the three leaves fortuitously bound in with the Hours of Jeanne de Navarre may possibly have come from a volume belonging originally to Duchess Anne - "possible but unlikely" - and that the Duchess probably did not own the Hours.

3. British Library MS Royal 18.C.II

Brief description: This is a large and tolerably handsome manuscript of the Canterbury Tales, dating from the second quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>232</sup> The decoration follows an established hierarchy: tales begin with competent four line gold initials on blue and pink grounds, with champ sprays of gold trefoils and green drops attached, while prologues and suchlike divisions are decorated with similar but smaller initials. Two scribes were responsible for the work, both writing clearly and neatly, and under supervision.<sup>233</sup>

History and provenance: evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The last flyleaf, presumed contemporary with the manuscript - the wormholes match - contains a number of scribbled names, including "mountford", "Malyfaunt", "Mabylye Darcy", "Manfield", "parker", "Plp. Chetwynd", "Stanley", and "Thomas Cobham", and the motto "S(ou)venance". Philip Chetwynd (d. 1527) a Staffordshire man, Gentleman Usher to Henry VIII, was the first certain owner. Some of the names Manly and Rickert identify as Chetwynd kin. Others they link back towards the household of Anne, Duchess of Buckingham, presumably through her daughter Anne's marriage to Thomas Cobham.<sup>234</sup> The front flyleaf contains the fragmentary remains of an Inquisition post mortem on the estate of Elizabeth Holland, Lady Neville, who had married John Neville, eldest half-brother of Duchess Anne.

The manifold connections of the names scribbled in the manuscript, particularly the Chetwynd group (for Chetwynds were Stafford retainers in the time of Duke Humphrey) point towards the Stafford household, in the opinion of Manly and Rickert.<sup>235</sup> They added in the suggestive possibilities of the motto "Souvenaunce" (perhaps related to the motto "Souent me souenne" as used by Anne's grandson Henry), a possible Neville saltire drawn in drypoint (f.20<sup>v</sup>), early "b's" in drypoint, and a possible "AB" in drypoint (f.153<sup>r</sup>), although they admitted that all these were 'perhaps coincidental'.<sup>236</sup> More significant is the textual evidence they adduce; MS Royal 18.C.II is textually (and also decoratively) close to British Library MS Sloane 1685, which belonged to Thomas Neville, Anne's nephew.<sup>237</sup> The two manuscripts may have come from the same source, perhaps a London shop, but since both seem to have been bought "off the peg" as decent but not luxury copies, the possible family connections of their owners may be coincidental. Given that there are no definite marks of Duchess Anne's ownership in MS Royal 18.C.II, only pointers towards her household and her family, it is possible, but not very probable, that the book belonged to her. Many members of Duchess Anne's "extended family" had connections of one sort or another with manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales, and it is quite plausible that she did too, but there is no direct evidence that it was MS Royal 18.C.II that she owned.

4. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61.<sup>238</sup>

Brief description: This lovely manuscript was obviously planned as a "luxury edition" of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. It was written in a time-consuming textura script, usually reserved for grand liturgical books, and spaces were left for about ninety miniatures.<sup>239</sup> Illustration of a secular text on such a scale was not

unheard of - some copies of the Roman de la Rose and the Roman de Troie had cycles of this size - but the creation of such a cycle more or less from scratch was an ambitious undertaking requiring time, money and thought. It was particularly unusual for such a cycle to be planned for an English work at the turn of the fourteenth century, especially since that work was not translated from a Latin or French work with an existing tradition of illumination.<sup>240</sup> A frontispiece serves as an indication of the quality of illumination to be bestowed on the manuscript. The miniature places Chaucer and his poem in the centre of a courtly, cosmopolitan milieu, (literally and figuratively). The iconography of the poet declaiming to a courtly audience relates this miniature to current trends in "author" and "preaching" miniatures, particularly the prefatory miniatures provided for De Guileville's Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine which show the poet reading to a predominantly royal and courtly audience.<sup>241</sup> The retinues winding down from two elaborate castles in the background suggested to Professor Salter a comparison with the "itinerary" miniatures devised by the Limbourgs to accompany prayers for the Duke of Berry's safe journeying.<sup>242</sup> Both iconography and style suggest that the Corpus artist was closely in touch with the best of contemporary French illuminations: Professor Salter found links, both general and specific, with the work of masters such as the Limbourgs, the "Brussels Initial Master", the "Coronation Master" and the "Bedford Master".<sup>243</sup> The rich border surrounding the miniature seems, however, to be of English work, of the kind to be found in sumptuous contemporary manuscripts, such as the Bedford Hours and Psalter (British Library MS Addit. 42131) and the Hours of Elizabeth de Quene (British Library MS Addit. 50001).<sup>244</sup>

The Corpus Troilus was clearly planned on a scale exceptionally

lavish for an English vernacular text. The amount already spent on it before the manuscript was laid aside, and its high quality, even in its incomplete state, suggest that the entrepreneur who organised the craftsmen who worked on it was 'fulfilling a specific commission', although it is possible that he was engaged on a speculative venture.<sup>245</sup> Either the speculation did not pay off, or the manuscript's commissioner died, or he 'changed his mind about the consequence with which he was endowing Chaucer's text'; the money seems to have run out and no further work was done on the manuscript.<sup>246</sup> Later owners were prepared to leave it in its unfinished state.<sup>247</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The manuscript does provide a few hints of ownership, although they leave its original provenance a mystery. The most definite evidence of ownership is the presence of John Shirley's "bookplate" on f.1<sup>r</sup>, in his hand.<sup>248</sup> Parkes thinks it is, on the whole, unlikely that Shirley was the original entrepreneur; the Corpus manuscript probably entered the book-production world before Shirley did, and it bears none of the hallmarks of a Shirley manuscript except his "bookplate". Another name, this time written in plummet on f.101<sup>v</sup>, in a late fifteenth century hand, "neuer Foryeteth Anne nevill", suggests some sources from which Shirley might have acquired MS Corpus 61. One is the unhappy lady Anne Beauchamp, who married Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, maker and unmaker of Kings. Since Shirley was once her father's secretary,<sup>249</sup> and Anne seems to have come from a cultivated family, in the habit of owning and commissioning fine manuscripts, it is an attractive possibility that Shirley acquired the manuscript through Beauchamp connections, and it may have passed back to them from him. On the other hand, another name, "knyvett", scribbled on f.108<sup>v</sup>, suggests another Anne Neville,

Anne, Duchess of Buckingham. Her daughter Joan married Sir William Knyvett in 1477. Parkes queries whether she would have styled herself "Anne Neville" after her marriage (1424), but Brusendorff points to the fact that Anne's mother Joan Beaufort was Chaucer's niece, and that Anne might thus have had a family interest in Chaucer's works.<sup>250</sup> Since Anne Beauchamp's husband Richard Neville was Joan Beaufort's grandson, presumably she too would have had a family interest in Chaucer, and so would the rest of the prolific Neville clan. There were other fifteenth century Anne Nevilles who might lay claim to the signature in the Corpus manuscript, although the one who owned British Library MS 4912 of the Troilus might be discounted.<sup>251</sup> Brusendorff, inclined to take Anne, Duchess of Buckingham as presumed owner of the Corpus Troilus, suggested that her grandfather John of Gaunt had ordered himself a handsome copy of Troilus (based on a plain copy given by his impecunious brother-in-law Chaucer), and that this family copy was then used as an exemplar by his daughter Joan, who had an equally sumptuous copy made, which passed to her daughter Anne.<sup>252</sup> Dr. Lawton believes that there is in fact little evidence that the exemplar for MS Corpus 61 was illuminated, and considers that the Corpus manuscript represented a unique attempt by an appreciative reader to give Chaucer's Troilus the setting it deserves.<sup>253</sup> The names of later admirers, Shirley and "Anne Neville", point to the milieu from which that unknown admirer probably came:

patterns for the original commissioning of the manuscript and its distinguished frontispiece should be sought among families at least as eminent as the Beauchamps, the Beauforts, the Nevilles and the Staffords, particularly those who had continental contacts and a taste for



continental book-painting.<sup>254</sup>

It is tempting to believe that it was a member of Anne of Buckingham's family who started the enormously and expensively ambitious project of MS Corpus 61, a project which seems to have been planned on a scale of magnificence which, although it must have reflected the taste of whoever commissioned the book in the first instance, was too ambitious in terms of what any other fifteenth century patron in England was prepared to accept, either financially or in terms of literary and artistic taste.<sup>255</sup> Unfortunately, the name "Anne Neville", scrawled on a page in the heart of the volume rather than proudly inscribed on a flyleaf, can only suggest that at some stage during the fifteenth century, probably after Shirley rescued the book, one "Anne Neville" had the book in her hands long enough to leave her mark. It is possible that Anne of Buckingham was the Anne Neville in question, and so a later owner of a literary and artistic treasure, but by no means certain. Millar, writing of the artistic provenance, said 'cette miniature ne laisse pas que d'être énigmatique'; the scraps of evidence mean that the provenance of the manuscript itself 'ne laisse pas que d'être énigmatique'.<sup>256</sup>

5. Glasgow, Hunterian Library MS V.3.7.<sup>257</sup>

Brief description: This manuscript is a unique copy of the Chaucerian Romaunt de la Rose, made early in the fifteenth century. It is a handsome copy, carefully and neatly written in an anglicana book-hand, and ornamented at textual divisions with small gold initials on coloured grounds, from which champs spring. One demi-vinet has survived on f.57<sup>V</sup>; the beginning, probably similarly adorned, has been lost. The textual problems of this manuscript are complex and will not be discussed here, but the first part at least is usually

regarded as part of the heresy against Love's law that Chaucer translated.<sup>258</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The manuscript is of good quality, and was probably ordered by the 'wealthy patron' postulated by Brusendorff.<sup>259</sup> A note scribbled on f.139<sup>r</sup>, "my lorde Monjoy/my lady your wyffe" provides some pointers towards this connoisseur. The Hunterian catalogue dates the note as sixteenth century, but Dr. Doyle argues for an earlier date, and suggests that Walter, Baron Mountjoy (d.1474) might be the Mountjoy addressed.<sup>260</sup> Anne, Dowager Duchess of Buckingham, had married this gentleman in 1467. The note certainly suggests that the volume was in the Mountjoy household by the late fifteenth century, but how it arrived there is of course unknown. It may have come with Anne of Buckingham - it is interesting that so many of the manuscripts ascribed to her ownership on debatable grounds are Chaucerian - but since there is no corroborative evidence, this remains a conjecture.

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills: Anne of Buckingham bequeathed to her daughter-in-law Lady Margaret Beaufort

a boke of English of Legenda Sanctorum, a boke of ffrensh called Lukan, another boke of ffrensh of the pistell and Gaspelles and a prymmmer with calpes of silver and gilt covered with purpull velvett.<sup>261</sup>

The "prymmer" (or Primer) and the French book of the Epistles and Gospels were probably handsome heirloom copies, if the description of the Primer's binding is any guide. The Primer may have been either a full book of Hours or a 'shortened and simplified text suitable for use as an elementary reading manual'; the term "Primer"

could be used for both.<sup>262</sup> It is interesting that the Epistles and Gospels are in French; such a book could have been acquired (by purchase or as booty) on one of the numerous Stafford trips to France necessitated by the events of the Hundred Years War. Ralph, Hugh and Humphrey were all frequent visitors on diplomatic and belligerent missions.

The 'Boke of English of Legenda Sanctorum' would no doubt have appealed to the pious Lady Margaret, particularly if she had insufficient Latin to enjoy the Legenda in its original tongue.<sup>263</sup> The Legenda Aurea or Legenda Sanctorum of Jacobus de Voragine, immensely popular, was translated into several vernacular versions; the 'boke of English' in question was most probably a copy of the Gilte Legende, a close translation of Vignay's Légende Dorée, (itself a fourteenth century French translation of Voragine).<sup>264</sup> The colophon of British Library MS Harley 4775 of the Gilte Legende describes the text's purpose:

to excite & stere symple lettird men & women  
to encrease in vertue bi the offten redinge & hiringe  
of this boke. For bi hiring mannes bileuing is mooste  
stablid & istrengthid.

The Gilte Legende came into the world in 1438, and so anticipated Caxton by nearly half a century.<sup>265</sup> Several copies survive, in various stages of completeness and degrees of beauty. Two of them have colophons naming the text in terms similar to Duchess Anne's will: British Library MS Addit. 11565 reads 'Here begynneth the life of seyntes & this boke is called yn Latyn Legenda Sanctorum', and MS Addit. 35298 calls itself 'Legenda Sanctorum in Englysshe. Here begynneth the boke of þe lyfe of seyntis; called in Latyn Legenda Sanctorum.'<sup>266</sup> In the absence of corroborative evidence,

such as heraldry or marks of ownership, it is impossible to say whether any of the surviving manuscripts was Duchess Anne's.

The 'boke of ffrensh called Lukan' is rather more difficult to identify. Lucan was second only to Virgil in popularity during the Middle Ages, and esteemed as poet, historian and philosopher.<sup>267</sup>

'In all areas of Europe, Lucan was read, translated or adapted'; and there were several French "translations" of Lucan.<sup>268</sup> De Bello

Civili appeared (in thirteenth century guise) in Li Hystore de Julius Cesar of Jehan de Tuim, which claimed to be based on 'les x. livres de Lucan'. This in turn was versified by Jacot de Forest as Le Roumans de Jules Cesar.<sup>269</sup> Lucan had in fact been translated

into French before Jehan de Tuim set to work, but as part of a larger compilation. De Bello Civili was one of the sources of the third section of Li Fet des Romains, which was 'translatees de latin en francois selonc Lucan et Suetoine et Saluste' (colophon of British Library MS Royal 16.G.VII), and sometimes formed part of an even larger compilation, a "universal history" known as L'Histoire Ancienne Jusqu'à Cesar. The Fet and Lucan together begat yet

another French adaptation, Le Pharsale, written by Nicholas of Verona in 1343 'Por amor son signor, de Ferare marchois' (Nicolas d'Este). There were thus several works which could have been

meant by 'a boke of ffrensh called Lukan'. Of these, the Fet was probably the most popular and the most widespread (it survives in at least thirty copies),<sup>270</sup> and the most likely candidate. Admittedly, it is not based on Lucan alone, but Lucan is placed first among the list of sources in several colophons, and the Middle Ages considered him to be the Roman historian par excellence.

None of the surviving copies of Li Hystore or Le Roumans de Jules Cesar or of the Fet, some of them of extremely good quality

and all of them of an expensive quantity, appears to have been Duchess Anne's book. There is however, a faint possibility that British Library 16.G.VII might be the book in question. It is a large, copiously illustrated "universal history", including the Fet des Romains, probably of late fourteenth century French provenance. This may perhaps be the volume bequeathed to Henry VIII by Lady Margaret Beaufort, which she described as 'a French book of vellum with diverse stories, at the beginning the book of Genesis with pictures limned'.<sup>271</sup> It certainly starts with Genesis, and has 'pictures limned', but there are no marks of ownership left by either noble Duchess and no traces of direct progression to the Royal Library through Henry VIII; the only names left on it are a late fifteenth century "Sir Henry Slyfeld" and "Bose a Bylyngate". Even if the Royal manuscript were indeed Lady Margaret's, and the very 'French book of vellum with diverse stories' she described, it seems probable that it was not the selfsame 'boke of ffrensh called Lukan' which she had been bequeathed. The two volumes may well have shared the same Roman material, but if Duchess Anne's book had included substantially more than Lucan, presumably she would have described it in terms more akin to those used by Lady Margaret.

#### Other Interests:

Plate and jewellery: Anne's will makes a few bequests of plate.

Her 'son of Buckingham' received a 'pair of basons gilt'; her daughter Joan a 'pair of basons of silver covered partly gilt, wherein I used to wash;' and her 'daughter Montjoy' (stepdaughter) a 'pair of pottle pots of silver'.<sup>272</sup>

Tapiserie and Embroidery: Anne's 'son of Buckingham' was given 'a bed of the salutation of our Lady, with the hangings of the chamber of Antelopes'. Her son John, Earl of Wiltshire, was left 'a sperver

... of red velvet, party gold, with a counterpane to the same of scarlet'.<sup>273</sup>

Architecture, etc.: Duchess Anne had much work carried out at Kimbolton, which struck Henry VIII's commissioners as a right goodly lodging contained in little room, within a moat well and compendiously trussed together in due and convenient proportion, one thing with another, with an inner court.<sup>274</sup>

Learning and piety, etc.: The Duchess wished for a quiet, unostentatious funeral:

I will that wheresoever I shall happen to die my executors cause my body to be carried as secretly as conveniently they can into the said Church, (Pleshey) setting all pomp and pride of the world apart, so that the cost there of and of my obit amount not to above c.l.

The priests at Sion and London and Sheen Charterhouses, and the 'Anker in the wall beside Bishopsgate, London' were to have money for prayers.<sup>275</sup>

11(a) Joan Beaufort, mother of Anne, Duchess of Buckingham

Daughter of John of Gaunt and Catherine Swynford.

m. 1. Sir Robert Ferrers.

2. Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmoreland.

d. 1440.

Putative ownership of MSS

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS e.mus. 35.

Brief description: This is a large and handsome copy of Love's Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ, together with several other shorter pious works, such as the Myroure to Lewde Men and Wymmen,<sup>276</sup> dating from the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

The manuscript is well-written and finely decorated. Minor divisions are marked by pretty penwork initials, larger divisions by champs, with gold initials on coloured grounds and feathery penwork sprays sprouting delicately-shaded "pseudo-flowers". The Proheme and the beginning of the Myrrour are dignified with fine bar-borders in gold and colours with sprays of flowers.

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: The bar-border for the Proheme originally carried two shields. One, Neville, has been partially erased; the other, Beaufort, survives more-or-less intact. Joan Beaufort, who married Ralph Neville, is a likely candidate, but the initials M.N. by the shields suggest that a different Neville-Beaufort combination might be involved. Joan's brother Thomas Beaufort, who married Margaret Neville of Hornby, is another strong possibility, although the bordure of the arms he carried was slightly different from the one painted here.

If Joan were the original owner of this manuscript, we have yet another example of a great lady owning a handsome copy of a

contemporary devotional text. Love's Myrrour, an orthodox work of edification, sober and simply constructed, yet 'at the same time offering to the more spiritually adventurous an introduction by which the mystical side of religion might be approached',<sup>278</sup> had much to offer the lay reader. Several great ladies, such as Margaret, Duchess of Clarence, Lady Margaret Beaufort, and Joan's youngest daughter Cecily, managed to combine a contemplative interest in their spiritual life with an active concern for maintaining their state in secular life. The possession of a copy of Love's Myrrour might suggest that even the ambitious and scheming Countess of Westmoreland<sup>279</sup> possessed some spiritual depths of which we are less aware than we are in the case of her contemporaries; or it may suggest no more than that she was following convention in choosing a popular devotional work in translation, and teaching her family and household on the lines "Do as I say, not as I do".

2. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 1158<sup>279</sup>

Brief description: This is apparently a handsome early fifteenth century Book of Hours, with illuminations in the style of the French "Bedford Master", except for two added portrait miniatures in English style.

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: The two added portrait miniatures show Ralph Neville with his sons by Joan Beaufort, and Joan with their daughters; they are identified by a plethora of Neville heraldry. It seems that the manuscript was acquired in France (by purchase "off the shelf", commission, or plunder?) probably by a member of the Neville family, and the two miniatures were added to commemorate the fecund marriage of Ralph and Joan. It is not known whether the book was destined for Ralph, Joan, or one of their numerous offspring; Joan seems a likely recipient.



Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills: Joan's brother Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, left her in his will 'unum librum vocat Tristram' - presumably a copy of one of the French versions of the Tristram romance.<sup>280</sup>

John Morton, 'armiger' of York (d. 1431), left 'reverendissime domine Johanne Comitissae Westmerland unum librum de Anglico, vocatum Gower, pro remembrancia'<sup>281</sup> - presumably a copy of the Confessio Amantis.

Other documents (iii): When Joan's nephew Henry V died he had in his possession several borrowed books, including her copy of the Chronicles of Jerusalem and her copy of Godfrey de Bouillon.<sup>282</sup> The Matter of Jerusalem, represented by both these works, had an enduring popularity - particularly the feats of that hero of chansons de geste, Godfrey de Bouillon.

Literary dedications (vi): Hoccleve seems to have had the Countess of Westmoreland in mind as a dedicatee of at least part of his "Series" as represented by Durham Cosin MS V.III.9. (part Hoccleve autograph, part Stow transcript). The "Series" is an idiosyncratic venture into the "framed narratives" kind of poem (of which the Canterbury Tales and the Confessio Amantis were the prime examples).<sup>283</sup> It begins with Hoccleve's Complaint, a cathartic account of his nervous breakdown, and his Dialogue with a Friend. The Dialogue provides the pegs on which Hoccleve hangs the treatise "lerne for to dye" made at the 'exitynge/& monicion' of a devout man (232-6), and a piece for Duke Humphrey of Gloucester. The Friend had reminded Hoccleve that he owed Duke Humphrey a gift, and that he should make amends for his previous dispraise of ladies; Hoccleve would have liked to provide something cheerful, 'balades' (551) or a

'Gesta Humfridi' (603), but instead offers a pious translation from the Gesta Romanorum. The tale of Jereslaus' Wife follows. At this stage it still appears that Jereslaus' Wife and the "lerne for to dye" (which is slotted in after Jereslaus' Wife) are attempts to catch Duke Humphrey's attention, but something seems to have affected Hoccleve's plans. He claims that the Friend has asked him to "english" another tale from the Gesta Romanorum, and so Jonathas and its moralisation are tacked on, followed by an envoy dedicating the whole to the Countess of Westmoreland:

Go smal book / to the noble excellence  
 Of my lady / of Westmerland / and seye  
 hir humble servant / with al reuerence  
 him recommandith / vn to hir noble eye  
 And by seeche hir / on my behalve & preye  
 Thee to receyue / for hire owne right  
 And looke thow / in al mannere weye  
 To plese hir wommanhede / do thy might.

humble servant    )  
                           )  
 to your gracious   )  
                           )  
 noblesse            )

T. hoccleue.

The final definite dedication comes rather unexpectedly, and rather amusingly. It is possible that the genesis of the individual items in the "Series" was more or less as Hoccleve claimed, in which case either the Duke of Gloucester, the 'devout man' and the Friend (if these last two existed outside Hoccleve's imagination) had already received their translations, freeing them for subsequent use, or else Hoccleve had changed his mind and decided to make up a 'smal book' out of available material. The "Series" gives the impression

of a number of pieces Hoccleve had translated at one time or another, and which needed a framework of some sort to give them cohesion and form them into the sort of 'small booke' which could be offered as a gift. That the Countess of Westmoreland was chosen as the ultimate dedicatee, rather than the Duke of Gloucester, gives a twist in the tail. Perhaps the Duke of Gloucester had become an obviously unwise choice while Hoccleve was occupied in putting the "Series" together. Since Hoccleve was in the habit of appealing poetically to various members of England's 'gracious noblesse', his decision to appeal to Joan was in character. She was noble, rich, perhaps politically more respectable than her nephew of Gloucester, and she may even have liked the kind of piece Hoccleve was offering.

Whether the Durham manuscript was the actual copy presented, is debatable. Hoccleve was a poor man, and could better afford to invest time than money in preparing a presentation copy. The Durham manuscript is a holograph; it is possible that it was intended for presentation to Joan, but it could represent the exemplar, or a copy kept by Hoccleve for his own purposes. The Countess was intended to receive a copy of the "Series", and one hopes that she was prepared to value it for its contents rather than its appearance.

12. Humphrey, Lord Stafford

Son of Humphrey, 1st Duke of Buckingham and Anne Neville.

m. Margaret Beaufort, daughter of Edmund, 2nd Duke of Somerset.

d. c. 1457-58.

Surviving MSS

British Library, MS Royal 19.B.XII

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Late fourteenth - early fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: 1) Le Roman de la Rose.
  - 2) 'le testament maistre Jehan de Meun'
  - 3) 'le songe'
  - 4) 'le codicille maistre Jehan de Meun'
  - 5) a shorter poem called 'le codicil'.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 12¼ x 9¼ inches (31 x 23.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 194.
- (f) Collation: Regular in 8's ff.2-148, then uncertain.
- (g) Lay out: Two column, verse.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: one scribe for the Roman, another for the remaining items. Continental book-hands.
- (i) Decoration: "Verse-paragraphs" in the Roman are marked by two-line initials, blue with red and red with black penwork. Direct speech is signalled by alternate blue and red paraphs. The beginning of the Roman is given a six-line historiated initial and full border. The border consists of bars of gold and colours, springing into tendrils with ivy leaves of rose, blue and gold, and lighter sprays of coloured drops. The right-hand bar is topped by a rather old-fashioned dragon in rose, blue and gold, sprouting tendrils.

The historiated initial represents the Dreamer lying in his bed - the simplest form of 'Dreamer' miniature.

After the end of the Roman, two unwanted leaves were excised, and the subsequent appearance of the pages changes. The first letter of each line of the 'Testament' is offset and touched with yellow, and textual divisions are marked by paraphs alone. The 'Testament' begins with a four-line initial, rose on gold, infilled with "vine leaves" in rose, scarlet and blue, and accompanied by a demi-vinet, a bar of gold and colours with leaf sprays in red, rose-pink, blue and gold. "Le Sõnge" begins with a three-line initial of blue with red penwork. "Le codicille" has an eight-line miniature in pen and wash of the "Mercy-Seat Trinity". Beneath it is a three-line initial and bar border like those that begin the "Testament". The "articles" of the "codicille" are given initials of red and black penwork alternating with blue initials with red penwork. The shorter "codicil" is divided into quatrains according to the placing of the paraphs, although the rhyme scheme is in octaves.

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: On f.194<sup>v</sup> is an erased inscription: 'Liber magistri Nicholas Vpton precentoris Sarum presenti humffridii comes Stafford{ie}'. Master Nicholas Upton, author of De Officio Militari, was Precentor of Salisbury 1446-1457. Between 1444 and 1457, Humphrey, son of the 1st Duke of Buckingham, was styled 'Earl of Stafford'; it seems that the book passed from the young Earl to Master Upton sometime between 1446 and 1457. What persuaded him to make the gift is not known; Upton's links seem to have been with the Earl of Salisbury, Cardinal Beaufort, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester and John Tiptoft, rather than with the Staffords.<sup>284</sup> Nor is it known how Humphrey

Stafford came to have the book, for there are no other marks of Stafford ownership; perhaps the plain old book was a supernumary family copy.

13. Anne Stafford

Daughter of Humphrey, 1st Duke of Buckingham, and Anne Neville.  
m. 1. Aubrey de Vere (d. 1462).

2. Reginald/Thomas, Lord Cobham of Sterborough (d. 1471).<sup>285</sup>

Putative ownership of MSS

1. British Library MS Egerton 2726

Brief description: This is an unassuming mid-fifteenth century copy of the Canterbury Tales, neatly decorated and provided with a minimal decorative hierarchy of initials of various sizes, in blue with red penwork.

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: Manly and Rickert suggested, on the basis of mid to late fifteenth century scribbles: 'My lorde Cobham... my Lorde Cobham' on the margins of f.158<sup>v</sup>, and some later marginalia, that MS Egerton 2726 was once in the possession of the Cobhams.<sup>286</sup> Since the 'Devonshire' manuscript of the Canterbury Tales seems to have been copied from Egerton, and was perhaps made for Lady Margaret Beaufort, they suggested that Lady Margaret acquired her exemplar through her sister-in-law Anne Stafford, then Lady Cobham.<sup>287</sup> Lady Margaret certainly acquired another book from Anne (see below), which suggests that they could have been on book-lending terms. Unfortunately, the evidence only places the Egerton manuscript in the hands of somebody in the Cobham household, or with some Cobham connection, and cannot be taken as proof that Anne Stafford had access to the volume after her Cobham marriage.

Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills: In 1472, Anne bequeathed her sister-in-law Lady Margaret Beaufort 'my boke with the pistilles of Othea'.<sup>288</sup>

This could have been either the French or the English version;

since her father had been the recipient of one dedication of Scrope's translation, it may well have been this text that she owned.

#### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery: Anne also gave Lady Margaret a 'cup with Gloucestre arms'. (The Gloucester arms could have been those of her great-grandfather Thomas, or those of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, who had married Eleanor Cobham, sister of Anne's second husband). Anne's sister Katherine received 'my potts with castles'. Her daughter, another Anne, was to have her jewels.<sup>289</sup>



14. Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond

Daughter of John, 1st Duke of Somerset, and Margaret Beauchamp of Bletsoe.

m. 1. Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond.

2. Henry Stafford, son of Humphrey, 1st Duke of Buckingham.

3. Sir Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby.

d. 1509.

Surviving MSS

1. Cambridge, St. John's College, MS N.24 (264).

Technical description

- (a) Date: c. 1420-1450.
- (b) Contents: Hours, Use of Courtances.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 8½ x 6 inches (21 x 15 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 179.
- (f) Collation: 1<sup>6</sup>, then regular in 8's. Some leaves wanting.
- (g) Lay out: Single column prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Probably one scribe, textura.
- (i) Decoration: The manuscript is extremely handsome. In the text, ordinary capitals are touched with yellow, and small initials are of gold on blue and crimson grounds. Larger, more intricate capitals with champs of gold balls, ivy leaves, coloured acanthus fleurons, stylized flowers and daisy buds, mark the openings of prayers and psalms. Line-infills are of gold and crimson and gold and blue patterns. The major divisions of a Book of Hours are graced with miniatures, full or half page in size. The miniatures have narrow gold frames, and outer borders in very delicate French style, consisting of penwork rinceaux with gold motifs, acanthus fleurons in blue, green, pink, scarlet and aquamarine, stylized flowers,

strawberries, daisy-buds, roses and cornflowers. The miniatures are of usual subjects for Books of Hours,<sup>290</sup> except for the miniature preceding the Office of the Dead, which shows Death spearing a fashionable young man, whose naked corpse is seen in a coffin and whose soul is fought over by angels and devils. The more usual representation, the Vigils of the Dead, is also present. The colouring of the miniatures is rich and bright: ultramarine, scarlet, pink, soft green and gold-washed scarlet.

History and provenance: evidence of (iv) Marks of ownership: the manuscript is probably too early to have been made specially for Lady Margaret herself; an inscription records her ownership. At the base of f.12 is written 'my good lady Shyrley pray for me that gevythe yow thys boke y hertely pray yow Margaret modyr to the kyng'. Lady Margaret was frequently styled as "mother to the king" between 1485 and 1509, and it seems reasonable to suppose that she owned this manuscript and gave it to Lady Shirley, wife of Sir Ralph Shirley.<sup>291</sup> How she came by it is not known, but her father and uncle, not to mention a host of other relatives, were in France frequently enough to have acquired any number of handsome French manuscripts.

Affiliations: The artist of the miniatures in the St. John's Hours has been identified as the "Fastolf Master" (from his work in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 570, the Epitre d'Othea made for Sir John Fastolf in 1450). This artist had a long and prolific career; he seems to have begun his artistic career in the Paris atelier of the "Bedford Master" and moved to Rouen, centre of the lands under English domination. He collaborated from time to time with other artists, and worked on at least two volumes copied by the scribe Ricardus Franciscus.<sup>292</sup> Liturgical books were his mainstay,

but he also illustrated some secular works, including the Epître d'Othea, and, as one amongst many artists, the huge and magnificent British Library MS Royal 15.E.VI, commissioned by John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury for presentation to Queen Margaret of Anjou. The St. John's Hours seems to belong to the "Fastolf Master's" French phase, when he produced in the main books for commissioners domiciled in France, and it has a cluster of companion volumes: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay Cuttings, Fr.3. (cuttings possibly from a Chroniques de France); Chicago, Mr. & Mrs. Chester Tripp, Hours (Use of Rouen); British Library MS Royal 15.E.VI; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M27, Hours (Use of Rouen, made for Jean Garin, canon of Rouen); Oxford, Keble College MS 38, Missal; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MSS 550, Hours (Use of Coutances) and 575 Hours (Use of Rome).<sup>293</sup>

2. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 261<sup>294</sup>

Technical description:

(a) Date: c. 1500

(b) Contents: Collection of plague tracts:

1. 'Tractatus de regimine pestilencio' of Benedictus Canuto.
2. English version of 1).
3. 'Regimen sanitatis Aristotilis ad Alexandrum magnum'.
4. Medical text 'Hic sequens litera tempore pestilenciali'.
5. John of Bordeaux' plague treatise.
6. 'Medicyn'.
7. Prayers and anthems in Latin for use in time of pestilence.
8. Medical advice for avoiding plague.
9. Lydgate's Dietary.

- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 7½ x 5¾ inches (19.5 x 14.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 32
- (f) Collation: in 8's.
- (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Littera batarda.
- (i) Decoration: Penwork initials mark some minor divisions; small initials and line-endings are in gold and colours. There is a full vinet border on f.1<sup>r</sup>, of naturalistic flower-sprays on gold grounds, accompanying a large decorated initial. Partial borders (demi-vinets) in similar style, with decorated initials, signal the more important texts that follow - numbers 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: The provenance of the manuscript is suggested by the heraldic contents of some initials and borders. The initial on f.1<sup>r</sup> incorporates the arms of Beaufort as borne by Lady Margaret (France modern and England quarterly within a bordure compony argent and azure); the initial on f.30<sup>v</sup> has a red rose (a Beaufort and Lancaster badge)<sup>295</sup> surmounted by a crown. The border on f.1<sup>r</sup> contains the Beaufort portcullis, repeated four times, together with the red dragon and greyhound of Henry Tudor. Other borders incorporate portcullisses and daisies ("marguerites") in their decorative schemes; that on f.23<sup>v</sup> has a dragon and greyhound also. The Beaufort arms and badges, and the daisies, point to Lady Margaret as the owner of this handsome little book; the Tudor badges point to a date between Henry VII's accession in 1485 and Lady Margaret's death in 1509. It has the look of a personal collection, put together out of a serious concern for personal health, and ornamented rather more richly than such a collection would usually be.

3. London, Westminster Abbey MS 39<sup>296</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Late fifteenth + early sixteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Preces privatae, private prayers, mostly in Latin, some in English.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 6 inches (22 x 15 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: ii + 118 + iii.
- (f) Collation: 8's (some leaves disarranged, some losses).
- (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: 'Written in England', textura.
- (i) Decoration: Capital letters in the body of the text are touched with green or yellow. One-line initials, if on coloured grounds, are gold on red, or plain gold; two-line initials are on red or red and gold grounds. Three and four-line initials are gold on decorated red and gold grounds; on some the decoration consists of portcullises and jambs. There are seventeen eight-line miniatures, with full vinet borders, usually of flowers on compartmented grounds coloured in red, orange, blue, green or gold - a late fifteenth century northern French trait.<sup>297</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: The arms of Margaret Beaufort occur on f.1<sup>r</sup>, filling the first picture space, and the portcullis which adorns some of the initials is one of her badges. The presence of the Stanley "jamb" and male forms in the prayers suggested to Ker that the prayer-book belonged to Lady Margaret's third husband, Thomas Stanley, possibly commissioned for him by Lady Margaret. The clasps, which survive, are probably of later sixteenth century date, and bear the initials E and M, possibly those of Edward Stanley, 3rd Earl of Derby, and his third wife

Mary. The corner-pieces are engraved with the Stanley "jamb" and an eagle.<sup>298</sup>

Putative ownership of MSS

1. British Library, MS Royal 20.C.V

Brief description: This is a copiously illustrated early fifteenth century French manuscript of Boccaccio's Claris Mulieribus in French translation. Each histoire is preceded by a single-column miniature representing an episode in the history of its "leading lady", except for the Prologue, which has a half-page four-compartment miniature. Demi-vinet borders accompany the miniatures, consisting of bars of gold and colours, and penwork rincaux adorned with gold, blue and pink ivy leaves and stylized flowers. The palette used for the miniatures is rich: ultramarine, bright orange-scarlet, rose, soft green, and gold-washed colours. Soft dark greens, yellows, tan and grey-blue are used for animals and backgrounds. Some of the backgrounds are of a rather old-fashioned chequered diaper, some are of landscapes beneath chequered diaper skies, and some are of landscapes beneath gold-starred ultramarine skies.

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: The initial 'D' which starts the "Table" on f.1<sup>r</sup> has an infill of a gold portcullis and chain on a blue ground, which looks suspiciously like an overpainting; the large initial beneath the presentation miniature has a more usual infill of coloured vine leaf scrolls. The portcullis was a Beaufort badge, used by Lady Margaret but also by other members of her family, and the ascription to Lady Margaret depends on the fact that she left her grandson Henry VIII 'a great volume of vellum named John Bokas'.<sup>299</sup> Axon suggested that this might have been a copy of Lydgate's Fall of Princes, based on Boccaccio's De Casibus, but since no obviously Beaufort-owned copy

of the Fall of Princes is extant, the Royal De Cleres et Nobles Femmes is an attractive possibility.<sup>300</sup> If MS Royal 20.C.V were indeed Lady Margaret's 'Bokas', it is rather too early in style to have been made specifically for her, but could have been acquired by a friend or relative, and given a Beaufort badge to personalise it at some later date. It is a handsome volume, the kind that a proud owner might well wish to personalise in this way. One proud owner was clearly a Beaufort, but whether it was Lady Margaret is still debatable.

2. British Library, MS Royal 19.B.XVII

Brief description: This is an extremely handsome copy of Jean de Vignay's 1382 translation of the Legenda Aurea, his Légende Dorée. It is copiously illustrated in good late fourteenth century French style, the work of at least two, possibly three artists; the miniatures are mostly well-drawn, and richly and delicately coloured. Their tri-coloured quatrefoil borders are characteristic of late fourteenth century French manuscripts; they can be seen in two other Royal manuscripts, 15.D.VI and 16.G.VIII, also of French origin and of similar date.<sup>301</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: Heraldic decoration was added to the flyleaf of this manuscript some time after it was made. The decoration consists of a Beaufort shield of arms surmounted by a coronet, and surrounded by golden portcullises with silver chains, red roses and scrolls bearing the motto "me souent sovant". This emphatic statement of Beaufort ownership was probably added late in the fifteenth century, by its appearance, and could have been made at Lady Margaret's request. A contradictory piece of evidence is the late fifteenth century inscription "Arundell" written through the border at the bottom of f.5<sup>r</sup> (the

first text-page), for the Fitzalans and Beauforts were not linked by marriage. It is difficult to decide which came first, Arundel or Beaufort ownership, and the ascription of this manuscript to Lady Margaret Beaufort's ownership remains debatable.

3. Chatsworth, "Devonshire" MS<sup>302</sup>

Brief description: This manuscript is a well-produced mid fifteenth century copy of the Canterbury Tales together with Lydgate's Legend of St. Margaret. In appearance it seems to be closest to Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawl. poet. 223 and Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.3. Minor textual divisions have pen-flourished initials, major divisions have larger initials with champs attached. The first page has a twelve-line historiated initial, containing the portrait of a richly dressed man sitting on a low seat in the sun; the cloth covering the seat and the grass seem to be sprinkled with daisies.<sup>303</sup>

History and provenance: The presence of the daisies ("marguerites") and the Legend of St. Margaret, together with the textual and artistic affiliations of the manuscript, led Manly and Rickert to note the possibility that it might be the 'boke of vellum of the Canterbury Tales in English' which Lady Margaret bequeathed to her kinsman John St. John. There is no corroborative evidence for this ascription; the only definite marks of ownership are the shields of Edmund Knyvett (d.1546) who married Jane Bourgchier, daughter of John, Lord Berners, and of their daughter Katherine.

4. London, Lambeth Palace MS 474<sup>304</sup>

Brief description: This is a well-illustrated little Book of Hours, probably made in England in the first or second quarter of the fifteenth century. The style of its decoration - large and small decorated initials, wide baguette borders of coiled acanthus spirals



and medallions filled with saints' and angels' heads, a miniature of the Annunciation-links it with the English "Bedford Master" and the atelier of Herman Scheere (see below under "Edward, 3rd Duke of Buckingham", British Library MS Addit. 50001).

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The manuscript is most closely associated with Richard III, whose date of birth has been added to the Calendar and whose special prayer against 'omni tribulacione' has been added at the end.<sup>305</sup> However, on the flyleaf is the inscription

In the honor of God and Sainte Edmonde

Pray for Margaret Richmonde

which may well, as James surmised, 'refer to the Lady Margaret', Countess of Richmond. It is possible that Margaret's son Henry Tudor acquired it with Richard III's goods after Bosworth, and gave it to her, but the evidence is inconclusive.

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) wills: Several noble ladies left Lady Margaret books in their wills. The bequests by Anne, Duchess of Buckingham and Anne, Lady Cobham, have already been discussed. Cecily, Duchess of York gave her a 'portuous'.<sup>306</sup> Another will provides evidence of a gift by Lady Margaret: Elizabeth, Lady Scrope (daughter of John Neville, Marquis Montagu) left her sister Lady Lucy 'a primer and a psalter, which I had of the gift of King Henry the Seventh's mother'.<sup>307</sup> The volume was probably well-decorated, but valued most of all for its personal associations.

Lady Margaret herself had a large allocation of books to dispose of. Westminster Abbey, which had already received books, chalices and vestments during her lifetime, received in her will a 'portuous' to be chained in the chapel, and 'oonn booke' hauyng in

the begynnyng certeyne Images with prayours to them and aftir  
theym the Prymare and the psaltere to be chayned within the chapell.<sup>1</sup>  
This volume may well have been of the sort represented by the twin  
Talbot and Beauchamp Hours in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge;  
their "secondary" texts include an English lyric based on the Litany,  
in which each prayer is associated with a miniature or 'image' of  
the saint to be petitioned.<sup>308</sup>

Durham, Collyweston Parish Church and the monastery of 'Burnn'  
all received Mass books. Any of the chapel books (and other chapel  
furnishings) not specifically bequeathed were to go to Christ's  
and St. John's Colleges, Cambridge.

Lady Margaret also bequeathed several secular texts. Alexander  
Frognall received a 'prynted booke which is called Magna Carta in  
french'. John St. John, her kinsman and chamberlain, was given 'a  
book of velom of Canterbury Tales in English'. Mistress Parker was  
to have 'a book of velomm of Gowere in Englishe' (presumably the  
Confessio Amantis). The king received the largest collection of  
books: first came 'a french booke of velom with diuers stories at  
be begynnyng be boke of Genesis with pictures lymned', probably a  
"universal history" like the Histoire Ancienne (see above). Then  
came 'a great volume of velom couered with black velvet which is  
the secund volume of Froysart'; this sounds like a part of a multi-  
volume set of Froissart's Chroniques. The king was also to receive  
'a great volume of velom named John Bokas', which could have been  
De Casibus or De Claris Mulieribus, probably in translation (see  
above). The last item was 'a great volume of velom of the siege of  
Troye yn English', most probably a copy of Lydgate's Troy Book.  
Lady Margaret seems to have had an interesting collection, from  
which her gifts were carefully selected.<sup>309</sup>

Evidence of (yi) literary dedications: In his prologue to his translation of Blanchardyn and Eglantine,<sup>310</sup> Caxton dedicates the work to

the right noble puyssaunt & excellent pryncesse, my redoubted lady, my lady Margarete, duchesse of Somercete, Moder vnto our naturel & souerayn lord and most Crysten Kynge henry þe seuenth, etc. (1-5).

He had sold the French original to Lady Margaret 'long to fore' (10) and she had recently returned the copy with her 'commaundement wyth alle / for to reduce & translate it in to our maternal & englysh tonge'. The French romance was one of those fashionable late fifteenth century prose reworkings of earlier verse romances that Caxton knew well and handled frequently. As Caxton, and presumably Lady Margaret knew, this text was 'honest & Ioyefull to all vertuose yong noble gentylnen & wymmen / to rede therin, as for their passe tyme' (11-12). Caxton had the sensible opinion (probably one with which Lady Margaret agreed) that

it is as requesyte other whyle to rede in Auncyent hystories of noble fayttes & valiaunt actes of armes and warre, whiche haue ben ached in olde tyme of many noble prynces, lordes & knyghtes / as wel for to see & knowe their walyauntnes for to stande in the specyall grace & loue of their ladyes, And in lykewyse for gentyl yonge ladyes & damoyseyllys, for to lerne to be stedfaste & constaunt in their parte to theym that they ones haue promysed and agreed to suche as haue putte their lyves oft in Ieopardye for to playse theym to stande in grace, as it is to occupye theym and studye ouer moche in bokes of contemplacion (13-22).

The story is 'loyefull' indeed, with its romping, complicated combination of adventures in love and chivalry (kept more or less untangled by the judicious use of chapter-headings and frequent resumés of the plot so far). Its concentration on 'noble actes and fayttes of warre', inspired by love of chivalry (p.16), love of a lady (p.78) and love of the Christian faith (p.137) probably warrant the epithet 'honeste'.

Lady Margaret may have bought the French manuscript, and then requested its translation, solely for the benefit of her household, but it is tempting to believe that she might have enjoyed Blanchardyn and Eglantine herself.

Lady Margaret joined forces with her daughter-in-law Elizabeth of York to commission another item from Caxton's press, the 1491 edition of a series of prayers, Latin and English, known as the Fifteen Oes, a most suitable project for the two pious ladies to initiate. It is also possible that she was indirectly involved in Caxton's decision to print the Life of St. Winifred in 1485, but this is by no means certain.<sup>311</sup>

Caxton was not the only printer whose output was swelled as a result of Lady Margaret's requests.<sup>312</sup> Pynson printed Bishop John Fisher's treatise on the Seven Penitential Psalms, which the good Bishop had published at Lady Margaret's request, and also an English Translation of the Imitatio Christi and the Mirrore of Golde for the Sinfull Soule. Ingelbert Haghe printed a Breviary at her request. Wynkyn de Worde was the printer who profited most from the learned lady's interest, and was allowed to style himself her printer. The first item she "commanded" from him was an English version of Hilton's Scala Perfectionis, as the colophon tells:

This heuenly boke more precyous than golde  
Was late direct wyth great humylyte  
For godly plesur theron to beholde  
Vnto the right noble Margaret, as ye see,  
The kyngis moder of excellent bounte,  
Henry the seuenth, that Jhesu hym preserve;  
This myghty prynesse hath commaunded me  
T'empyrynt this boke, her grace for to deserue.

She also asked for a translation of Sebastian Brant's Ship of Fools, which de Worde duly printed (the translation being by Watson, one of de Worde's team of translators). Bishop Fisher may have secured her approval for some of de Worde's enterprises.<sup>313</sup>

Own writings: As well as providing 'entysement and exhortacyon' to others, Lady Margaret turned her own hand to translation. The translation of the Imitatio Christi printed by Pynson was made from the Latin by Dr. William Atkynson, but the fourth book was also separately translated by Lady Margaret, this time from a French version. She also translated the Mirrore of Golde for the Sinfull Soule, again from the French.<sup>314</sup> As Bishop Fisher explained in his "Month's Mind" sermon on Lady Margaret,

right studyous she was in bokes whiche she hadde in grete nombre bothe in Englysshe & in Frensshe... Ful often she complayned that in her youthe she had not gyven her to the vnderstondynge of Latyn wherein she had a lytell perceyuyngge specyally of the rubrysshe of the ordynall for the sayeng of her seruyce whiche she dyde wel vnderstonde.<sup>315</sup>

The pieces she chose to translate were of impeccable piety, and linked with the Continental traditions of the Devotio Moderna, a

movement of the lay piety which struck answering chords in England. Lady Margaret stands between her contemporary Cecily, Duchess of York, another lady of pious habits, and those more learned royal ladies Queen Catherine Parr and the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth.

Other Interests:

Plate and jewellery: Lady Margaret was plentifully supplied with these indispensable adjuncts of the noble life. Her will is thick with bequests of goldsmiths' work. Some was in the form of jewellery; two fine gold girdles are mentioned, a 'colere gold conteynyng xiiij. Ems and xiiij. Jesus with xxvj. hertes'. Some was in the form of 'Images'; Crucifixes with Mary and John at their bases, and statues of Mary with the Christ Child, Mary Magdalene, St. John the Baptist and St. George. Most was in the form of plate. Some was for chapel use, such as the chalices, basins, censers, cruets and holywater stoups; some was for secular use, mostly cups, but including other pieces such as saltcellars and bowls. Much of this plate was richly jewelled and enamelled, often with Lady Margaret's personal and family "devices". There were chalices 'powned with portculions roses and margarites', basins 'emboced with roses and sonnys and my ladyes armes enamayled in their botomes and about their borders be grauen brannches of Roses', a 'standing cuppe of gold couered garnyshed with white hertes perles and stonys' (do the white harts date this back to the reign of Richard II perhaps?), a 'small salt of gold couered chased cheuornn wise garnyshed with perles and on the hight of the couere resteth a saphire', a 'standing cupe gilte with a couer chased vpright cheueron wise the oonn cheueronn rased and be oder playnn with iiij. small braunches and ix. small roses of gold resting in blew enamayled in the bottomm', and many more such pieces. Portcullises, roses and margeurites seem

the most popular embellishments.<sup>316</sup>

Tapiserie and embroidery: Not surprisingly, Lady Margaret possessed handsome chapel and house furnishings. The chapel furnishings included several rich altar cloths, such as the 'payre of aulter clothes of grene veluet paled with crymsynn veluet and embrodered with portculions with the Image of seynt Gregories piety embrodered in pe oonn of them', and the set for Lent of 'white saten with pagentes of the passionn in white and blacke', and vestments such as the 'cope of crymsynn clothe of gold offried with blew veluet with portculions and Jesus'.

Some of the bed hangings were embroidered also, but there is nothing quite as gorgeous as the beds of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester.<sup>317</sup>

Architecture, etc: Lady Margaret may have had some handsome building work done at Maxstoke, but Tipping believed it was in fact her cousin Margaret Beaufort, wife of the Stafford heir, who was referred to in the relevant document.<sup>318</sup>

Music, etc: Lady Margaret maintained a group of minstrels; apparently she also supported a poet (unnamed) who appears in the accounts of 1497 as 'my lady King's moder poet'.<sup>319</sup>

Learning and Piety: Lady Margaret's services to learning and piety are well known. Her will reveals the depth of her concern; apart from the generous blanket bequests related to her funeral expenses, there are most precise bequests of money, plate and chapel furnishings to foundations ranging from Westminster Abbey to the parish church of Collyweston. Friaries, Charterhouses and various Anchor-esses were also remembered. A chantry was to be established at Wimbourne, with a practical purpose: it was to support 'oonn per-petuall preest there to teche gramere frely to all them that will comme ther unto perpetually while the world shall endure'.<sup>320</sup>

By the time of her death Lady Margaret had already founded one Cambridge college (Christ's) on a generous scale, and apparently had every intention of founding another (St. John's was founded through Bishop Fisher's determined interpretation of her intentions). The university as a whole benefitted too, as did Oxford, from Lady Margaret's institution of 'ij perpetuall Reders in holy theologie oonn of theym in the vniuersite of Cambridge and the other of theym in the vniuersite of Oxenford'. The terms of her will make her purposes clear:

for as moche as the singulere lawde praise and pleasure of Almighty God restethe moost in this transitorye worlde in admynistracion sacrifice and dyuine seruices by the ministres of holy church for remyssion of oure synnes and in then cres of vertue connyng and of cristen faith: And in doying of good almes and deedes and werkes caritatis

She was making her benefactions to Westminster, Cambridge, Oxford, 'and other places where the lawes of God be more specially lerned taught and preched'. Her colleges were to promote 'uertue and connyng for then cres of Cristes faith'.<sup>321</sup>

Her second husband, Henry Stafford, kept to his family traditions; he wished to be buried at Pleshey, and left £160 to buy twelve marks' worth of 'livelode by year' to support 'an honest and fitting priest to sing for my soul in the said college'. Most of the specific bequests are to do with the disposition of his horses; the rest of his goods went to his 'beloved wife'.<sup>322</sup>



15. Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham

Son of Humphrey, Earl of Stafford and Margaret Beaufort, daughter of Edmund Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset and Eleanor Beauchamp.

m. Catherine Wydeville, sister of Queen Elizabeth.

d. 1483.

No surviving MSS.

Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (v) heraldic devices; Henry may have inherited New York Public Library MS Spencer 3, his grandmother's Hours and Psalter (see above). The book was later rebound for a Wingfield, and Henry's widow had married that gentleman's father or grandfather; it looks as though she managed to save the book when her husband's goods were forfeited through his attainder.

Other interests

Architecture: Henry may have provided some of the early buildings at Buckingham, now Magdalen College, Cambridge.<sup>323</sup>

Learning and piety: Henry continued his family's sporadic interest in the Austin friary at Newport, and added to the friary's lands.<sup>324</sup>

16. Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham

Son of Henry, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and Catherine Wydeville.

m. Eleanor Percy, daughter of Henry, 4th Earl of Northumberland,  
and Maud Herbert.

d. 1521.

Surviving MSS

British Library MS Royal 19.A.VI

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Late fifteenth - early sixteenth century.
- (b) Contents: 1) 'vng traitie de conseil extraict du second volume de la Toison dor de mon tres redoubte seigneur monsieur le duc charles de bourgogne compile par reuerend pere en dieu Guillaume euesque de Tournay'. (The Toison d'Or of Guillaume Fillastre, Chancellor of the Order of the Golden Fleece).
- 2. 'le liure de tulle appelle de viellesse (Cicero's De Senectute).
- 3. 'les enseignemens de cathon quil bailla a son filz pour le endoctriner en bonnes meurs' (CatoMajor).
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 11 x 7½ inches (28 x 19 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: i+1+175.
- (f) Collation: Mostly regular in 8's, one 4, one 3
- (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: One scribe, large and dashing littera batarda script.
- (i) Decoration: Minor textual divisions are signalled by paraphs in gold with coloured penwork. Beginnings of paragraphs or chapters are given two-line initials of gold on blue and crimson grounds.

Each text is preceded by a miniature in Flemish style of the late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, accompanied by a full border. Unfortunately the colours have oxidised badly, and the effect of the harsh ultramarine, crimson, blue-grey and a rather dirty green is not very attractive. The quality of the miniatures, except for the landscape backgrounds, is not very good, and Warner and Gilson are justified in describing them as of 'rather coarse execution'.<sup>325</sup> Nor are the borders particularly distinguished; large acanthus fleurons in blue and buff, and rather dingy strawberries, violas and periwinkles, clamber over penwork coils studded with gold motifs. History and provenance: evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: On f.1<sup>r</sup> is an elegant calligraphic signature, "E. Bukyngham" set proudly on the blank leaf (on the verso is the colophon to the first item). It seems reasonable to suppose that the Duke was putting his mark of ownership on this collection of treatises dealing with "Magnificence" and "bonnes meurs". There is no other mark of his ownership, suggesting that the manuscript was not made to his specific commission, although he may well have chosen it for the sake of its contents.

The manuscript does contain evidence of another owner, however. A coat of arms encircled by a garter appears on the bottom border of the first miniature (f.2<sup>r</sup>); the arms are those of Charles Somerset, Earl of Worcester (d. 1526) who was elected a Knight of the Garter in 1496. Somerset was the natural son of Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and "cousin" to Edward Stafford; he too was brought up by Lady Margaret Beaufort.<sup>326</sup> The coat of arms appears to be an addition to the border, rather than an integral part of the design. It is debatable whether Duke Edward acquired the manuscript from Somerset, or vice versa; the coat of arms does give the impression,

though, of an emphatic statement of new ownership in reply to the inscription left by a previous owner.

Putative ownership of MSS

1. British Library, MS Cotton Nero E.III

*Brief description:* This is a large and showy copy of the Anciennes Chroniques de Flandres, well-written in an elegant bâtarde script, wide-margined, and attractively ornamented, probably made in Flanders in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. One-line initials and paraphs are of blue with red penwork, gold with black; the chapters are usually given two-line gold initials on blue and crimson grounds. The text proper is preceded by a miniature and full border. The miniature represents the events which could be said to mark the beginnings of the house of Burgundy; the exiled Saluard de Roussillon is murderously attacked by a giant, while his wife, pregnant with Saluard's heir (founder of Burgundy) escapes to a wood where a hermit will succour her. The miniature, particularly in its treatment of the landscape and the repellent giant, is of a high standard. The border which accompanies it is both attractive and rather unusual. It is of the type which replaced the French-style penwork rincaux with their ivy leaves and coloured fleurons in popularity towards the end of the fifteenth century, a wide coloured ground serving as a foil for ornament. In this case the ground is of an unusual pinkish-buff, and the ornament is not the meticulously-reproduced flora and fauna so beloved by the artists of the Flemish ateliers, but a brocade of gold-shaded chestnut motifs - branches thick with leaves and flowers, inhabited by wild-life and wild men.<sup>327</sup> The place between and beneath the two columns of text which would be the most suitable location for a coat of arms is now filled with Cotton's coat of arms, obliterating any earlier device.

(The only other manuscript of the Anciennes Chroniques I have been able to locate, British Library, MS Royal 16.P.III, which has the same basic format, has a blank at this spot, bearing traces of a crayon sketch for a shield and crest).

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The only evidence for an owner prior to Cotton is of a particularly puzzling nature. Pasted to the last, ruled flyleaf (f.305<sup>V</sup>) is a slip of unruled parchment which bears two late fifteenth century signatures, "humfrey talbot" and "Dorene savant. E. Bukyngham", and a stanza in rhyme royal, most probably in "humfrey talbot's" hand. The Buckingham signature matches well with the signature in British Library MS Royal 19.A.VI, and "Dorene savant" is given as the Duke's "word" by Leland; it was inscribed over the gatehouse of the ducal mansion at Thornbury.<sup>328</sup> Humfrey Talbot was probably the child of John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury, and his second wife Margaret Beauchamp; he was a minor landowner and local administrator, M.P., councillor of Richard III and Marshal of Calais. By 1494 he was dead.<sup>329</sup> He apparently had no connection (except a very remote kinship) with Duke Edward, and there is no clue as to why the two men should have signed their names together. The poem does not help; it is a collection of commonplaces, and has not yet been traced, although Humfrey Talbot could probably be given such credit as there is for it. The collocation of signatures and verse looks like a "flyleaf collection",<sup>330</sup> and could have been cut from a now vanished flyleaf when the manuscript was rebound for Cotton. Unfortunately, there is no secure evidence that the cutting was ever an integral part of this manuscript, and so no guarantee that either gentleman ever owned it.

2. British Library MS Addit. 50001 (formerly Yates Thompson 59),  
The Hours of 'Elizabeth the Queen'

Brief description: This gorgeous little Book of Hours is one of the finest produced in England in the early fifteenth century, an example of the "International Gothic" style in all its glory. It is decorated on a lavish scale; even the Calendar is adorned with luscious demi-vinets of curled acanthus scrolls coloured rich blue, olive green, rose and scarlet, in which nestle tiny medallions showing the zodiacal signs and "occupations of the months". Even the one-line penwork initials, blue with red penwork, gold with indigo, seem to be of unusual elegance. There are two, three and four-line champ initials, often filled with "portrait" heads, and tiny historiated initials of the saints in the Litany. The Hours are illustrated with eighteen half-page miniatures accompanied by vinet borders; the colouring is rich and delicate, soft pink, scarlet, ultramarine, pale grey, olive green, mauve, and a little yellow. The miniatures are mostly the work of one of three notable artists responsible for establishing the "International Gothic" style as a dominant force in early fifteenth century English illumination. This artist is known as "Johannes" from a signed miniature in the Livres du Graunt Caam section of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 264; he may also have illustrated Bodleian Library MS Bodley 902 of the Confessio Amantis. In his fondness for rich colours, crowded dramatic scenes, and carefully delineated faces, Johannes seems to have been influenced by another of the three, the Dominican John Siferwas. The third, Herman Scheere, probably of Dutch or German extraction, worked in a delicate, emotive manner. Although the workshop style of each of these masters is distinctive, manuscripts of "mixed" style suggest that workshop affiliations

were fluid. Members of the Siferwas and Scheere ateliers seem to have begun collaborating by 1410, while the Hours of Elizabeth the Queen shows Johannes working with a talented assistant from the Scheere workshop which had produced the "Neville Hours" and the "English" Bedford Hours, (British Library MS Addit. 42131). The culmination of several artistic traditions (native English, Dutch-Flemish, German-Bohemian and French), the Hours of Elizabeth the Queen and the Duke of Bedford are seen as the finest flowers - verging on the overblown - of the "International Gothic" style as practised in England in the early fifteenth century.<sup>331</sup>

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: This manuscript seems to have belonged to some of the noblest families in the land. Probably the first nameable owner was Cecily Neville, Duchess of Warwick, wife of Henry Beauchamp; her death is recorded in an erased inscription on f.147<sup>r</sup>. Somehow the manuscript passed to the royal family; "Elyzabeth de Quene" is written at the foot of f.22<sup>r</sup>. This was either Elizabeth Wydeville, or, more likely, her daughter Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII. At some point Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, nephew of the former and cousin of the latter queen, also made his mark. His signature "Edwardus Dux Bukyngham" was once on f.152<sup>r</sup> although it is no longer visible, even under ultra-violet light.<sup>332</sup> Whether the Duke or the Queen actually owned this book is debatable. However, both the Queen's scrawl on an internal page (implying some familiarity with the manuscript), and the Duke's careful placing of his name on the last leaf (perhaps signifying a declaration of ownership), might suggest that it was in their hands for longer than the brief moment required to write one's name in somebody else's book, and that both were saying, in different ways, "This is my book". However the Duke came to have access to the

Hours, he seems to have appreciated its beauty, and there is a temptation to stretch the evidence to fit his ownership.

3. Holkham Hall MS 24, the "Knightly Psalter"<sup>333</sup>

Brief description: This is a large and handsomely decorated Psalter probably written in England in the early fifteenth century, and another example of the complex relationships between English and Continental book-production early in the fifteenth century. Apart from the usual penwork single-line initials, the decoration has two major components. One is a set of historiated initials, illustrating, as was usual, the psalms sung first at Matins on each day of the week.<sup>334</sup> David, shown as an elderly man, and various other protagonists (the Fool of 'Dixit Insipiens', the choristers of 'Cantate Domino') move through sketchy landscapes or interiors, set against crimson backgrounds starred or diapered with gold. The initials are accompanied by "baguette" or bar borders on gold and colours, with outer borders of loose penwork rinceaux with stylized flowers and trefoils in blue and crimson. The palette is attractive: soft blue, ultramarine, rose-pink, rose-mauve, scarlet, blue-green, tan and grey. The miniatures are handled competently, but in a slightly old-fashioned way, by an artist probably from the Low Countries. The second decorative component is an inserted frontispiece, a full-page miniature of Christ in the Tomb with the Instruments of the Passion (the "Christ of Pity"), a subject usually destined for a Book of Hours rather than a Psalter. This miniature has a frame of bars of gold and colours from which spring spare and elegant sprays of blue and crimson flowers and gold leaves. The artist of this miniature appears to have been a particularly close associate of the "Beaufort Saints Master", an elusive gentleman who seems to have flourished in the first decade of the fifteenth century. Our artist almost



certainly illustrated Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawl. liturg. e, 32, a Book of Hours of the Use of Therouanne; the facial similarities between the Christ in the Rawlinson Crucifixion (f.13<sup>v</sup>) and Last Judgement (f.57<sup>v</sup>) and the "Christ of Pity" in the Holkham manuscript are particularly striking. He also illustrated two manuscripts belonging to Major Abbey, MSS JA 7377 and 7378.<sup>335</sup> His colleague the "Beaufort Saints Master", named for the lively "saints' gallery" added to British Library MS Royal 2.A.XVIII and Rennes, Bibliotheque Municipale MS22, the so-called "Beaufort Hours", collaborated with Herman Scheere (and others) on Oxford, Bodleian Library MS lat. liturg. f.2., a beautiful little Book of Hours. Without Scheere, he worked on Bodleian Library MS Canon liturg. 116, (Hours) and perhaps British Library MS 2.A.VIII (Hours); his touch has also been noticed in British Library MS Addit. 18213 and Antwerp Musee Plantin-Moretus MS 192. Somewhere between the fully-fledged style of the "Beaufort Saints Master" and that of his associate of the Knightly Psalter, falls the illustration of Bodleian Library MSS Barlow 33 and Canon. liturg. 276, Oxford, Jesus College MS 32, and British Library MS Addit. 27948.<sup>336</sup> It seems likely that both the "Beaufort Saints Master" and his associate, like Scheere, had a Continental origin, and that the "Beaufort Saints Master" at least may have worked in England for a while.<sup>337</sup> This may account for a mixture of English and Continental features in manuscripts associated with the "Beaufort Saints Master", and for some unevenness in the quality of his output. Mrs. Spriggs points out that 'great changes in quality can be noted in the same artist... according to the grandeur of the book he has been commissioned for' and the exigencies of workshop production, which makes it possible that the work of associates may be ascribed to the master and vice versa.<sup>338</sup> However,

certain characteristics make it likely that the artist of the Holkham "Christ of Pity" and its sister-manuscripts was a close and skilful associate of the "Beaufort Saints Master" rather than the master himself.

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: At the beginning of the volume is a sixteenth century record of the book's known ownership. It states that

It was first given by the Duke of Buck. to

Syr Rycharde Knyghtley the Father	)	of Fallesley
	)	in
Syr Rycharde Knyghtley the Son	)	Northampton Shire

The manuscript then passed through the hands of various Knightleys, and reached the Cokes by a Knightley-Coke marriage. The family ownership was clearly being carefully recorded, and there seems little reason to doubt the family tradition which claimed the Duke of Buckingham made them a present of this Psalter. The problem is, which Duke of Buckingham? The Psalter, otherwise anonymous and probably bought "off the peg" rather than specially commissioned, is early enough to have been in the possession of any - or all - of the three Stafford Dukes of Buckingham. Then there were no less than five Richard Knightleys in father-son succession between c. 1416 and 1537.<sup>339</sup> However, the Knightleys, a Staffordshire family from Gnoshall, did not acquire Fawsley in Northamptonshire until it was purchased by the Richard Knightley who died in 1442,<sup>340</sup> (which probably eliminates his father Richard). The first father and son pair with both styled "Sir Richard Knightley" rather than plain "Richard Knightley", seems to be the grandson (d. 1534) and great-grandson (d.1537) of the purchaser of Fawsley. This suggests that the donor is more likely to have been Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, than either of his ducal predecessors. The connection

between the Duke and the Knightleys is not known; Sir John Knightley of Gnoshall had been steward of the Staffords' estates in Staffordshire c. 1399 - 1406,<sup>341</sup> and it is possible that the Knightleys remained Stafford clients of some sort, but there is no clear indication of this. How the Psalter came to be the Duke's to give is also unclear. The Psalter, handsome enough to make a fine memento, but not distinguished by Stafford heraldry or family remembrances, might have been a gift to a Stafford before it was a gift to a Knightley; it might otherwise have been bought "off the peg" or second-hand at any time during the fifteenth century and added to the Staffords' stock of devotional manuscripts.

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (ii) Inventories and (iii) other documents: surviving accounts and inventories for the years 1503/4 and 1516/17<sup>342</sup> reveal that Duke Edward was an assiduous purchaser of books for himself and for members of his household. They also reveal that he not only commissioned the translation and printing of a particular work (see below) as Lady Margaret had done before him, but that he regularly bought printed books "off the shelf": almost all the recorded books are described as 'inpressis'. He seems to have been the first Stafford who truly appreciated the part that printed books could play in the creation of a well-stocked library and in the dissemination of information. His young children and wards, and their companion "henchmen", were provided with generous stocks of educative books: Latin primers, Stanbridge's Vocabulary and another Stanbridge grammar, texts of Terence and Sulpitius started them in Latin grammar. Young Lord Stafford also received some early grounding in the law, judging

by the selection of legal texts acquired for him, and he also received a treatise on architecture. (For a fuller description of these and the other printed books, see Appendix ). These books may represent some of the Duke's own particular interests, for he was both litigious and an avant-garde builder,<sup>343</sup> and certainly several of the Duke's own books were copies of important legal handbooks, such as Littleton's Tenures and the abridgement of Statutes.<sup>344</sup> Other needs could be catered for by Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, the 'dicta philosophorum', "lyue well and dye well", the "ffloure de comaundementes" and the "contemplacion peccatorum". A book called "Blasinge de armys" and another called "Goodmaners" suggest a care for the niceties of the noble life; that the Duke enjoyed the pleasures of such a life is suggested by the presence of a substantial number of historical romances and romantic histories. His collection ranged from the "Regule" and "Sege de Troye", "Oryoun and Valantyne", "Partonope" and "Olyver de Castell" to the homelier "Kinge Richarde Cor de Iyoun" in scope. One hopes that the young Staffords were allowed a share in such delights.

It is also possible that some of the pre-1521 printed books listed in the library catalogue compiled in 1556 by the Duke's heir Henry<sup>345</sup> were bought by Duke Edward in years for which no accounts survive. At least one book, the "lyue well and dye well", is recorded in both the 1556 catalogue and the ducal accounts, and most of the Duke's purchases would be equally at home in his son's library. Only Duke Edward's favourite chivalric tales would have found themselves without a home; perhaps they did not fit into Lord Henry's Italianate classification scheme - or perhaps they had been read to death,<sup>346</sup>

It seems that most of Duke Edward's books were purchased from English printers, in particular Wynkyn de Worde (see Appendix). However, some of his printed books were probably imported (as was at least one of his manuscripts, BL MS Royal 19.A.VI, described above). The Sulpitius bought in 1516/17 may have been the 1508 Paris edition of Jodocus Badius, rather than one of de Worde's editions, for it is that Paris edition which features in the 1556 catalogue,<sup>347</sup> and the five little "French bokes" bought in 1503/4 probably had French origins. Some of the romances recorded in 1516/17 almost certainly did: "Dolyn de mengeaunce" and "Olyver de Castell" were both printed in France. Wynkyn de Worde did not publish a translation of "Olyver de Castell" until 1518, so far as is known.<sup>348</sup> Duke Edward probably owned at least one more French romance, a copy of Jean Petit's 1504 edition of Helyas, from which Copland made and de Worde printed a translation at Duke Edward's request (see below).

Two cryptic references in some accounts for 1508 show that Duke Edward's munificence extended to writers, although the nature of the relationship is not clear. A "French poet of the abbot of Glastonbury" received 3s. 4d., while "one Haly, of Oxford, poet", was given 13s. 4d., sums similar to those given to minstrels and musicians, and perhaps given for "performances" on similar occasions.<sup>349</sup>

Evidence of (vi) literary dedications: In 1512 the press of Wynkyn de Worde published The Story of Helyas, Knight of the Swan, a translation by Robert Copland of a 1504 French edition of that story (printed for Jehan Petit in Paris). The Knight of the Swan or Chevalere Assigne had a venerable history, attached at an early age to a cluster of chansons de gestes

relating to the history of Godfrey de Bouillon and the crusades, and appropriated as an "ancestral romance" by the Staffords (and other noble families) who traced a relationship back to that hero.

The 'Prologue of the Translatour' reads as follows:  
Veritably it is that all vertues and noble entencions  
ben nourysshed and engendred in the hertes and courages  
of gentyll persons, the which causeth them to encline  
to all perfeccyon of bounte. Endeveryng them to heare,  
se and avaunce the gloryous renoune of theyr foregoers  
predecessours replenished with the grace and love of God.  
Amonge all other endewed with bountie and noblesse  
the hygh dygne and Illustrious prynce my lorde  
Edwarde by the grace of god Duke of Buckyngham  
Erle of Hereforde, Stafforde, and of Northampton  
desyringe cotynally to encrease and augment the  
name and fame of such as were relucet in vertuous  
feates and triumphante actes of  
chyvalry. And to encourage and styre every lusty  
and gentell herte by the exemplyficacyon of the same  
havyng a goodli booke of the highe and miraculous histori  
of a famous and puyssaunt kinge named Oryant sometime  
reynynge in the parties of beyonde the sea havynge to his  
wife a noble llady of whome she conceived sixe sonnes and  
a doughter and chylded of them at one onely tym at whose  
byrthe echone of them had a chayne of sylver at their  
neckes the whiche were all tourned by the provydenge of  
god into whyte Swannes (save one) of the which this

present Hystory compyled, named Helyas the Knight  
 of the Swanne of whom lineally is dyscended my sayde  
 Lorde. The whiche ententifly to have the sayde history  
 more amply and unyuersally knowen in thys hys natif  
 countrie as it is in other hath of his bountie bi some  
 of his faithful and trusti servaunts cohorted mi mayster  
 Wynkyn de Worde to put the said Vertuous hystori  
 in printe. And he as willing and glad to content  
 accomplish and obey the gracious mynde and pleasure,  
 hath sought and found a true approved copie,  
 enprinted and corrected in the frensch language, at  
 whose instigacion and stirring (I Robert Copland) have  
 me applied moiening the helpe of god to reduce and  
 translate it into our maternal and vulgare english  
 tonge, after the capacite and rudenesse of my weke  
 entendement. Beseeching my sayde lorde and  
 consequently al them that redeth or hereth if red  
 to take no regard to the languag misorned and rude,  
 for wythout hygh style and enerve industry I have  
 al onely verbated and folowed mine auctour as nyghe  
 as I coulde with the profoundite of good herte, and  
 where as oni faute bi me or wrong Impression be found  
 intelligibly after their science to correct and amend  
 in pardonyng al ygnoraunce.<sup>350</sup>

The Duke's motives for commissioning such a work were  
 mixed. Wharton ridiculed his pride in deriving his descent  
 from a fabulous "Knight of the Swan" at a time when the  
 humanistic Renaissance was blossoming in Italy, but the Duke  
 had a political motivation for this.<sup>351</sup> Descent from the

(fabulous) "Knight of the Swan" implied descent from the very real family of de Bohun, and descent from the Bohuns gave Duke Edward a valid claim to wide estates (retained on dubious grounds by the houses of York and Tudor) and to the hereditary Constablership of England. His most nearly successful attempt to claim the Constablership was at Henry VIII's accession in 1509, and it may well be that the commission to translate and print the Story of Helyas was 'yet further propaganda in Buckingham's suit for the Constablership of England.'<sup>352</sup> His "instigation" of the printed edition would bring the 'glorious renoune' of the Duke's lofty ancestors to many minds (as presumably his use of the ancestral swan badge, from the same source, was intended to do); it was also a grand gesture, redolent of his current power and prestige, that he could afford to command such an enterprise.

The Duke may also have had some purer motives. He had been well-educated while in Lady Margaret's care, and may well have had pleasure in putting work in the way of a printer who had done much to propagate her concerns. Brought up to become an epitome of the Burgundian style of learned chivalry and "Magnificence", the Duke would have found much that appealed to him in the Story of Helyas other than its family interest. Much as Lady Margaret had persuaded Caxton to translate and publish Blanchardyne and Englantine to provide 'honeste & Ioyefull' reading-matter for the 'passe tyme' of young people (see above), Duke Edward's commission to de Worde and Copland was to increase and augment the name and fame of such as were relucant in vertuous feates and triumphante



actes of chyualry. And to encourage and styre euery

lusty and gentell herte by the exemptyficacyon of the same.

The Knight of the Swan, partly because it had strong associations with the ducal house of Burgundy (and more particularly, their relatives of Cleves)<sup>353</sup> was one of a number of old French verse romances recast in a fashionable prose redaction under the aegis of the Burgundian court or the early French printers. In its early days, as the romance of the Swan Knight accumulated material to itself, and became attached in turn to the prestigious cycle of the crusader Godfrey de Bouillon (presumed grandson of the Swan Knight), it was still full of partly digested motifs from another world of myth and magic.<sup>354</sup> By the time of Jehan Petit and Copland, however, although these elements remain, the process of digestion, rationalisation and moralisation is more complete; this is history 'folowinge by ordre the true cronycle' (p.105). The fair Beatrice is no longer a fay, but a gentlewoman of 'noble prudence, curteysy, and graciosite' and 'garnished of all beautee' (pp.26-7). The magical becomes the miraculous: the children born with silver chains

vertuousli demonstred the pure and singular dignite

of the noble mother and her childe, and that God wolde

upon them extend his diuine grace (p.41);

the evil which works 'alway to pervert and to tally adnichil al good werkes' (p.41) has entered the story as the result of a worldly marriage 'made be coveitise and not by love' (p.23) and operates through the way "evyll and wicked folke paine them selfe alway to noye and do accombraunce to them that ben good and loved of God'. (p.67). The grace of God works in a mysterious way throughout: it inspires Matabrune's huntsman to ignore his orders to kill the children, it sends a hermit to rescue them and a milch goat to feed

them, and so continues to control the marvels of the story, for 'there as God lyste to worke nothing abydeth impossyble to his divyne wyll' (p.136). The hero Helyas is a little prodigy, 'and all bi thinfusion of the divine grace. For he never had conversed ne haunted the worlde' (p.65). When he is called to action, it is both an angel of God and his swan-brother who call him, that 'more apertli the dyvine and vertuuous miracle of God should be shewed in him' (pp. 72, 102). After all, he is to be ancestor of Godfrey de Bouillon, who will reconquer Jerusalem. Helyas, as befits his life of athletic Christianity, becomes a holy hermit and makes a blessed end; as has been frequently foretold, his 'prue and noble' grandson (p.149) does indeed win Jerusalem and become the third Christian "worthy". One can appreciate the Duke of Buckingham's fondness for the story - on its own merits as well as for its glorification of his ancestors.

#### Other Interests

Plate and jewellery: The 1503/4, 1516/17 and 1521 accounts reveal the acquisition of stocks of plate and jewellery for use as gifts, investments, and ornaments - salts, goblets, standing cups, crucifixes, pendants, bracelets, chains, pomander beads, and more besides.<sup>355</sup>

Tapiserie and embroidery: The Duke is known to have purchased Flemish tapestries;<sup>356</sup> these were still the best that could be bought. The remains of a suite of exquisite "Knight of the Swan" tapestries, now in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, give an idea of the quality available.<sup>357</sup> An indication of the lost splendours is provided by an inventory of some of the goods Duchess Eleanor and Lord Henry Stafford were allowed to keep after Duke Edward's attainder.<sup>358</sup> These included some tapestries with more personal reference than pieces like the "Storye regis Caroli" or 'Story Sampsonis'

recorded in 1516/17:<sup>359</sup> "foure pecys of newe tapstry worke of the Iustys at Turney" (scene of one of Henry VIII's hollow triumphs of 1512, Th rouanne and Tournai, at which Duke Edward participated), "iii olde peasis of tapstery w<sup>t</sup> swannes and stafford knottes", and a set w<sup>t</sup> wydewes mantelles Swannys Stafforde knottes Carte navys and Anteloppis wrought in the same in panys not mete for none other persoune".

The Duke's fondness for rich clothes on state occasions probably provided employment for several teams of embroiderers. The Duke's costumes for the festivities associated with the wedding of Prince Arthur and Katherine of Aragon won a mention in the London chronicles; one embroidered and furred gown was valued at  1,500. When he accompanied Henry VIII on his foreign enterprise in 1513, the chroniclers say more of his heraldically embroidered costume and horse trappings than of his military skills.<sup>360</sup> The whole ducal "family" (in the sense of blood relatives and familia or household) had a position on the world to maintain; so we find young Lord Henry Stafford riding in the royal party to meet the rulers of Castile, wearing

a gown of cloth of tuissew, tukkyd, furryd with  
 sabulles, a hatt of goldsmyth werke, and full of stons,  
 dyamondes, and rubys, rydyng apon a sorellyd  
 courser bardyd with a bayrd of goldsmythes work,  
 with rosys and draguns red.<sup>361</sup>

These rich gowns and horse-trappings were for special occasions; the Duke was careful of his expenditure, but he knew how to spend for maximum effect.

Architecture: Although the 3rd Duke of Buckingham allowed several of his ancestral dwellings to fall into disrepair, being too remote

from his usual haunts and too expensive to repair, he was an enthusiastic and avant-garde builder. Penshurst was well-maintained, Blethchingley was much improved (with the addition of a newly fashionable long gallery), but Thornbury was transformed.<sup>362</sup> The old Gloucestershire manor-house became a palatial residence in the latest style. Although machicolated and gatehoused, with 'gates and toures in it Castelle lyke', and with quarters (built and planned) sufficient for a small army, it was to be a 'magnificent retreat where (Buckingham) could live in style and comfort.'<sup>363</sup> It was to be equipped with all that was newest and best in the way of domestic architecture; the grand suites of the duke and duchess were lit by traceried oriel windows of rich and complex design, looked out on courtyard gardens with covered walks for winter exercise, and were warmed by magnificent fireplaces whose flues were topped by stupendous chimneys in expensive moulded brick.<sup>364</sup> The design of the windows, closely akin to those in Henry VII's state apartments at Windsor and his chapel at Westminster Abbey, and the presence of a two-storied "cloister" garden walk like the new one at Richmond, suggest that Duke Edward either employed the same architects or had his own architect look closely at the royal works.<sup>365</sup> The whole edifice was built for the ducal comfort and prestige. The splendid gatehouse proudly proclaimed 'This gate was begun in the yere of our Lorde God 1511, the 2. yere of the Reigne of Kynge Henry the 8., by me, Edward Duc of Bukkyngham, Erle of Hereforde, Stafforde and Northampton'. Window-mullions, doorjambs and fireplaces were carved with the Stafford badges - the Stafford knot and flaming wheel-nave, the Bohun swan and antelope, the ducal mantle; even the beautiful chimneys bear Stafford knots and Stafford shields in specially moulded bricks. The 'goodly gardeyn to walk ynne

closed with high walles imbattled' was laid out in "knots"; one likes to think they were "Stafford knots",<sup>366</sup> The adjoining church (connected to the house by the splendid double gallery) was also refashioned in the latest style, for it was raised to collegiate status. It too bears traces of Stafford badges.<sup>367</sup> Yet all this was left 'a Token of a noble Peace of worke purposid', for the Duke was brought low before he could complete his lovely dwelling.<sup>368</sup> Music, etc.: Duke Edward maintained a group of singers and instrumentalists, supplemented by handsomely-rewarded visiting musicians when needed.<sup>369</sup> The accounts for 1516/17 reveal that two pairs of "clavycordis" were bought for the ducal chamber, together with a generous stock of "knottes" of wire (strings).<sup>370</sup>

Learning and piety: Having been brought up by the formidable Lady Margaret Beaufort, Duke Edward was well aware of the value of a good education. Not only was his son and heir carefully brought up, but the young choristers and "henchmen" of his household were provided with high-quality tuition by resident masters. Friars scholars and preachers were supported in their careers. The Duke was certainly generous to Christ's and Queen's Colleges, Cambridge, and probably equally generous to Buckingham (later Magdalen) College, Cambridge; he also endowed St. Paul's School, London, perhaps through the influence of the learned John Colet.

Like his great aunt, the Duke was representative of the new age in his support for education; like her he was also pious in the spirit of a former age, closely concerned with the religious establishments to which he was connected by proximity or patronage, and generous in his gifts. He planned to endow Tewkesbury Abbey with sixty pounds a year, while Thornbury College was to receive lands worth three hundred pounds.<sup>371</sup>

17. Eleanor, Duchess of Buckingham

Daughter of Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland, and Maud Herbert.

m. Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham.

d. 1530.

Surviving MSS

British Library MS Arundel 318

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Late fifteenth - early sixteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Book of Hours 'secundum consuetudine anglie'.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 8 x 5 inches (20.5 x 12.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 152 + i.
- (f) Collation: 1<sup>6</sup>, then in 8's (miniatures possibly inserted), one 4.
- (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Probably one scribe; neat textura hand.
- (i) Decoration: The manuscript is plentifully decorated. Single-line initials are of blue with red penwork, gold with black. The next grade of initial is of gold on dull pink and slate blue grounds, accompanied by small champs of penwork sprays with blue and pink trefoils. Larger initials, such as the five-line initial introducing the Commemoration of the Trinity, are of blue and pink on a gold ground with coloured surround. Then there are two sizes of miniature; six-line miniatures with demi-vinets are used for the suffrages of the saints, prayers to the Virgin, and prayers on the Cross and the Five Wounds; full page miniatures are used to mark the various divisions of the Hours. The miniatures are in late fifteenth - early sixteenth century Flemish style. The colouring is subdued:

grey-mauve, mustard, blue-green, with occasional touches of scarlet, pink and bright blue, but the miniatures are skilfully painted and attractive. The borders, however, are poor: crude fleurons in red and blue, daisies, strawberries, and "pseudo-flowers" in red, pink and blue, and a spatter of gold dots, in wide bands.

The full-page miniatures are usually found on the versos of leaves, opposite the items to which they belong, and the rectos before them are usually blank; they may have been inserted, but the evidence is inconclusive.

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: On f.152<sup>r-v</sup>, (ruled but left blank) is found

Oratio elionore percie

ducissa Buckhamnie

followed by a macaronic poem (in English and Latin) on the Five Joys of the Virgin. The last verses, in a similar early sixteenth century hand, read

This <u>praier</u> <u>compiled</u> by vertuous memorie	)	
By the Right noble duches buckghammie	)	verit
Whos soule god <u>pardon</u> : late elener percie	)	a titulo

Saye one pater noster one ave marie & one crede

ffor hiere Soulle and all cristene soulles.

These lines at least must have been written by the "Anne arundell" who signs herself thus on f.152<sup>v</sup>; this lady was Anne Percy (younger sister of Eleanor), who married William, Earl of Arundel c. 1510-11, and d.1552, twenty years after her sister. The "anne mautreuers" who claimed ownership on f.153<sup>r</sup> may be the same Anne or the Anne Dacre who married Philip, Earl of Arundell. It is possible that Eleanor herself inscribed her poem in her own Book of Hours, which subsequently passed to her sister, but there is also the possibility

that she was writing it in her sister's book, or even that it was her sister who wrote it down in memoriam in what was her sister's - or her own - book. The book clearly belonged to one or other of them, and the dating may give Eleanor priority.

Own writings: The little poem mentioned above is the work of Eleanor, Duchess of Buckingham. It is a simple but pleasant piece, closely following the Marian hymn "Gaude virgo, mater Christi" - indeed it uses the Latin "themes" to tie its own stanzas together.<sup>372</sup> Each stanza celebrates one of the Five Joys or "Gaudes" of the Virgin - Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection, Ascension, Assumption - followed by a brief Petition. Given that the form and content were in effect ready to hand, provided by a well-known hymn, the poem did not require a great deal of intellectual effort, perhaps, but it is not badly done, and it strikes a note of cheerful piety. One wonders whether Eleanor was at all unusual in making her poetic prayer, or whether other noble ladies were doing likewise.



17(a) Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland

Father of Eleanor, 3rd Duchess of Buckingham.

Son of Henry Percy, 3rd Earl of Northumberland, and Eleanor Poynings.

m. Maud Herbert, daughter of William, Lord Herbert, and Anne Devereux.

d. 1489.

Surviving MSS

I. British Library MS Royal 18.D.II

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Begun c. 1455-69, continued c. 1516-23.
- (b) Contents: 1) Lydgate's Testament.
  - 2) Lydgate's Troy Book.
  - 3) Lydgate's Siege of Thebes.
  - 4) Poem by or for William Cornyssh.
  - 5) Skelton's Elegy on the death of Henry Percy, 4th Earl.
  - 6) 'Le assemble de deus'.
  - 7) Lydgate's Kings of England (with additions).
  - 8) 'arms of certayne kyngis cristanyde'.
  - 9) William Peeris's Chronicle of the Percy family.
  - 10) Proverbial and moral verses inscribed on the walls of Lecon field and Wressle Castles.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 15½ x 11 inches (39.5 x 28 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: i + 212.
- (f) Collation: Item 2 in 8<sup>s</sup>, 6<sup>s</sup>, rest irregular.
- (g) Lay out: Two column, verse.

- (h) Number of scribes, script: One anglicana hand for items 2 and 3; items 1 and 4-10 in calligraphic "bastard secretary" script, with elaborate ascenders and penwork initials.
- (i) Decoration: The history of the illumination of this manuscript, analysed by Dr. Lawton<sup>373</sup>, is rich and complex. Items 2 and 3, the original core of the manuscript, were copied and provided with most of their minor decoration and some of their miniatures in the first "campaign", c. 1455-69. Capital letters were touched with yellow or rubric, secondary textual divisions were given blue initials with red penwork and red with blue penwork, and rhetorical high points were marked with small gold initials with coloured champs. These features are common to both the Troy Book and Thebes, although the quality deteriorates in the last two leaves of the Thebes. The first series of miniatures was completed c. 1455-69, and received the appropriate border-decoration - a full vinet border for the first miniature, demi-vinets for the others, consisting of sprays with green drops and gold balls, and "pseudo-flowers" and roses. These miniatures represent the usual programme of illustration for the Troy Book (where miniatures are present), a "presentation picture" and a series to mark the beginnings of the five books, although with an idiosyncratic adaptation of the "presentation picture". That usually offers some interpretation of Lydgate presenting his work to Henry V, but here we have William Herbert and his wife Anne Devereux kneeling in their heraldic mantles before an enthroned king, in a miniature more akin to the portraits of English kings in Nova Statuta manuscripts than to the usual "presentation picture". Dr. Lawton suggests that the miniature represents an act of homage and affirmation of loyalty to a king to whom the Herberts owed nearly everything, rather than the act of presenting this book to the king

and is evidence of Herbert's involvement in the production of the manuscript.<sup>374</sup> The work stopped, incomplete, probably after Herbert's death in 1469, but was resumed in the early years of the sixteenth century, probably started when the extra texts were added. Seven miniatures were added to the Troy Book, thirteen to the Thebes, by two fine artists, one of them a sophisticated exponent of current Flemish style. Spaces had been left in the text for these miniatures, implying that the programme was devised when the volume was being planned. It was a programme with no real precedent, particularly where the Troy Book was concerned, and the concentration in Books II and III, with an emphasis on the story of Troilus, may represent a particular interest of Herbert's in the Troilus story and the events leading up to the destruction of Troy. Manchester, John Ryland's University Library MS Ryland's English 1, covered these incidents but as part of a blanket programme of illustration which dealt with many of the "story moments", and did not emphasise any in particular. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS 876, although incomplete, was intended to expand the basic programme in certain areas, and may, like the Royal manuscript, reveal the intervention of an interested patron.<sup>375</sup>

The later texts are not illuminated, but written in an elegant calligraphic script, and decorated with very fine penwork initials. History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: The manuscript was begun for Sir William Herbert and his wife; their shields and mottoes occupy a prominent place in the border to the first miniature, and they are represented in that miniature, wearing heraldic mantles to emphasise their identity. Later heraldic additions show that the manuscript continued in the family. The Percy arms within a Garter, accompanied by the initials HP and the badges of a

crescent and a shacklebolt, point towards Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland, who married Maud Herbert. Heraldic evidence is not always conclusive, for shields can easily be overpainted or added, and although the quantity and placing of the heraldic devices in the frontispiece suggest that they were an integral part of the design, it is gratifying to find extra evidence of provenance.

Evidence of: (iv) colophons: The colophons, and the contents of some of the later additions confirm Percy ownership. Two of the items concern Percy history; one is Skelton's elegy on the death of the 4th Earl of Northumberland, the other is a verse history of the Percies composed by William Peiris, 'preste secretary' to the 5th Earl. The last item is a collection of "proverbs" and moral sentences inscribed on the walls and roof-beams of various roofs in the Percy castles of Leconfield and Wressle, and : presumably of family interest. The addition of much Percy-centred material (including the Percy arms), and the decision to complete the illumination of the manuscript by employing skilled artists, suggest that this was a "living" and much-liked book. The Herberts began it, with keen interest, and their Percy descendants (possibly their son-in-law, more certainly his son) added both the missing decoration and fresh material, with equal concern for maintaining the manuscript's quality.

Affiliations: The scribe of the additions to the Royal manuscript reappears in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden B.10. This is a copy of Hardyng's Chronicle, and excerpts from Lydgate known as The Proverbs upon the Fall of Princes, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1519. This copy was made for the Percy family, whose arms appear in an initial on f.197<sup>r</sup>; they seem to have had an attachment to the works of Lydgate and the productions of this scribe.<sup>376</sup>

2. British Library MS Royal 18.D.V

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Third quarter of the fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Lydgate's Fall of Princes.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 16½ x 11 inches (42 x 28 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 217.
- (f) Collation: Regular in 8's, some leaves wanting.
- (g) Lay out: Two columns, verse.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Probably one scribe, fairly neat anglicana, except for a later quire, ff.185<sup>r</sup> -92<sup>v</sup>, replacing a lost section, and ff. 212<sup>r</sup>-13<sup>v</sup>, replacing the lost central leaf of a gathering.
- (i) Decoration: Capital letters are touched with yellow, and each stanza has a paraph beside it, usually alternating between blue with red penwork and gold with indigo. Secondary textual divisions are given three-line gold initials with champ sprays attached. The Books are signified by four-line gold initials on coloured grounds, with champ sprays attached. f.1<sup>r</sup> has a full vinet border, rather damaged but still impressive, consisting of bars of gold and colours, around which curl acanthus fleurons in blue, crimson, and green, and penwork sprays with green drops and gold balls. The corner medallions are filled with "aroids" (large, squashy "pseudo-flowers" of rather tropical appearance), coloured in the same tonal range as the acanthus.

History and provenance; evidence of (v) heraldic devices: At the end of the poem proper, on f.216<sup>v</sup>, are the arms of Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland, set within a Garter. In appearance they

are very similar to those in MS Royal 18.D.II, but with more complex quartering; and with some extra badges. It seems reasonable to suppose that he had them added to "personalise" a manuscript which was bought "off the peg".

3. The "Petworth" MS<sup>377</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: c. 1420-30.
- (b) Contents: Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 13 x 9 inches (32 x 22.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: iii + 307.
- (f) Collation: Regular in 8's, <sup>7</sup>ast q.ire 3.
- (g) Lay out: Single column, verse.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: One clear anglicana hand.
- (i) Decoration: The manuscript is one of the more handsome copies of the Canterbury Tales. The textual apparatus is rubricated, with page and marginal headings preceded by *paraphs of blue with red penwork and gold with violet*. Secondary textual divisions are marked by three-line champs, gold initials on coloured grounds with sprays attached. The beginnings of tales are enriched with demi-vinets, bars of gold and colours with acanthus fleurons and curling penwork sprays adorned with green drops, gold motifs, and "pseudo-flowers" in blue, pink and dull red. The first major initial, on f.2<sup>r</sup>, has a full vinet border in the same style.

History and provenance: evidence of (v) heraldic devices: On f.309<sup>v</sup>, after the Retraction, is a square containing the Percy arms, as used by the 4th Earl, within a Garter, much as in British Library MS Royal 18.D.V. The manuscript is too early to have been made for him originally, but it could have been made for the second or third Earls

of Northumberland, and given the coat of arms later, or else  
acquired by gift or purchase and "personalised".

18. Katherine Stafford, Countess of Westmoreland

Daughter of Edward, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, and Eleanor Percy.  
m. Ralph Neville, 4th Earl of Westmoreland.

d. 1555.

Surviving MSS

Belvoir Castle, "Rutland MS" of Lydgate's Fall of Princes<sup>378</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Third quarter of the fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Lydgate's Fall of Princes.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 18½ x 13½ inches (41.5 x 33.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 178.
- (f) Collation: Regular, in 8's, last quire 2.
- (g) Lay out: Double column, verse. No spaces between stanzas.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Probably anglicana.
- (i) Decoration: The stanzas begin with initials, alternately blue with red penwork, and red with blue. Chapters and Envoys are dignified with gold initials on blue and crimson grounds, with champ sprays attached. The Prologue of Book I has a full vinet border, to start the volume in style; the first Chapters of subsequent Books are given decorated initials and demi-vinet borders. They are apparently characteristic English work of the second half of the fifteenth century. The decoration was never quite finished; towards the end of the manuscript some of the one and two-line initials and rubrics are lacking, and some of the coloured initials were not finished off.

History and provenance: evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: On the bottom margin of f.1<sup>v</sup> (the recto was filled with border-decoration) is the inscription "as offthen as you one these loke renber me that wrote yn yore boke your louyng mother Katheryn Westmorland'.



Katherine's daughter Margaret married Henry, 2nd Earl of Rutland, and the book has remained in the ownership of the Earls of Rutland to this day. The date of the manuscript is too early for it have been made for Katherine, but it was a work which retained its popularity well into the sixteenth century, and was quite likely to be passed down through families as an heirloom. Katherine could have acquired this copy through her Stafford or her Neville kin, but she may have acquired it second-hand.

(d) SURVEY OF THE BOURGCHIER'S BOOK OWNERSHIP 1420-1533;

1. Henry Bourgchier, 1st Earl of Essex

Son of William Bourgchier, Count of Eu, and Anne, Dowager Countess of Stafford.

m. Isabel, daughter of Richard, Earl of Cambridge, and Anne Mortimer.

d. 1483.

No Surviving MSS

Sometime Ownership of MSS

Evidence of: (vi) literary dedications: Benedict Burgh, presented to his first church living by Earl Henry's mother,<sup>1</sup> wrote his Cato for Henry's heir. Caxton's prologue to his own 1483 translation and edition of Cato noted that 'Mayster Benet Burgh...ful craftly hath made it in balade ryal for the erudicion of my lord Bousher, sone & heyr at that tyme to my lord the erle of Estsex...'<sup>2</sup> Burgh's "Christmasse Game" may also have been made for the Bourgchier family.<sup>3</sup>

Although several copies of Burgh's Cato survive, some of them fine, none appears to be the copy made for young Lord Bourgchier.

Bourgchier assistance, in the form of presentation to church livings and the manipulation of family interest to secure preferment, kept Burgh in comfort in his career as churchman and writer. His earliest known literary effort, an epistle to Lydgate, was written at Beeleigh Abbey (a foundation enjoying Bourgchier support), and his other works were produced with the general or specific encouragement of the Bourgchiers' interest.<sup>4</sup>

Other Interests

Architecture, etc: Earl Henry spent little on building, but he is commemorated in a handsome memorial. The tomb of Earl Henry and

his wife, once at Beeleigh Abbey, now at Little Easton, consists of their memorial brass set into an altar slab, enriched with a cornice of oak leaves, and handsome columns. The coloured enamel still survives in all its brilliancy; Earl Henry is in his dress as a Garter Knight, Countess Isabel in a purple mantle over a scarlet kirtle faced with ermine. Both have collars of suns and roses with white lion pendants, and both rest their feet on eagles. The stone in which their brass is set was once powdered with separately inlaid Bourgchier knots, York fetterlocks and Garters, but these have vanished.<sup>5</sup>

Music, etc: Like other magnates with large households, Earl Henry had his troupe of minstrels who played to him and to his neighbours. One of them, John Barow, had an annuity of two pounds. More interestingly, the Earl seems to have been an early patron of secular drama; his "plaiers" entertained the Duke of Norfolk's household in 1482, and his lusores and istores performed for the inhabitants of Maldon in 1469.<sup>6</sup> Presumably they entertained the Bourgchier household also.

Learning and piety: Earl Henry was well brought-up; he was literate in English and French, and possibly had a grounding in Latin, while he was financially astute enough to be both a successful trader on his own account and a good Treasurer of England.

Following his mother's example, Earl Henry became a lay brother of Llanthony Priory and a member of the fraternity of Bury St. Edmunds. With his wife he joined in making generous gifts to local religious houses ; the friaries of Clare and Alchester, and the Premonstratensian Abbey of Beeleigh. Earl Henry also presented a number of talented clerics to church livings in the Bourgchiers' gift; they included Benedict Burgh, William Fallan (later a Baron

of the Exchequer), William Pykenham and John Dygon (Oxford graduates), and William Turner (a Cambridge graduate).<sup>7</sup>

2. Isabel, Countess of Essex

Daughter of Richard, Earl of Cambridge, and Anne Mortimer.

m. 1. Sir Thomas Gray of Heton.

m. 2. Henry Bourgchier, Earl of Essex.

d. 1484

Surviving MSS

British Library MS Royal 2.B.XIV

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Mid-fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Psalter, with Canticles, Litany and Office of the Dead.
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions: 12½ x 8¼ inches (31 x 21 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 135.
- (f) Collation: 1<sup>6</sup>, then regular in 8's, last quires 10(-7), 6
- (g) Lay out: Single column, prose.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Probably one scribe, textura.
- (i) Decoration: Single-line initials are of gold with black penwork, blue with red. Most of the psalms begin with two-line capitals, gold on blue and crimson grounds, with champ sprays attached. Some more important psalms have four-line initials of similar style, but with more elaborate champs, which include acanthus fleurons and "pseudo-flowers". The seven major psalms have six-line initials of blue and crimson on gold grounds, infilled with acanthus fleurons and "aroids". To these are attached demi-vinets, bars of gold and colours from which spring acanthus fleurons and "pseudo-flowers" in blue, pink, crimson and green, and penwork sprays with green drops and gold balls. The first text-page has a full vinet border of similar style, but richer. This ornamentation is characteristic mid-fifteenth century English work.

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The Psalter is placed firmly in Bourgchier hands by a number of additions to the Calendar, and a signature. Three hands have added records of Bourgchier births and deaths; the deaths of Earl Henry and Isabel, their sons Henry and Edward, Isabel's brother Richard of York, and Isabel, widowed Countess of Devon and wife of Thomas Bourgchier "the elder", fifth son of Henry and Isabel; and the births of Johanna and Isabel, daughters of Thomas Bourgchier and Isabel his wife. Thomas Bourgchier signed his name carefully on a blank leaf at the end, f.135<sup>r</sup>. The concise set of obits and births points to ownership by the Bourgchiers in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Evidence of (v) heraldic devices: Heraldic evidence confirms Bourgchier ownership. At the foot of f.7<sup>r</sup>, the first text page, is a shield with supporters: that shield bears the arms of Henry Bourgchier, 1st Earl of Essex, impaled with those of Isabel his wife. Beneath the shield is a Bourgchier knot (a more complicated version of the Stafford knot), cosily entwined with a York fetterlock. The supporters are eagles. The combination of Bourgchier knot and York fetterlock is drawn in light brown ink on f.134<sup>r</sup>, and the fetterlock alone appears in crayon on f.82<sup>r</sup>.

The shields and supporters may have been added subsequent to the rest of the decoration on f.7<sup>r</sup>; one of the supporters seems to overlap the bar of the vinet, and the surrounding sprays are in a different ink and a different shade of green. This suggests that the Psalter may not have been made with the Bourgchiers in mind as the owners, but whether the heraldic decoration was added at a late stage of production or after purchase, the Bourgchiers seem to have been pleased enough to mark it as their own. Whether the Psalter

belonged originally to Henry or to Isabel (or to both) is difficult to decide, but perhaps Isabel is the favourite candidate; the obits include her brother, husband and children, and there is some emphasis on her relationship with Richard of York. From Isabel the Psalter probably passed directly to her son Thomas (d.1491), who added his name, and details of his own family.

Sometime Ownership of MSS

Evidence of (vi) literary dedication: Osbern Bokenham, an Austin friar of Stöke Clare, Suffolk, compiled his Legendys of Hooly Wummen during the years before his death in 1447, as it suited him and the various acquaintances who requested some of the "legends".<sup>8</sup> One of these acquaintances was Isabel Bourgchier, who made her request of Bokenham during the Epiphany festivities of 1445, when:

In presence ~~I~~was of þe lady Bowsere  
Wych is also clepyd þe countesse of hu,  
Doun conueyid' by þe same pedegru  
That þe duk of York is come, for she  
Hys sustyr is in egal degre (5004-8)

... I saye, whyl þis ladyis foure sonys ying  
Besy were wyth reuel & wyth daunsyng,  
And opere mo in þere most fressh aray  
Dysgysyd, for in þe moneth of may  
Was neuyr (wyth) flouris (whyte) blewe & grene  
Medewe motleyid freshlyere, ~~I~~wene,  
Than were her garnementys ... (5023-9)

... Iseyø, whyl þei bus daunsyng dede walke  
Aboute þe chaumbyr, wyth me to talke  
It lykyd my lady of hyr ientylnesse  
Of dyuers legendys, wych my rudnesse

From latyn had turnyd in-to our language  
 Of hooly wummen, now in my last age (5035-40)  
 ... And whyl [we] were besy in þis talkyng  
 My lady hyr hooly & blyssyd purpøos  
 To me þis woyses þer ded oncloos:  
 'I haue', quod she, 'of pure affeccoun  
 Ful longetym had a synguler deuocoun  
 To þat holy wumman, wych as I gesse,  
 Is clepyd of apostyls þe apostyllesse;  
 Blyssyd Mary Mawdelyn y mene,  
 Whom cryste from syn made pure & clene,  
 As þe clerkys seyn, ful mercyfully,  
 Whos lyf in englysshe I desyresothly  
 To han maad, & for my sake  
 If ye lykyd þe labour to take  
 & for reuerence of hyr, I wold you preye. (5062-75)

The embarrassed Bokenham, torn between his modest fear of 'þe dul-  
 nesse / of my wyt' (5079-80), and the knowledge of  
 ... how hard it is to denye

A-statys preyer, wych after þe entent  
 Of þe poete is a myhty comaundement (5082-4)  
 agreed, although he begged for, and obtained, respite until he had  
 completed a pilgrimage planned to Compostella. The pilgrimage made,  
 he set out to perform

My ladyis wyl & hir comaundement  
 ... That I may translate in wurdys pleyne  
 In-to our language oute of latyn  
 The lyf of blyssyd Mare Mawdelyn,  
 To hyr goostly confourth in especyal,



And of them generally wych it redyn shal (5117, 5252-6).

Bokenham is blessedly circumstantial in this "Prolocutorye" to the Legend of Mary Magdalen, as he is in the prologues to the other legends done by special request, and reveals just how Lady Bourgchier made her request, that combined pious devotion and literary awareness to a nicety.

Presumably Isabel received a copy of her Legend, perhaps as a simple unbound "booklet"; no such copy remains, however, and the Legends have come down to us in the form of a "collected edition", prepared after Bokenham's death in 1447 by his friend Thomas Burgh, a friar of Cambridge, and presented by Burgh to a Cambridge nunnery.

#### Other Interests:

Plate and jewellery: Isabel, as aunt of the King, would be expected to keep up appearances at the fashionable court of Edward IV. She is recorded as owning at least one fine necklace, a gold and ruby chain adorned with twenty-three "knots" (presumably Bourgchier knots).<sup>9</sup>

Architecture, etc: Isabel and her husband shared the handsome monument at Beeleigh Abbey (now at Little Easton) described above.

Learning and Piety: Isabel had some links with Clare friary, a house patronised by her family, which may in part explain Bokenham's presence at her Epiphany party and her request for the Legend of St. Mary Magdalen. In 1466 she and her husband Henry gave a gift of land to Clare friary.<sup>10</sup> She and Henry were also generous to the Franciscans of Colchester in return for masses for the welfare of her brother Richard of York, her nephew Edward IV, and herself. They were also benefactors of Beeleigh Abbey, Maldon, their burial place.

Several scholars benefitted from the church livings in Henry's and Isabel's gift (see above, under 'Henry Bourghier, 1st Earl of Essex').

3. Thomas Bourgchier, Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury

Son of William Bourgchier, Count of Eu, and Anne, Dowager  
Countess of Stafford.

Bishop of Worcester 1435-43; Bishop of Ely 1443-54; Archbishop of  
Canterbury 1454-86; Cardinal of St. Cyriac 1467-86; Chancellor of  
England 1455-6, 1460.

d. 1486.

Surviving MSS

Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.11.11.

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Second quarter of the fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Missal (plus fragments from 1515 printed Missal).
- (c) Material: Vellum.
- (d) Dimensions:  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$  inches (24 x 16.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: ii + 363.
- (f) Collation: ii + 1<sup>6</sup>, then regular in 8's with some losses.
- (g) Lay out: Two columns, prose, music inserted in columns where  
necessary.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Probably one scribe, neat textura.
- (i) Decoration: This manuscript is richly and delicately illustrated.  
Single-line initials are of blue with red penwork and gold with  
black penwork. Larger initials are historiated and accompanied by  
vinet borders. The borders are rich and soft; bars of gold and  
colours support penwork sprays with green drops and gold balls, and  
softly shaded acanthus fleurons and "aroid" flowers in blue, pink  
and green. Most of the historiated initials contain miniatures of  
good quality, given the limitations of space - many of the figures  
are barely one inch tall. The palette is cheerful - scarlet, pink,  
ultramarine, green, with some use of yellow and tan. Backgrounds

are usually of crimson or pinkish-buff with swirling gold diapers, but there are gestures at landscape, such as the flowered hill from which Christ ascends.

History and provenance; evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: On the flyleaves are found firstly, the group "T. Bourgchier; J. Worcestre; J.T. de lisle"; and secondly "Thomas Bourgchier T.B. Cantuariensis" (the "Cantuariensis" looks like a later addition). The repetition of the "T. Bourgchier" suggests that this gentleman was probably the owner, and the heraldry suggests which Thomas Bourgchier it was. The other signatures may perhaps be those of John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester and John Talbot, Lord Lisle (son of the 1st Earl of Shrewsbury).

Evidence of (v) Heraldic devices: This manuscript is copiously decorated with heraldic devices. The first text page has three shields repeated in its border, which reappear in various permutations in the subsequent bar-borders. The shields are those of Stafford, Bourgchier and Anne, Dowager Countess of Stafford. These suggest that the owner of the Missal was either Anne, Dowager Countess of Stafford or one of her children. The inscription by her son Thomas Bourgchier, later Archbishop of Canterbury, shows that it was certainly in his hands by the mid-fifteenth century. A tempting surmise is that the handsome Missal was a present from his mother when Thomas received ecclesiastical preferment, perhaps his first benefice.

Putative ownership of MSS

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 39: see under "Sir Thomas Bourgchier 'the elder'."
2. British Library, MS Addit. 10344

Brief description: This is a late fifteenth century copy of John

Doget's Commentary on Plato's Phaedo, possibly Doget's holograph "humanistic" script.<sup>11</sup> The manuscript is well-presented, with decorative initial initials of rather Italianate appearance.

History and provenance: evidence of (vi) literary dedication: The work opens with Doget's dedication of the work to Cardinal Bourgchier:

Johanne Dogete anglici in examinatorium in phedonem  
platonis ad reuerendissimum et nobillissimum dominum  
Thomam Bourgchier sancti Cyriaci in termis presbiterum  
Cardinalem. Cantuarie Archiepsicopum. tocius Anglie  
primatem et apostolice sedis legatum. prohemium incipit  
feliciter. (f.1<sup>r</sup>)

Clearly Doget intended Cardinal Bourgchier to receive a copy, but there is no certainty that MS Addit. 10344 is the "presentation copy". It is certainly handsomely and carefully enough prepared to have been a "presentation" copy, and since Doget was Cardinal Bourgchier's protegé, the thought might well have counted for more than the decoration that clothed it. There is no mark of ownership, however (although with a handsome dedication on the first page the Cardinal may have thought it superfluous to add his name). Doget seems to have thought that the Cardinal would appreciate a copy of his Commentary (even if personal interests weighed as heavily in the dedication as any interest the Cardinal might be presumed to have in Plato), and gave him one accordingly - perhaps this manuscript, perhaps not.

3. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 108

Brief description: This is a well-presented copy of John Bury's Gladius Salomonis, made, probably, soon after 1457 when the work was composed. The first page, with the dedication, has a decorated

initial and fine demi-vinet border with penwork sprays, acanthus fleurons and "pseudo-flowers" in rose, blue, green and scarlet. The first chapter has a similar demi vinet, the second a smaller initial with a champ spray. Single-line capitals are of blue with red penwork.

History and provenance: Evidence of (vi) literary dedications: in his position as primate, with responsibility for defending England's 'gregem ... Christi' from 'luporem morsibus'<sup>12</sup>, Archbishop Bourghier had to ensure that Bishop Pecock's heretical Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy was repressed. One of the weapons available to the Archbishop was the written word; an Austin friar, Master John Bury of Clare, was engaged as official polemicist, and set about refuting Pecock, using the detailed arguments set out in the Gladius Salamonis. Although it was probably the influence of Bishop John Lowe, himself an Austin friar, which was most directly responsible for Bury's selection (rather than Bourghier affection for Clare and its literary inmates) it was Archbishop Bourghier who was responsible for the work's inception, and who rightly received its dedication, as the prologue explains.<sup>13</sup> It is more than likely that he also received a dedication copy, but neither of the two copies of the Gladius that I know of seems to bear obvious marks of his ownership; perhaps, as with Doget's Phaedo, his name in the dedicatory prologue obviated the need to add other marks of ownership. The Bodley manuscript is certainly an expensive copy, and would make a handsome dedicatory offering, but the plainer Durham MS Hunter 59 should not be ruled out of consideration.

4. Former Dyson Perrins MS 17 (present whereabouts unknown).<sup>14</sup>

Brief description: This early fifteenth century manuscript of Statutes for the reigns of Henry III - Henry IV is apparently a

handsome example of its kind, neatly written and well-decorated. The opening page has a full vinet border, consisting of bars of gold and colours, with sprays of foliage and flowers, and the opening statutes for the reigns of Henry III, Richard II and Henry IV are adorned with similar vinets and also with historiated initials containing stereotyped portraits of the appropriate king, as is usual.<sup>15</sup> (Edward I and Edward II seem to have been overlooked, however, and the relevant leaf for Edward III has been lost).

History and provenance: Evidence of (v) Heraldic devices: the manuscript was early, if not originally, in the possession of a fifteenth century gentleman, one John Holme of Paull-Holme (d.1438); Warner's description gives the impression that the Holme and Wastney arms on ff.1<sup>r</sup> and 173<sup>r</sup> were infills of blank shields, but that the same arms on f.227<sup>r</sup> look original. Before the end of the fifteenth century, according to (iv) Marks of ownership, the manuscript was in the hands of "T. Bourgchier", who wrote his name on f.v<sup>v</sup>, the first vellum flyleaf. How the book came into Bourgchier ownership is unknown, but books of statutes were frequently bought by armigerous and professional gentlemen who needed a working knowledge of the law, and their production constituted a thriving part of the London book-trade.<sup>16</sup> Since I have been unable to trace this manuscript's whereabouts and examine the Bourgchier signature, I have been unable to ascertain its provenance to my own satisfaction, but presume that Warner had sufficient evidence for the attribution to Archbishop Thomas Bourgchier rather than to either of his namesakes, Thomas Bourgchier "the elder" or Thomas Bourgchier "the younger".

Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) Wills: the Archbishop would clearly have needed a collection of liturgical and technical texts, and it is probably

these that are represented by the 'libris' bequeathed to his successor, and also by the more specific bequests of a 'missale' to Thornbury parish church and of 'unum de antiphonariis meis' to Maidstone collegiate church.<sup>17</sup>

Other Interests:

Plate and jewellery: The Archbishop was the owner of a large quantity of plate and jewellery, since he was able to leave his successor goods, including unspecified valuables of this sort, to cover "dilapidations" to the archdiocese during his tenure. He bequeathed 'de bonis meis videlicet in Jocalibas vasis argenteis vestimentis libris et in aliis MML li.'

His cathedral received a splendid statue: the Prior and Chapter of Christchurch, Canterbury, were bequeathed in honour of the Trinity, St. Alphege and St. Thomas Becket 'vnum ymaginem sancte trinitatis de puro auro cum dyademe et xj balasseri x saphiris et xliiij gemmis nuncupatis perlis'. His first cathedral, Worcester, received

Vnum ymaginem beate Marie de argento et deaurato  
in sole stantem super pedem cum ymaginibus  
et sex angelis cum thuribilibus super sex pinnacula  
et dicta ymago habens puerum in manu sua in  
valore lxix li. v s.

Walden Monastery received 'secundarium ymaginem meam beate Marie stantem in sole cum imaginibus et ij angelis cum thuribilibus de argento et deaurato.'

The parish church of Thornbury, in Worcester diocese, gained 'meum optimum calicem de argento deaurato.'

Archbishop Thomas's relatives also received bequests of plate: his great-nephew Henry, Earl of Essex was left 'vnum Ciphum cum coopertorio de puro auro vulgariter nuncupatum the grete bolle of



gold', which was to be a family heirloom, and a nephew, Sir Thomas Bourgchier "the elder" received one hundred marks' worth of 'Jocalibus et ornamentis et aliis.'<sup>18</sup>

Tapisserie and embroidery: Not surprisingly, the Archbishop was the proud owner of many sets of rich vestments, many of them finely embroidered. One such set was the gift to Christchurch, Canterbury of

vnum vestimentum integrum de panno aureo rubeo  
vocato rede tissue pyerled videlicetur vnam capsulam (sic)  
duas dalmatica cum toto apparatu et vnam cappam  
ejusdem secte cum gemmis preciosis in le orfres infixit  
et garneizatis et xxvj. capas de rubio tissue cum  
orfres completis,

another the set 'orfreised de rubeo panno aureo' left to the conventual church of Notley, Lincolnshire, another the vestments 'de albo damaske puluerizatas cum angelis de auro' bequeathed to Thetford.<sup>19</sup>

Architecture, etc: Archbishop Thomas was one of the few members of his family to sponsor any large-scale building work. He spent at least £105 on 'nouum edificium' at the manor of Knole, which became his favourite residence.<sup>20</sup> His cathedral church was graced by his splendid tomb sculpture.

Learning and piety: Archbishop Bourgchier is reputed to have promoted printing in England before Caxton set up his press, and to have inspired Justice Lyttleton to submit to him his treatise on tenures, but the evidence is extremely tenuous.<sup>21</sup> There is, however, some contemporary evidence for the Archbishop's active interest in places of learning. In 1472 Prior Sellyng wrote to the Archbishop that he had found 'a scole master for your gramer scole in Canterbury,

the which hath lately taught gramer at Wynchester and att saynt  
Antonyes in London', a note which suggests that Bourghier may have  
founded the school, and certainly took some interest in its pro-  
gress. Oxford and Cambridge were given one hundred pounds apiece  
to found loan chests for poor scholars, although, as Woodger  
points out, such kindly intentioned gifts compare rather poorly  
with the magnificent foundations of Archbishop Chichele (All Souls,  
Oxford, 1437) and Bishop Waynflete (Magdalen, Oxford, 1456).<sup>22</sup>  
Archbishop Bourghier seems to have been an adequate rather than a  
spectacular patron of learning.

4. Sir Thomas Bourghier "the elder"

Son of Henry Bourghier, 1st Earl of Essex, and Isabel of York.

m. 1. Isabel Barre, widow of Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Devon.

m. 2. Anne Sulford.

d. 1491.

Surviving MSS

1. British Library MS Royal 2.B.XIV: see under "Isabel, Countess of Essex" for details. Thomas added his own name and family details.
2. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 39

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Second half of the fifteenth century.
- (b) Contents: Lydgate's Life of Our Lady.
- (c) Material: Paper.
- (d) Dimensions: 11 x 8½ inches (28 x 21.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: i + 109 + i.
- (f) Collation: Irregular 1-2<sup>8</sup> 3<sup>16</sup> 4-6<sup>12</sup> 7<sup>16</sup> 8<sup>14</sup> 9<sup>12</sup> (leaf lost from 7)
- (g) Lay out: Single column, verse.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Possibly two scribes, anglicana book hand.
- (i) Decoration: This manuscript is very moderately decorated. The Prologue and chapters begin with black and red penwork initials, and other ornament consists of rubricated capitals, paraphs, and textual apparatus. The decorator seems not to have concentrated very closely on this simple programme; initials and apparatus are sometimes left uncoloured.

History and provenance: evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: The flyleaves are rich in signatures and bons mots. Several Bourghiers have left their marks: a "Sir T" and a "Sir Thomas" (possibly the same man's "display" and "everyday" signatures). One or perhaps

two Anne Bourgchiers signed their names, and somebody wished "Anne Bourgcher lady preserue hyre in good helthe". An unspecified "Bourgcher" seems to be linked with one "Rychard B(lund)eyll." "Janney / Robert" (Robert Janney?) claimed that "love takyth liberte", and also seems to have written bitterly:

What shuld I say sithe faith is dede  
and truth is exiled in whomanhed

(a couplet which resurfaced, in slightly different form, as Wyatt's 'What shulde I saye',<sup>23</sup>) but in better mood he added

My harte ys yours ye may be sure  
and so shall it be while lyffe shalle indure.

A "Sir William Rous knyght" also left his mark, and so did an apparently youthful "Isabell", probably a Bourgchier since her signature is close to an unattached "Bourgchier". An anonymous rhymer left a variation on the Envoy to Lydgate's This World is full of variaunce:<sup>24</sup>

O ye women wyche be enclyned  
be the enfflewens off your nature  
To be as pure as gold refyned  
In yowr trowth tendure  
arme your selffe in strong armvre  
lest men assay yowr sekerness  
Set vppon your brest your selfe to assure  
A myghtty scheld off dowbelnesse

There is a large crop of Bourgchiers to choose from when it comes to giving these names a local habitation. Ethel Seaton inclined towards a grouping of Anne, Dowager Countess of Stafford and Lady Bourgchier, her son Thomas Bourgchier (later Archbishop of Canterbury), and Isabel Bourgchier, her daughter-in-law.<sup>25</sup> A much more likely combination, however, is that suggested by Dr. J. Boffey: Thomas

Bourgchier, son of Earl Henry and Isabel, whose first wife was named Isabel, whose second wife was named Anne, and whose daughters were named Isabel and Anne.<sup>26</sup> The "T. Bourgchier" on the flyleaves (placed in a commanding position and in a "display" script) matches well with the signatures in British Library MS Royal 2.B.XIV and Princeton University, MS Garrett 150.

It seems quite plausible that this manuscript was in the hands of Sir Thomas Bourgchier and his immediate family, although, since flyleaves did not always begin life attached to the volumes to which they now belong, attributions based on flyleaf signatures alone should be made cautiously.

#### Putative ownership of MSS

Princeton University Library MS Garrett 150<sup>27</sup>

Brief description: This is apparently a large and handsome copy of the Brut chronicle, well written and presented, and dating from the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

History and provenance: evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: Like Bodleian MS Ashmole 39, the Garrett MS bears the signatures "Sir T. Bourgchier" and "Syre Thomas Bourg(ch)yer knight" on its last leaf but one and its last leaf (now a pastedown). It seems likely that Sir Thomas was an owner, but not necessarily the first owner, of this manuscript.

#### Sometime ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) wills: In his will Sir Thomas bequeathed a collection of liturgical books: a 'masse book', an 'antiphone', three processionalis, and 'a manuell a booke that I bought of Sir William Pykenham called a leitonary'. Pykenham was a university man, presented to a Bourgchier living; he seems to have owned more books than Sir Thomas's purchase, for he left All Souls' College, Oxford, his legal and theological text books.<sup>28</sup>

### Other Interests

Tapiserie and embroidery: Sir Thomas left his nephew the Earl of Essex, a bed of blue damask.<sup>29</sup>

Learning and Piety: Sir Thomas provided for a priest at St. Andrew's Church, Baynard's Castle, to sing masses for his soul for ten years.<sup>30</sup>

5. Humphrey Bourghier, Lord Cromwell

Son of Henry Bourghier, 1st Earl of Essex, and Isabel of York.

m. Joan Stanhope, niece and co-heiress of Thomas, Lord Cromwell.

d. 1471 (Battle of Barnet).

Surviving MSS

Glasgow, Hunterian Library MS V.8.8. (505) <sup>31</sup>

Technical description:

- (a) Date: Mid-fifteenth century (?)
- (b) Contents: Statutes for the Reigns of Edward III and Richard II (1327-99).
- (c) Material: Vellum
- (d) Dimensions: 7½ x 5¼ inches (19 x 13.5 cm.).
- (e) Number of leaves: 216.
- (f) Collation: Probably regular in 8's.
- (g) Lay out: Unascertained.
- (h) Number of scribes, script: Unascertained - "well written".
- (i) Decoration: The manuscript seems to be a handsome one; it has been given vinet borders and champ initials of gold and colours.

History and provenance: evidence of (iv) marks of ownership: On f.6<sup>v</sup> is the inscription "Markham", while on f.1<sup>r</sup> is a red crayon inscription

Thys boke ys myn humfrey Bourghyer lord Cromwell

by the gifte of the rythe nobyll and famus Iuge

Sir Ihone Markam Chiefe Iustys of the Kings benche

This, and the associated evidence of the Markham shields in the borders make it clear that the book of Statutes was made for Justice Markham. (made Chief Justice in 1461) and later given to Humphrey Bourghier. It seems that the two men were on good terms, and it is possible that Humphrey had an active interest in the law. The inscription records

with blessed clarity an occurrence which was probably more frequent than the records suggest - the transfer of books by gift during the donor's lifetime.



6. John Bourgchier

Son of Henry Bourgchier, 1st Earl of Essex, and Isabel of York.

m. 1. Elizabeth, Lady Ferrers.

m. 2. Elizabeth Chichele.

d. 1499.

Sometime Ownership of MSS

Evidence of (i) wills: Sir John bequeathed 'a grete Inglishe boke'; obviously he knew, and expected his executors to know, which book he meant, and felt no need to give further details - unfortunately.<sup>32</sup>

Other Interests:

Architecture, etc: Sir John wished to be buried at Beeleigh Abbey, near to his parents' tomb; he wanted 'a tomb made for me, and both my wives, according to my degree'.<sup>33</sup>

7. John Bourgchier, 2nd Baron Berners

Son of Humphrey Bourgchier of Berners and Elizabeth Tylney; grandson of John Bourgchier, Lord Berners and Lady Margery; great-grandson of Anne, Dowager Countess of Stafford and William Bourgchier.

m. Katherine Howard, daughter of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk.

d. c. 1533.

Lord Berners, although a member of a cadet branch of the Bourgchiers, is considered here because of the interest of his writings.

Sometime Ownership of MSS

Evidence of (ii) Inventory: Lord Berners owned a large library, of eighty volumes, which was seized, with other effects, when he died in debt to the Crown.<sup>34</sup>

Own Writings: Lord Berners' most famous work was his translation (printed 1523 and 1525) of Froissart's imperishable Chronicle, a work Caxton had recommended (amongst others) to the 'knyghtes of England' thirty years previously as the epitome of chivalry.<sup>35</sup> The translation, begun perhaps as a pleasant, and possibly remunerative exercise in the eschewing of idleness (for the life of the Deputy of Calais was a quiet one), was offered to Henry VIII. The work, so 'comodyous, necessarie, and profytable to be hadde in Englysshe', as a chivalric history, may well have found favour with a king whose 'abundant energy found full outlet in the idealized world of valorous knighthood', who had once dressed in the guise of Coeur Loyal to joust for his lady.<sup>36</sup>

Berners translated two more chivalric romances, which like the Froissart were to serve as 'good and laudable example' and an invitation to 'like honourable atchieuements'.<sup>37</sup> Huon of Bordeaux was translated from a mid-fifteenth century French prose version of an old Charlemagne romance, and, like the Froissart, continued the Caxtonian

tradition, for Caxton had translated two companion romances, Charles the Great and the Four Sons of Aymon.<sup>38</sup> The other romance, Arthur of Litle Brytayne, belonged to the Matter of Britain, and was a story much loved by Berners and his contemporaries, in spite of the difficulties Berners seems to have found in dealing with its supernatural elements.<sup>39</sup>

Berners also translated, through French intermediaries, two Spanish texts of a rather different nature. The Castell of Love was a well-written courtly love-allegory more concerned with fine feelings than with heroic actions, and it rapidly achieved international popularity, being translated into Italian, French and Berners' English. Berners apparently made the translation of this 'sentimental novel' for his niece Lady Elizabeth Carew.<sup>40</sup> The translation of Guevara's Golden Boke was made for Berners' nephew, Sir Francis Bryan (brother of Lady Carew), a poet and himself the translator of another work by Guevara, A Dispraise of the Life of a Courtier. The Golden Boke, 'one of the collections of wise sayings and aphorisms that had been so popular throughout the Middle Ages', but written in a fashionable new style, was another extremely popular work, translated into Castilian, French and English. It proved to be Berners' last and most popular translation, and, with the Castell of Love, reflects newer literary fashions, as his earlier translations had looked back to Caxton and the courts of France and Burgundy.<sup>41</sup>

CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM THE STUDY OF  
STAFFORD AND BOURGCHIER BOOKS

One of the first facts to emerge from a study of the Staffords' and Bourgchiers' known and presumed book-ownership and acts of literary patronage is the refractory nature of the evidence, which resists precise quantitative analysis. The presumptive evidence offered by marks of ownership in surviving manuscripts (which is of variable reliability), and the quantitative evidence offered by items in wills and other documents (which is rarely as precise as one would wish - how many books were donated as "residium omnium ... librorum ... ad capellam meam pertinencium", for instance)<sup>1</sup>, can be made to add up to quite widely divergent totals. The core group of Stafford books, if Duke Edward's printed books are included, consists of a minimum of one hundred and forty-two items, a maximum of one hundred and sixty; the Bourgchier totals range between ninety-six and one hundred. The important collections belonging to the families of Stafford brides, discussed above on account of their possible influence on Stafford tastes, would add an extra one hundred and fifty-four (or one hundred and fifty-six) to these totals. It should also be remembered that the Stafford and Bourgchier figures ought to include quite a large random variable to cover the unknown quantities of books hinted at by several residuary bequests of the 'residium omnium librorum' kind. The variable reliability of the quantitative evidence reflected in these divergent totals naturally affects the qualitative interpretation of various subgroups. The relatively high number of putative ascriptions of Chaucer manuscripts may well distort our view of the reading habits of Stafford women, for instance. These problems will necessarily recur

in the ensuing discussion of Stafford and Bourghier book-ownership and patronage; interpretations will be based as much as possible on definite ascriptions, but the potential distorting effect of the debatable ascriptions will have to be acknowledged.

#### Book Ownership: Average Figures

Although the total numbers of Stafford and Bourghier manuscripts (surviving or otherwise) are quite respectable, compared with those of contemporary baronial families, the average figures for individual ownership are quite low. It is rare to find a Stafford owning more than one or two books before the mid-fifteenth century. (The gentle rate of increase may reflect nothing more than a fifteenth century book's proportionately greater chances of survival than those of a fourteenth century or earlier manuscript, and so the greater likelihood that more fifteenth century Stafford and Bourghier books would survive in any case, rather than the fact that there were significantly larger quantities of them fighting for survival<sup>2</sup>). The striking exceptions in the early period are Bishop Edmund Stafford, whose duties to church and state predicated a large working library (but not a workaday one, judging by his surviving De Speculo Regis); and two Stafford kin by marriage, Thomas of Gloucester and Eleanor de Bohun, parents of Countess Anne. Most of their extensive joint collection, one of the largest recorded from its period, was dispersed as a result of Thomas's attainder instead of descending to his children, and so was lost to the Staffords - except for the books bought by Bishop Edmund. (see above). Had that collection reached the Staffords, it would have boosted their "ownership figures" dramatically and probably unfairly, for, compared with other contemporary libraries for which sufficient data survive - even the large collection forfeited by Henry, Lord Scrope of Masham<sup>3</sup> - it seems to have been of

unusual size and scope, the fruits of a combined inheritance of royal and Bohun wealth, artefacts and good taste.

The figures for Stafford and Bourgchier individual ownership would still barely produce an average figure of four books per head once the mid-fifteenth century is reached (and passed), were it not for three more special cases - Lady Margaret Beaufort/Stafford, Edward, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, and John Bourgchier, Lord Berners - all of whom possessed substantial book collections which included printed books. The size of their collections cannot be ascribed solely to the advent of printing, although print offered an opportunity to extend a collection relatively rapidly and cheaply (compared to the time-consuming<sup>4</sup> and expensive business of acquiring specially commissioned manuscripts) - few of their contemporaries seem to have been as alert to its possibilities. Each of these three, however, did have a particular relationship with printers or the printed word, an interest which may be reflected in the quantity as well as quality of their collections. Buckingham, Berners and Beaufort were all utilising the press for particular purposes. Lady Margaret early seized upon its potential for the wider dissemination of works of 'godly plesur', and was the moving force behind the printing of eight items - six works of unimpeachable devotional content, one moral satire, and one 'honeste' romance (see above, "Lady Margaret Beaufort"). None of these is mentioned in her will, but one "off the shelf" printed book is present, a "Magna Carta". Duke Edward, brought up by Lady Margaret, seems to have shared her interest in education and the educative powers of the press, and it is likely that several of the pre-1521 books amongst those at Stafford catalogued for his son in 1556, books of civil and canon law, grammar, history, astronomy, rhetoric, medicine and theology, were bought with that son's education in mind.<sup>5</sup> Certainly several of the books bought by Duke Edward in 1516/17 were destined for young Lord

Stafford and his fellow pupils. One hopes they were allowed the occasional indulgence of a romance. The one work that Duke Edward is known definitely to have commissioned from Wynkyn de Worde's press, The Story of Helyas, was to be used as propaganda of a more specialised kind. The Duke may well have wished his "ancestral romance" to persuade its readers to emulate the 'glorious renoune of theyr foregoers' for their own benefit, but the Duke's motives in having 'the sayde history more amply and unyuersally knowen in thys hys natif countrie' were also intimately connected with his campaign to recover the rich inheritance of his Bohun foregoers of 'glorious renoune', for his benefit. (see above, 'Edward, 3rd Duke of Buckingham'). Lord Berners shared some of Duke Edward's and Lady Margaret's concern with books offering 'good and laudable example' and the incentive to 'honourable atchievements' and the eschewing of idleness. He added to this a pressing need for money and court favour, and met these demands as well as he could by writing five courtly translations himself, some of them printed in his lifetime.<sup>6</sup> Presumably some, at least, of the eighty books he owned were required for his translating enterprise. Printed books clearly expanded the scale of all three collections, but in already established modes which did not much affect their scope, and one suspects that the generous size of each collection was largely the result of individual choices both to keep existing books and also to buy more, or have more written - or printed - to meet particular needs.

#### Book Ownership: Male and Female

Once we begin to look more closely at the component parts of the Stafford and Bourgchier collections, some patters do begin to emerge, although often incomplete because of missing evidence. When the sex of book owners in these two families is taken into account, it appears that, overall, Stafford women book owners outnumber the men, except at the

poorly-documented start of the period, by nearly two to one (eleven to seven). Not only were there more of them, they also seem to have owned more books until Duke Edward's forays into the world of printed books redressed the balance. This may be explained in part by the fact that the Stafford family nurtured several notable dowagers, whose accumulated riches included books.<sup>7</sup> As Rosenthal puts it,

Their wills may mention more books because they usually outlived their husbands and were then able to dispose of personal goods in a context of considerable personal freedom. Estates were then transmitted by the decree of the law, not of the concerned parties, and much of the personal portable wealth would be transferred at the husband's demise; the women (who were usually widows) were now free to redistribute the remaining personal items as they chose.<sup>8</sup>

The Stafford ladies seem to have fitted this pattern. In the Bourgchier family, however, it is the men who considerably outnumber the women book owners, and who account for almost all the Bourgchier books. Since the evidence for both families is drawn from the same mixture of sources - surviving manuscripts, wills and other documents, records of commission and dedication - one cannot help wondering whether the Bourgchier tendency to produce widowers rather than widows has tilted the balance in favour of their male book owners.

#### Sources of Books Owned

The main sources from which books came into Stafford and Bourgchier - and other contemporary - hands, are three: testamentary bequests, gifts made during the donor's lifetime, and purchase. The latter is presumed to have occurred when ownership of a manuscript (based on marks of owner-



ship such as signatures and/or heraldic displays) cannot be accounted for satisfactorily in another way. This lack of alternative evidence may inflate the totals of books acquired by purchase, but there is some justification, for the chance survival of documentary evidence reveals at least two purchases of books,<sup>9</sup> and, records of other purchases may have been lost. Be that as it may, the surviving evidence suggests that the Staffords were most likely to acquire books as bequests, but did buy some books of their own choice, whilst the Bourgchiers appear to have been more willing to go out and buy books than wait for them to be given. Actual records of gifts to members of either family figure half as often.

#### Books Bequests : Donors and Recipients

When the donors and recipients of Stafford book bequests are examined, it transpires that most of the records refer to Stafford women bequeathing their books. Many of these ladies' books went to Stafford kinswomen, nearly as many to kinsmen. A few were given into clerical hands to the benefit of either individual clerics, or individual churches, or religious foundations, for example Lady Margaret's gifts to Collyweston Parish Church and Westminster Abbey. The evidence for bequests by Stafford men is much scantier, which may account for the bias in favour of presents by them to churches and religious foundations, for most were presents given by Bishop Edmund to his cathedral church and Exeter College, Oxford. In the Bourgchier family the reverse pattern occurs, for there is apparently no documentary evidence of book bequests by Bourgchier women, although it is possible that Countess Isabel did bequeath her Psalter to her son Thomas (see above, "Isabel Bourgchier", "Sir Thomas Bourgchier the elder"). The more substantial evidence for bequests by Bourgchier men suggests that they, like their Stafford kinsmen, were more likely to give books to religious beneficiaries rather than to their kinsfolk. There are few bequests to Staffords recorded, in fact, only bequests to Stafford women,

and there seem to be no records of bequests to Bourghiers of either sex. It is hardly surprising to find that most of the bequests to Stafford ladies came from Stafford kinswomen, followed by a few from kinsmen and friends.

#### Gifts of Books: Donors and Recipients

The recipients of books given during the donor's lifetime fall into similar groupings to the recipients of bequests, as far as can be ascertained. Stafford women tended to give books to their female friends and kinswomen, Stafford men to benefit other Staffords, friends, but particularly, churchmen and religious foundations. Data for Bourghier book gifts is, unfortunately, lacking. Gifts made to the two families are here taken to include "dedication copies" of literary works offered both by speculative seekers of patronage and by commissioned writers; although these latter may have been paid directly or indirectly by money gifts, annuities, or the like, or the offer of "good lordship" (and evidence for such payment is rare in fifteenth century England),<sup>10</sup> in both cases a book dedication, and presumably a book itself, was offered. Dedication copies of both kinds account for a generous portion of the books given to both Staffords and Bourghiers. In the Stafford family, although the total number of book gifts divides more or less evenly between male and female recipients, it seems that the Stafford women were more active than their menfolk in actually commissioning new works, albeit on a modest scale (two commissions by women, one by a man), and that the powerful Stafford matriarchs were at least as likely to attract patronage-seeking dedications as their husbands, if the English works offered to Duke Humphrey and Duchess Anne, one apiece, are any guide. In the Bourghier family, the men were marginally more likely to acquire books as gifts, but Bourghier men and women seem to have been equally active in commissioning the kind of works they wanted, judging by Earl Henry and Countess

Isabel. Although the Bourgchiers were a powerful and influential family, they do not seem to have been the targets of speculative dedications, except in the case of Doget's dedication of his commentary on Plato's Phaedo to Archbishop Bourgchier. That dedication probably constitutes a special case, for Doget may have been kin to the archbishop, and, although he may have hoped the Phaedo would boost his clerical career, the work seems to have been offered principally out of gratitude for benefits already given, as the fruits of a Bourgchier-sponsored education and trip to Italy.<sup>11</sup> Works dedicated to the Staffords, however, seem to have been offered in the hope of benefits yet to come, which is the case with most speculative dedications of the period.

#### Purchased Books

Although we know little enough about the origins of books that passed through Stafford and Bourgchier hands as bequests and gifts, we know even less about the origins of the books they are thought to have bought. Some, whose presumed date of manufacture matches with the presumed date of acquisition, seem to have been bought new, either "off the shelf" or as special orders, at home or abroad. Booksellers and their associated craftsmen could and did supply both kinds of demand.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, some of the books which seem to have been bought "off the shelf" (but occasionally modified by personal additions) were the kind of liturgical text for which there was a steady demand, and of which booksellers tried to keep a steady supply;<sup>13</sup> Duchess Anne's Hours (but not their companion Psalter), Duchess Eleanor's Hours, Isabel Bourgchier's Psalter, for instance. Some vernacular works also seem to have been readily available,<sup>14</sup> and these are represented in Stafford and Bourgchier collections - books like the Canterbury Tales that Duchess Anne may have owned (which seems to be part of a manuscript sub group linked by text and decoration),<sup>15</sup> and Sir Thomas Bourgchier's Life of Our Lady

(one of many surviving copies).<sup>16</sup> Where something out of the ordinary was wanted, however, whether in terms of text or decoration, or both, a special order would have to be placed. This seems to have been the case with Duchess Anne's Psalter, for instance, with its special heraldic borders supplied by a notable border artist, and its personalised prayers; and Bishop Edmund's De Speculo Regis, so much handsomer than its fellows, or Duke Humphrey's Polychronicon of unusually high quality, amongst the secular texts. Several of the Stafford and Bourgchier books, however, seem to antedate their presumed date of acquisition by many years. Some are quite easily accounted for as private purchases from the executors of estates, such as Thomas of Gloucester's Roman de la Rose or Bishop Edmund's subsequent purchase of some of Thomas's books. Others may be unrecorded acquisitions through family and friends - one suspects that Joan Stafford's French Ancrene Riwe or Lord Humphrey Stafford's Roman fall into this category, for instance. Others, however - and they could equally well include Joan's Ancrene Riwe and Humphrey's Roman, as well as Sir Thomas Bourgchier's Brut or Lady Margaret's French Hours - may have been bought second-hand. Evidence for this habit amongst fifteenth century Staffords and Bourgchiers is scanty, but at least one sixteenth century Stafford, Lord Henry, was prepared to buy second-hand *if the text he desired was not readily available new*, as his letters reveal, and it seems reasonable to infer that his predecessors might have done likewise.<sup>17</sup>

#### Categories of Stafford and Bourgchier Books:

Information is fortunately more forthcoming, although still fragmentary and occasionally ambiguous, when the nature of the books being bought, bequeathed, given or received, is investigated. When attempting to classify them, a helpful guide is the catalogue system employed by fifteenth century Burgundian librarians, who classified the contents of the ducal library under the headings "Bonne Meurs, Etiques et Politiques"; "Chapelle";

"Librairie Meslee"; "Livres de Gestes"; Livres de Ballades et d'Amours"; "Croniques de France"; "Oultre-mer"; "Medecine et Astrologie"; "Livres non parfaits". As Blake points out, most of Caxton's output fits neatly into these categories, allowing for the difference of language by substituting English chronicles, romances and poems for French,<sup>18</sup> and so do most of the Stafford and Bourgchier books, although perhaps another category should be added, "Law". The mid-sixteenth century catalogue system used by Henry Stafford proved less suitable for application to the books of his predecessors, for although several categories are the same - such as law, history, medicine and astrology - the emphasis on books of grammar and rhetoric (including classical Latin poetry) is not to be found except amongst the books of that early Renaissance man Duke Edward, Henry's father, and Henry's library arrangements reflect Renaissance tastes, albeit as a 'pale reflection of the great fifteenth century Italian collections.'<sup>19</sup>

It is hardly surprising to find that most of the Stafford and Bourgchier books come under the category of "Livres de Chapelle", with Psalters and Books of Hours (which were used for private devotion as well as public)<sup>20</sup> heading the field, followed by missals, portiphoria, antiphons, Bibles, and a small quantity of other liturgical books such as legends, graduals and manuals. If a subsection of vernacular books suitable for private devotional use is added to these, devotional books account for nearly a third of all Stafford and Bourgchier books, and the true figure might be nearer one half, did we but know more about the nature of Lord Berners' eighty books. This preponderance of devotional books, surviving and /or recorded, tallies with what can be established for other contemporary baronial book collections. The next most heavily-populated section is that of "Bonnes Meurs" etc., filled with items such as "Mirrors for Princes" and books of deportment, which

accounts for nearly a tenth of the Stafford and Bourgchier books, closely followed by chronicles and histories. The literature of entertainment, (which includes the two subdivisions indicated by the Burgundian classifications of "Livres de Ballades et d'Amours" and "Livres de Gestes") may well have rivalled "Bonnes Meurs" and History in quantity, but it is a category particularly plagued by debatable ascriptions, and so is cautiously ranked behind the other two. The categories in which fewest traces of interest survive are those of "Oultremer" (including foreign marvels and "natural science"), Law, and Medicine and Astrology, with just a handful of books apiece recorded. This distribution again matches several contemporary collections, except perhaps in the shortage of books of Medicine and Astrology, which usually made a better showing, and were certainly well represented in Lord Henry Stafford's library.<sup>21</sup>

#### Language and Contents of Stafford and Bourgchier Books:

The language of the books involved reveals a little more about the nature of Stafford and Bourgchier interests. Overall, half their recorded books were in Latin; three-fifths of the remainder were in French, the other two-fifths in English. The proportion of Latin books remains steady throughout the period; the representation of French also remains steady well into the fifteenth century. The records of English books show the most noticeable change, however; they have caught up with French by the mid-fifteenth century, and have begun to outstrip French by the end of that century.

The high proportion of Latin books can be attributed in large part to the prevalence of liturgical books in the records. Only a small number of these books - a few Bibles and sections of Bibles such as Gospels, and most of these belonging to Thomas of Gloucester and Eleanor de Bohun - are listed as being in French or English. Apart from the liturgical books, the other Latin texts are mostly of a technical nature. Some of

the "Bonnes Meurs", etc. turn out to be in Latin - Bishop Edmund's De Speculo Regis, for instance - and also some of the Histories, such as Duke Humphrey's Polychronicon. The law books are mostly in a mixture of Latin and "law French". The only medical book recorded is an interesting case, for one of its important Latin texts, the "auctoritees", is accompanied by an English version, and Lady Margaret's little book is a combination of tracts in English and Latin in more or less equal proportions.

Apart from the books of liturgy, and medicine, few of which are French. French books are represented more or less equally in the other categories - "Bonnes Meurs", Histories, works for private devotional use, and books of entertainment. Books in English contributed similar numbers to "Bonnes Meurs", rather less to Histories. In the case of books for entertainment, the representation of English works seems to increase as the works of Gower, Chaucer, Hoccleve and Lydgate reached peak circulation, and Caxton and de Worde began printing, but this section has more than its fair share of debatable ascriptions, and the apparent frequency of English may be misleading. However, even if the debatable ascriptions and the books of fathers- and mothers-in-law are disregarded, English still manages to edge ahead of French in this section. The frequent use of English for books of private devotion is, fortunately, easier to establish, and it is in this category that English really overtakes French as a chosen language. Included amongst the variety of English texts are several direct translations from the French, but one has the distinct impression that most of the Staffords and Bourghiers were, like Lady Margaret (see above), at home with books in either language, and that an individual's choice of language was not always significant.<sup>22</sup> It may have been more significant, however, in the case of the translations commissioned by Lady Margaret and Duke Edward. It is possible that they realised that

printed books were beginning to widen the reading public to include many unable to understand French, let alone Latin, and that their purposes in having books printed would best be served by having them printed in English.<sup>23</sup>

#### Language and Origins of Stafford and Bourgchier Books

If a further correlation is attempted between the language of Stafford and Bourgchier books and their origins, no very striking conclusions emerge. The books given or received as bequests were predominantly expensive service books in Latin; substantial quantities of these were also bought for personal use and for presents. The other categories most likely to figure in bequests seem to have been books of "Bonnes Meurs" and Histories, usually in French, and books for private devotional use, usually in English. The few books of an entertaining nature mentioned in bequests were fairly evenly divided between French and English. When Staffords and Bourgchiers were buying such books for their own pleasure, and books of "Bonnes Meurs" and Histories likewise, they were apparently just as likely to choose French as English texts. It is only in the choice of devotional texts, again, that English predominates.

The availability of texts may have affected the linguistic balance of the Stafford and Bourgchier collections, although the evidence is inconclusive. It does seem that most of the French texts recorded throughout the period of study, especially those chosen for bequests, had been in circulation for some time before their acquisition by a Stafford or Bourgchier, and would probably not have required much seeking out. Most of the handful of non-liturgical Latin texts were also hardly in the first flush of youth when acquired. The English texts, however, exhibit overall a fairly even division between extant and contemporary works. Bequests of English books tend to refer to older texts, but purchases also seem to have been made from the ranks of older favourites with an estab-



lished circulation, such as Chaucer (although that is debatable ground). Gifts of English books, because of their inclusion of dedication copies, exhibit a much stronger bias towards contemporary texts than would otherwise occur, and are largely responsible for the apparent balance of new and old. It seems that if the Staffords and Bourgchiers went out of their way to acquire a contemporary text, they went far enough to commission an English work to suit a particular interest or need. This was particularly the case with the Bourgchiers. While they would willingly accept older texts in either French or English, dependent on availability, the underlying preference seems to have been - increasingly - for English works, surfacing in commissions for new works.

#### Physical Quality of Stafford and Bourgchier Books

The possible influence on Stafford and Bourgchier choices of books - and our interpretation of those choices - of the physical quality of the manuscripts involved, is even harder to evaluate. Would any apparent Stafford or Bourgchier willingness to pay heavily for vernacular texts in handsomely illuminated copies imply the existence of a "coffee-table book" mentality that valued quality of presentation above quality of text, and treated such a book as just another objet de luxe, for instance? Or might it imply instead a respect for the text in question and a decision to dignify it with the handsomest presentation that could be afforded?<sup>24</sup> Conversely, might the presence of mediocre copies of vernacular texts in the Stafford and Bourgchier texts imply a low valuation placed on such texts, or a determination to acquire such texts regardless of the shabbiness of their presentation? It is not always that sufficient copies of the text in question, or other books belonging to the owner in question, survive for comparison and evaluation. It should be remembered also that the "coffee-table" kind of book, particularly in its role as heirloom, probably stood a better chance of survival than its

tatty "paperback" equivalent, and that what seems to modern eyes a cheap manuscript was still relatively expensive to its fifteenth century purchaser. Given that the evidence is often ambiguous and occasionally biased, a few tentative conclusions can be drawn about the quality of Stafford and Bourgchier books. One is hardly surprising: the section containing the most high quality manuscripts, enriched with expensive illumination, is that of liturgical books, whose intrinsic and symbolic value was usually matched by the value of their decoration, making them doubly attractive as gifts and bequests. The Staffords and Bourgchiers were apparently no exception to the contemporary habit of treasuring such books, of which some lovely specimens came to them as gifts, although they do not seem to have gone out of their way to acquire the very best available when it came to buying for themselves. The vernacular texts for private devotional use are more variable, ranging from modest, barely-decorated little books like Joan Stafford's French Ancrene Riwe or Sir Thomas Bourgchier's Life of Our Lady, to large and handsome volumes like the same lady's fine copy of Love's Myrroure or the 'beal et bien enluminee' Legende Doree bequeathed to Countess Anne. Since this variability of quality seems representative of the market, it is not very surprising to find it reflected in the devotional books owned by Staffords and Bourgchiers. It is rather more unusual to find a preponderance of expensively produced volumes amongst the Latin technical works, but the sample is small and should be treated cautiously. The more generally useful books like Histories and "Bonnes Meurs", however, of which rather more survive, still exhibit a similar bias towards good quality copies, whether in Latin, French or English. It is apparently only in the category of books for entertainment, whether in French or English, that the bias seems to be the other way, judging by Lord Humphrey Stafford's Roman or the Canterbury Tales ascribed (admittedly on the thinnest evi-

dence) to his sister. This is of course the area where debatable ascriptions are a particular problem, for the four Chaucerian manuscripts ascribed to Duchess Anne and Lady Margaret would tip the balance the other way. Given that most of the surviving fifteenth century manuscripts of Chaucer and Lydgate are of middling expense, decorated but not outstandingly ornate, with personal intervention apparently required to raise the quality to the level of the Corpus Troilus or the Herbert-Percy Troy Book (see above under "Anne, Duchess of Buckingham" and "Henry Percy") it is probably fair to assume that the middling quality of the Staffords' and Bourgchiers' "literary" manuscripts is a reflection of both their own and contemporary considerations of what was suitable in the matter of presentation.<sup>25</sup> They could have afforded the best if they had wanted it for such books. One has the impression that when it came to choices about the quality of appearance of their books, the Staffords and Bourgchiers rarely chose anything unusual.

#### Comparison of Books chosen by Men and Women

One more factor which has some bearing on the matter of Stafford and Bourgchier interest in the appearance and contents of their books, and particularly on their choice of language, is the sex of the book owner. The Latin liturgical books, adjuncts of the nobleman's or noblewoman's chapel, are more or less evenly divided between the men and women of the two families. Lack of literacy in Latin, as bemoaned by Lady Margaret, may have been most prevalent amongst women,<sup>26</sup> but it would not have lessened a liturgical book's symbolic and artistic value to either man or woman. The technical Latin books, however, works of "Bonnes Meurs", etc., Histories and the like, do seem to have been more of a male preserve. The same kind of books in both French and English, but rather more often in French, were actively bought by Stafford and Bourgchier men, but they were also to be found in female ownership, passed

on as gifts and bequests to friends and relatives of either sex. Books for entertainment are recorded more often in female ownership, and their preference seems to have been for English works. It is in the categories of books for private devotional purposes that the female preference for English works seems most strongly marked, with English texts outnumbering French by virtually five to one. Although older French devotional works were still circulating well into the fifteenth century, they were outstripped by newer English works such as the Gilte Legende, Love's Myrrour, and the religious verses commissioned by or offered to noble Stafford and Bourgchier ladies. They seem to have been active in acquiring and circulating such works of 'godly plesur'.

#### The Active Interest of the Stafford and Bourgchier Women

Although the Stafford and Bourgchier ladies were by no means alone in their active preference for English works of 'sentence' (and possibly English works of 'solaas' too), their activity is one of the notable features to emerge from a study of the Stafford and Bourgchier habits of book ownership and patronage. Even after the vagaries of the evidence are taken into account, more often than not it is the Stafford men who are found accepting the literary status quo, taking what is given (Duke Edward being an honourable exception) and the women who married them who introduce an element of variety and sense of purpose. Although the records of Bourgchier book ownership and patronage do show the men to have been more active in the former field, they reveal female interest in the latter. In these two families at least, the women shared in the offers of patronage and receipt of book dedications. In this matter, as in the wider context of the nature of the books acquired by Staffords and Bourgchiers and their interests in them, the Staffords and Bourgchiers make a respectable, but rarely exciting, showing, compared with some of their contemporaries.

A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF BOOK-OWNERSHIP AND PATRONAGE  
PATTERNS AMONGST SOME OF THE STAFFORDS'  
AND BOURGCHIER'S CONTEMPORARIES.

The main features which have emerged from a study of the fragmentary evidence for Stafford and Bourgchier activity in literary matters are their steady, occasionally enthusiastic interest in acquiring and circulating books (including vernacular texts) within and without the family circle; the potential importance of women as 'arbiters of lay piety and ambassadors of culture';<sup>1</sup> and an appreciation of the powers of the press. Their occasional forays into literary patronage were in conformity with current tastes, and representative of contemporary patterns: three pious ladies chose short devotional poems in English; one man commissioned the English translation and printing of an "ancestral romance", a 'goodli booke'; another requested an English translation in the "Bonnes Meurs" category for his son's 'erudicion', from a cleric sponsored by the family; and a third, by virtue of his rôle as primate, commissioned an anti-heretical tract. The works dedicated to members of these powerful families were also eminently acceptable: an English devotional poem offered to a duchess, a 'litell laboure' in the fields of "Bonnes Meurs" offered to a duke, and a work of scholarship offered to an archbishop. Comparison with some of their contemporaries suggests that literary conservatism was not confined to the Staffords and Bourgchiers, and that the enterprising choices and consistent campaigns of intelligent patronage one would like them to have made were expectations unlikely to be fulfilled, except in part, by them or by many others. Some individuals and families did indeed make more outstanding contributions to the fostering and development of fifteenth century English literature, and they deserve notice as examples of what the Staffords could have achieved, compared with the Staffords' and

Bourgchiers' respectable and representative - if rarely exciting - achievements. Also, some families and individuals displayed contrasting preferences in matters such as the language and contemporaneity of texts chosen, the acceptability of printed books, the desirability of wielding patronage to obtain a particular kind of work, the restriction of that patronage to members of the household or its extension to others. These preferences make useful comparisons with the Staffords' patterns of patronage and book-ownership and throw some light on the options available.

#### The Almost "Bookless" Noble: The Lovells and the Courtenays

There are certainly some noble families, such as the Courtenays and the Lovells, whose relative "booklessness"<sup>2</sup> and apparently total lack of interest in literary patronage throws a flattering light on the Staffords' activities in these spheres. For the fifteenth century Lovells, who were wealthy enough, by all accounts, to have indulged any literary tastes they possessed,<sup>3</sup> the only apparent evidence of any contact with books is the bequest of an enigmatic 'French book' in 1436 by Maud Lovell, Countess of Arundel, to her daughter Amicia,<sup>4</sup> and one intriguing example of artistic patronage. This survives as the "Lovell Lectionary", (British Library MS Harl. 7026), a sumptuous service-book presented by John, Lord Lovell (d. 1408) to Salisbury Cathedral. The presentation of such a book to such an institution was by itself no more unusual than Maud Lovell's mother-daughter bequest of a vernacular text - we have already seen similar gifts and bequests by Staffords and Bourgchiers; the Lectionary's unusual feature is its striking prefatory miniature of Lord Lovell reaching for the book, held out by its fine artist, John Siferwas, with donor and artist

eloquently portrayed on equal terms. Siferwas, one of the three finest artists of the "International Gothic" style working in England, was certainly an inspired choice.<sup>5</sup> Lovell was clearly possessed of discriminating artistic taste, but there is no evidence that his discrimination ever extended to literature, and it is debatable whether it is lack of evidence or lack of inclination that consigns the Lovells to the outer darkness of 'booklessness'.

In the case of the Courtenays, there is rather more evidence, but still a disappointing amount for the inheritors of an old earldom and sufficient royal blood to excite Henry VIII's suspicion (and meet a similar fate to Duke Edward Stafford). After a fine fourteenth century beginning - enough to stir feelings that their literary interests might well bear as close an investigation as their rumbustious political behaviour<sup>6</sup> - the trail runs cold. There are three records of bequests: the 'livre fraunceys' (an enigma one comes to expect), left by Earl Hugh to his daughter in 1377;<sup>7</sup> the gift of a book of theology or canon law from Bishop Grandisson of Exeter to Earl Hugh's clerical son William, later Archbishop of Canterbury (the Bishop's executors chose the Letters of St. Anselm, which Courtenay bequeathed in turn to his college at Maidstone);<sup>8</sup> and a fine collection of at least nine books bequeathed by Earl Hugh's widow in 1391. Margaret Courtenay, née Bohun, had a collection worthy of a Bohun. Liturgical books were distributed amongst her children (Archbishop William, Philip and her 'fille Dangayne') with a missal bequeathed to one 'Sire John Dodyngton'; the Dangayne daughter also received 'un liure appelle Artur de Britaigne', and the Luttrell daughter was given 'mon liure appelle Tristram'. Annes Chambernon received a mixture of "Bonnes Meurs", romance and medecine: 'un liure de medycynys et de marchasye et un aultre liure appelle vyces et

vertues et un liure appelle merlyn,<sup>9</sup> This nicely-balanced collection is the last one hears of books amongst the main-line Courtenays for some time. (Margaret's grandson Richard, from the cadet branch at Powderham, did make use of his position as a high-ranking cleric and diplomat to buy himself some fine books in Paris, according to the account of the unhappy bookseller - a fortunate piece of evidence that Englishmen did buy books abroad.<sup>10</sup> A Bible, a Book of Job, a Nicholas of Lyra and some astrological books were not unusual purchases for a bishop to have made; an expensive Tristram, Froissart and Ovid are perhaps evidence of more worldly tastes, and of a family fondness for romances.<sup>11</sup> For reasons unknown the Bishop refused to buy a Boethius and a 'mappemonde' that were on offer ). The only other traces of main-line Courtenay contact with books that I know of are the possible ownership of a prayer roll (Pierpont Morgan MS M486) by Elizabeth Courtenay, Lady Harrington,<sup>12</sup> daughter of the third Earl, and the signature of Henry Courtenay (brother of the fourteenth Earl) amongst several other noble scrawls on the fly-leaf of British Library MS Royal 17. D.VI, a Fitzalan copy of Hoccleve's Regement apparently used as an album amicorum.<sup>13</sup> Henry may have read the book, but he did not own it. His signature is the only tenuous link between the Courtenays and fifteenth century English literature.

#### Many Books, but no Literary Patronage: The Scrope Family

By contrast, there were high-ranking families whose involvement in book ownership was more enthusiastic, although it did not necessarily include patronage. The Scropes of Masham (main-line) and Bolton (cadet branch) were such a family, apparently able to satisfy their literary needs and play a significant part in the cultural and spiritual life of their native Richmondshire without resorting to literary patronage.



Many of the Scropes

were owners of Latin, French, and English books, chiefly of a pious character, and ... constantly connected by blood, friendship, and other sympathies with inhabitants of the principal religious houses of the stricter orders, where such literature was pre-eminently cultivated,<sup>14</sup>

and they seem to have been active in circulating their books amongst themselves and amongst their neighbours.

Although there are only three surviving Scrope manuscripts known - an Ordinal presumed to have belonged once to the saintly Archbishop Scrope of York, afterwards to his nephew Henry, and two similar books of devotional writings in English which belonged to Anne, Lady Scrope and Elizabeth de Vere (née Scrope), British Library MSS Harley 4012 and Harley 1706<sup>15</sup> - there are fortunately many Scrope wills extant and also an important inventory.<sup>16</sup> Between them, the Scropes possessed at least one hundred books - more or less the same number as the Bourghchiers, rather less than the Staffords. A high proportion of the books mentioned - seven-tenths - are, as might be expected, the fine liturgical books, missals, Bibles, porteouses, Psalters, Hours, passed on to other members of the family, to chaplains, and to favourite local churches. The Scropes seem to have treasured such books for their special associations, passing them on as family heirlooms: Roger, Lord Scrope of Bolton (d. 1403) bequeathed to his son the porteous and missal of York use which had once been his father's;<sup>17</sup> John, 4th Lord Scrope of Masham (d. 1455) left his wife ' j olde Masse Boke with Scrope armes in ye begynnyng';<sup>18</sup> Henry, Lord Scrope of Masham (ex. 1415) left a portifory given to him by Thomas of Gloucester and a new Psalter, glossed, with the arms of

himself and his wife;<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth, Lady Scrope, left her sister Lady Lucy 'a primer and a psalter, which I had of the gift of King Henry the Seventh's Mother';<sup>20</sup> Anne, Lady Scrope (d.c. 1498) left her godson of Suffolk 'a Primer whiche kynge Edward gauffe me'<sup>21</sup> - and so on. Devotional literature, in Latin, French and English, which accounts for a fifth of the total, circulated throughout the family, although most of the vernacular treatises came into female possession. The homilies of Bede, St. Remigius and Gregory the Great, the Revelations of St. Bridget (bought locally at Beverley), the "Lives of the Saints" in French, the Prick of Conscience, at least one 'good book' in French (given to Mary Maleverer) and two more 'good books' (given to his mother) formed part of Henry, Lord Scrope's substantial bequests,<sup>22</sup> whilst his father Stephen had left William at Kirk 'unum librum vocatum Pars Oculi', and 'unum librum de gallico vocatum Grace Dieu' was given by John, Lord Scrope of Masham (d. 1405) to one of his daughters.<sup>23</sup> Anne, Lady Scrope's book of devotional writings, a collection of pious prose and verse, including the Clensyng of Mannes Sowle, is very similar in character and contents to her niece Elizabeth's book (British Library MS Harley 1706), which may have come from the same source.<sup>24</sup> The most interesting item, however, is the presence in Henry, Lord Scrope's will of copies of Rolle's Incendium Amoris and Judica me Deus (which may have been an autograph copy, and was passed to Scrope's kinsman Henry Fitzhugh, a founder of Syon, as a special treasure).<sup>25</sup> The family interest in Rolle extended to his disciple, the anchoress Margaret Kirkeby, who seems to have received Scrope support.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from the liturgical books and the devotional literature, the occasional volume of "Bonnes Meurs" or history also receives a mention in Scrope wills, as might be expected, although these form

a tiny percentage of the total. A printed Latin Chronica Chronicarum (one of a selection of printed books, the rest being liturgical) made its way from John, 5th Lord Scrope of Bolton (d.c. 1494) to St. Agatha's, Easby (a family foundation),<sup>27</sup> while his widow Anne, some of whose books have already been mentioned, left a 'Frenche boke called the Pistill of Othia' to 'my lord of Surrey', a sign that Christine de Pisan's works were still fashionable amongst the English aristocracy.<sup>28</sup> Although the Scrope family's interests seem to have been firmly centred on devotional literature, there was occasionally room for some rather less godly literature of 'solaas'. Lord John Scrope of Masham (d. 1405) certainly left a Bible to his nephew and a French Grace Dieu to his daughter, but he also left another daughter 'unum librum de gallico vocatum Tristram',<sup>29</sup> and it is quite possible that the enigmatic 'Franse boke' and 'remainder of Franse bookes' bequeathed by Richard Scrope of Bentley in 1485<sup>30</sup> and the unnamed 'French boke' of Lady Anne included a romance or two.<sup>31</sup> Lady Anne's tastes seem to have embraced both English and French literature, 'sentence' and 'solaas': as well as owning two French books and her book of English devotional treatises, she also borrowed John Paston's copy of Troilus for some time before her Scrope marriage, when she was still Lady Wingfield and an East Anglian neighbour. But it is John Paston's book-list which tells us that.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that most of the evidence about Scrope books comes from wills probably accounts for the infrequent appearance of secular books like the Troilus and the Tristram in Scrope hands.<sup>33</sup> But the surviving Scrope manuscripts are of incontrovertibly pious character, and there are not even any "debatable ascriptions" of copies of secular texts (such as the "debatable" Chaucers which plague any assessment of Duchess

Anne Stafford's interests), so it is possible that the wills do not give a misleading impression. In them the Scropes appear as a closely-knit family, with its members, both male and female, forming a local network of pious interests, and able to satisfy their literary needs through the books they bought, bequeathed or were bequeathed. The cultural influence of the more mobile and cosmopolitan Staffords was spread more widely, but also more thinly, by comparison.

Patronage, Printed Books and Influential Ladies: The Beaumont-Vere Group

The Scropes provided an example of a family with a strong tradition of literary activity apparently able to satisfy its needs for reading-matter without resorting to literary patronage. A family group which cast its net wider, and into the waters of literary patronage, was that of Beaumont and Vere, linked by the two marriages of Lady Elizabeth Scrope, first to Viscount Beaumont and second to John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford; between them they too owned approximately one hundred books. The Beaumonts, middle-ranking nobility committed to the Lancastrian cause, provide us with a neat little encapsulation of the fifteenth century nobleman's interest in books. A dry official document reveals that early in the fifteenth century, Charles Beaumont was on book-lending terms with Henry V: apparently the recently deceased king had failed to return Beaumont's copy of a chivalrous French romance, Guiron le Curtois.<sup>34</sup> In the next generation John, Viscount Beaumont was involved in the genesis of 'Vegetius translate / Into balade', known now as Knyghthode and Bataile,<sup>35</sup> but the exact nature of his involvement is difficult to define. The work opens with a conversation between the poet, a 'person of Caleys' (33) and Beaumont, in which the poet

visualises himself submitting the first instalment, together with a bill pleading for the book's acceptance by Henry VI, to Beaumont for approval. Beaumont declares that 'I fynde it is right good and perty- nente / Vnto the Kyng ... I halde it wel doon, hym therwith presente' (62-4), and the poet duly offers his 'litel werk' (74) for the king's consideration. It is possible that the translation was begun on the poet's own initiative, to be offered to the king as much-needed advice to 'chace his adversaryes euerychone' (85), and that the poet submitted it, like a petition, to Beaumont because as Lord Chamberlain he had the king's ear. However, it is also possible that Beaumont stood in some kind of patronal relationship to the poet (a sidenote in one of the manuscripts says 'after my maistre' beside the first reference to Beaumont):<sup>36</sup> the poet seems to have felt the need of a "good lord" to promote himself and his work (especially if he had recently lost a previous "good lord" in Humphrey of Gloucester)<sup>37</sup> and selected Beaumont for the task.

Although it is likely that Beaumont had a soldier's interest in Vegetius, the soldier's "auctoritee" (his contemporary Fastolf owned a copy, for instance)<sup>38</sup> the extent of his literary interest in Knyght- hode and Bataile is difficult to gauge. Was he just acting as the poet's "good lord" in forwarding the poem, or was he acting as his literary patron? Was he approached as intermediary because of his political sympathies or his literary sympathies? At least he seems to have decided that the poem was 'wel doon' and to have done what was expected of him, and it is quite possible that we would not have the poem today were it not for Beaumont's promotion. Fortunately, we are on surer and more familiar ground when we come to the book associated with Beaumont's son William. That is a handsome Book of Hours, Oxford

Bodleian Library MS Rawl. liturg. f.37, which William presented to his wife Elizabeth in 1498, 'she toccupie the same during her lief'.<sup>39</sup> For once this typical gift is recorded in a formal inscription.

Lady Elizabeth presumably retained that book after her second marriage; she certainly took another volume with her to the Vere household. Both halves of British Library MS Harl. 1706, the first half containing an 'unusually inclusive gathering of Middle English devotional literature', made late in the fifteenth century, the second half, slightly later, containing a further selection of devotional and didactic literature, bear her signatures as Elizabeth Beaumont and Elizabeth Vere.<sup>40</sup> She may have acquired her special collection of devotional literature from or through the nuns of Barking, with whom she had various connections.<sup>41</sup> (Her aunt Anne, Lady Scrope, possessed a book with similar contents, British Library MS Harl. 4012, as mentioned above). Apart from these two special books, Lady Elizabeth possessed at least two more, a book 'of gold' given to her sister and 'a booke of gold hauing diuers leffys of golde with the Salutacion of our Lady att the begynnyng' given to her niece Lady Surrey.<sup>42</sup> These were probably richly decorated "heirloom" Books of Hours, most suitable for bequests to kinswomen. Lady Elizabeth's fondness for devotional literature and connection with Barking was very much in keeping with Scrope traditions, but it was also in keeping with the traditions of other noble ladies who had married into the Vere family. Prior to the late fifteenth century, although we know next to nothing about the literary interests of the Vere menfolk, we do know something about the interests of their wives. Philippa, widow of the 9th Earl of Oxford, owned a volume of French theological writings, the Vies des Saints Peres, which made its way to Barking; Elizabeth Howard, wife of the 12th Earl, made another carefully con-

sidered gift to Barking, this time a fine fourteenth century manuscript of devotional treatises in French prose.<sup>43</sup> She was also one of the circle of East Anglian ladies who persuaded Bokenham to write his Legendys of Hooly Wummen, a

... Request of hyr to whom sey nay

I neyther kan, ne wyl, ne may,

So mych am I bounden to hyr goodness (505I-3)

She chose St. Elizabeth of Hungary as "her" saint.<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Scrope fitted in well.

Lady Elizabeth's husband, the 13th Earl, has left a fuller, but tantalisingly incomplete, record of his own literary interests, in the form of documentary evidence, surviving manuscripts and literary dedications. The will and inventory made at his death reveal, as might be expected, a large quantity of service books - described in some detail - which included two printed missals, and whose numbers account for some four-fifths of the total. The documents also reveal the presence of a 'chest full of frenshe and englisshe bokes', which are not described at all.<sup>45</sup> It is more than likely that the chest's contents included British Library MS Harley 3862, one of the better decorated copies of Lydgate's Life of Our Lady,<sup>46</sup> which includes the Vere arms in its decoration; the tantalising question is whether the contents included the delightful Ellesmere manuscript of the Canterbury Tales (San Marino, Huntington Library MS 26.C.12). A unique flyleaf poem on the noble origins and character of the house of Vere, whose current representative (the 12th or 13th Earl)

Standyth styffe in tryeuth stronge as a maste

Redy w<sup>t</sup> his powere to helpe in all stowrys

The Lyon his lorde where he standythe in dystresse

certainly suggests some connection with the Vere family - Manly and Rickert were tempted to call it ownership - during the late fifteenth century.<sup>47</sup> It would certainly be to the Earl's credit if he did own it. At least when it comes to literary dedications the Earl's literary interests are more clearly displayed, and we find him revealing a similar interest in the capabilities of the printing-press to Duke Edward Stafford, commissioning the translation and printing of works on familiar and family topics.

By 1489 the Earl had sent Caxton a copy of Les quatre fylz Aymon for translation and printing, through his desire to have 'other Hystories of olde tyme passed of vertues chyualry reduced in lykewyse into our English tongue', much as he had previously requested a translation from a French "life" of his predecessor Robert, Earl of Oxford - history with a personal touch. Unfortunately, the Earl's personal interest in his ancestral history and 'thactes and faytes of warre' did not make him a prompt or reliable paymaster. Poor Caxton was driven to remind the Earl that printing involved 'great coste and charges' and that some payment for "Robert" would be welcome - would 'hys good grace' kindly ... 'rewarde me in suche wise that I shall have cause to pray for his good and prosperus welfare?'<sup>48</sup> However, the Earl, a man of good standing with Henry VII, may have been instrumental in securing a prestigious royal commission for Caxton. In 1489 Henry Tudor expressed to Caxton a desire to have Christine de Pisan's Livre des Faicts d'armes et de chevalerie translated and printed,

to thende that euery gentylman born to armes  
& all manere men of werre captayns / souldiours /  
vytayllers & all other shold haue knowlege how  
they ought to behaue theym in the fayttes of



warre & of bataylles.

It was the Earl of Oxford who handed over the French text on behalf of the King, and who had probably suggested to Henry that the Faicts, 'as necessary a boke & as requysite / as ony may be for euery estate hie & lowe' was a suitable project for Caxton's press.<sup>49</sup> One hopes that Caxton profitted better from it than from the Earl's personal commissions. Although the Earl was more enterprising than some of his contemporaries both in his appreciation of the propaganda value of "public patronage" of Caxton, and in his suggestion of titles to the printer, rather than the printer's suggestion of titles to him,<sup>50</sup> the books he is associated with are well in line with contemporary tastes (as epitomised and supplied by Caxton's output). 'Fayttes of armes' and 'thystoryes of the ryght noble and hie vertues of the prodecessours whiche ben digne' were just the kind of reading-matter enjoyed by the Earl's contemporaries, perhaps the men in particular.<sup>51</sup> Similarly the kind of vernacular devotional material collected in British Library MS Harley 1706 had a strong appeal to the Earl's wife and her pious contemporaries.

#### More Influential Ladies: (a) The Chaucer-Montagu-de la Pole Combination

The brief discussion of the Veres' literary activities has revealed the Vere spouses contributing an important but independent element to the family's pattern of book-acquisition and dispersal. In some other family groupings, the women appear to interweave their own inherited traditions of book-ownership and patronage with those of their husbands to create a new pattern. On a small scale (approximately thirty-five books are involved) this can be illustrated by the marital career of Alice Chaucer, granddaughter of Geoffrey. Her literary influence on

her mercantile first husband is, unfortunately, unrecorded, but her influence on her second husband, Thomas Montagu, 4th Earl of Salisbury, and on her third husband, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, can still be investigated.

Alice's father Thomas Chaucer seems to have been on friendly terms with Lydgate (who wrote an 'altogether pleasing' poem at the 'Departing of Thomas Chaucer on Ambassade in to France')<sup>52</sup> and it is Lydgate who provides the linking strand in the Chaucer-Montagu-de la Pole patterns. One would do well to remember that Lydgate was not necessarily 'passed around from one patron to another as a poet who could turn out something for you'.<sup>53</sup> However, it cannot be entirely coincidental that Alice's family was friendly with Lydgate, that Alice herself commissioned a work from Lydgate and owned a copy of another Lydgate work, that Alice's second husband commissioned a work from Lydgate, that Alice's third husband owned a copy of yet another Lydgate work, and that association with Lydgate seems to go against the grain of Montagu and de la Pole literary interests.

William Montagu, 2nd Earl of Salisbury (d. 1397), Thomas's great-uncle, seems to have been particularly active in acquiring and circulating books, both at home and abroad. He cheerfully paid out one hundred marks for the gorgeous Biblè Hystoriaux (now British Library MS Royal 19.D.II) captured with the French king's baggage at Poitiers, and promptly bestowed it on his 'compaign', his wife Elizabeth.<sup>54</sup> Thomas, Duke of Gloucester was the recipient of another fine book (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 319) of Brunetto Latini's Livre du Tresor (see above, "Thomas, Duke of Gloucester"). Montagu also seems to have supplied some of the manuscript source material for the French romance Melusine. This "ancestral romance" survives in two versions, written

for his two interested families; the first was compiled between 1387 and 1394 by Jean de Berry's secretary Jean d'Arras, for the amusement of Berry's sister, while the second, written soon after, was made by the Poitevin La Coudrette for William and John of Parthenay.<sup>55</sup> Both writers speak of Montagu's provision of 'veray and true Cronykles' of the Lusignan family:

Et puis, apres cinq ou six mois,  
Comme celle hystoire Amery,  
Le cont de Salebry,  
Dun liure quauoit du chastel  
Qui tant par est fort et bel,  
Car il parlait en tous ses dis  
De tous les fais que Ie vous dis.<sup>56</sup>

The English version, Parténay, describes the transaction thus:

And syn, after monthes fife or sixe, lo!  
This historie confermed anthonye,  
The erle of salz and of Barry also,  
In a boke whych had of this castel hie,  
Whiche that was so faire, fulstrong and myghtie,  
But al-wais spake in his wordes al  
Vn-to thes bokes Aboue-said egall (176-82)

Why they should call the Earl 'Amery' and 'Anthonye' respectively is a mystery, since none of the Montagu Earls of Salisbury bore either name; given the date of Jean d'Arras' version, William is the Montagu most likely to have been ferrying chronicles to Jean de Berry. On another occasion the traffic in books went in the opposite direction: the Louvre inventories speak of 'Le Roman de la Rose, envoyé par le roi au conte de Salisbury, par l'archevesque de Rouen'.<sup>57</sup> William

Montagu's heir John (ex. 1400), one of Richard II's chamber knights, continued the courtly, literary traditions of his uncle. Christine de Pisan, whose son was brought up in the Salisbury household, (at Salisbury's request) spoke glowingly of Salisbury as 'un noble conte, dit de Salsbey et comme icelluy gracieux chevalier amast dictiez et lui mesme fust gracieux dicteur.'<sup>58</sup> Jean Creton also mentioned the 'gracieux dicteur's' gifts: 'si faisoit balades & chancons / rondeaulx & lais / Tres bien et bel'.<sup>59</sup> A graphic reminder that the cultured environment which fostered elegant poetry like Salisbury's also fostered dangerous political intrigue is provided by Salisbury's special commission to the aforementioned Creton. Following Richard II's deposition Salisbury, still loyal to his royal master, instructed Creton to provide an up-to-the-minute account in French verse of the Deposition: this was to be circulated in France as political propaganda, to persuade France to come to Richard's aid.<sup>60</sup> Salisbury's valiant efforts to alter the course of history through the power of the pen and the power of the sword were, unfortunately, equally unsuccessful.

John's son Thomas, the 4th Earl of Salisbury, was as much of a traveller between the courts of England and France as his forebears, but the only record of his literary interests suggests that they were rather different from theirs. In the Prologue to the Pilgrimage of the Life of Man,<sup>61</sup> amongst his customary dilations on style and content, Lydgate lets drop the information that Salisbury, the 'noble manly knyght' (123) had commissioned the work,

Be-cause he wolde that man shold(e) se,

In ovre tonge, the gret moralyte

Wych in thys boke ys seyde & comprehendyd. (135-7)

It is quite possible that Salisbury genuinely wanted an English transla-

tion of the Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine (just as the Duke of Bedford wanted a Latin prose translation of the Pèlerinage de l'Âme).<sup>62</sup> However, it is also possible that Salisbury was persuaded first, that he wanted the translation, and second, that he should entrust Lydgate with the task, by Countess Alice - or even by Lydgate himself.<sup>63</sup> Spiritually, the result was undoubtedly a "good work": poetically, it was not. However, it was to prove less ephemeral than John Montagu's graceful verses.<sup>64</sup>

The literary activity of William de la Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk and Alice Chaucer's third husband, seems to veer in a remarkably similar manner between courtly verse making and Lydgatian associations. There is no family tradition like the Montagus' in Suffolk's case - the only books known to have belonged to his unfortunate ancestors were heirloom liturgical volumes<sup>65</sup> - but Suffolk's own interests seem to have been those of a courtly "maker". According to Shirley, Suffolk composed some poems in French when captive in France during the 1420's; Shirley is an unreliable witness, since at least one of these poems was by Alain Chartier,<sup>66</sup> but at least Shirley seems to have believed Suffolk was a poet. The evidence that Suffolk wrote poems in English is even more slippery. However, it does lead to tempting conjectures, for some of the poems involved are English translations of Charles d'Orléans' poetry, and Suffolk was Charles' gaoler. Unfortunately, the proof that he was a fellow-poet is lacking.<sup>67</sup> (It is more certain that Suffolk was interested in poetry's companion art, music: during his sojourn in France, Suffolk retained the great composer Gilles Binchois, whose music seems to have soothed Suffolk's occasionally savage breast).<sup>68</sup> The only book Suffolk is known to have owned points back to the

Lydgate connection" and Alice Chaucer again: Suffolk's arms adorn a very good copy of the Siege of Thebes, Lydgate's "appendix" to the Canterbury Tales. (British Library MS Arundel 119).<sup>69</sup> Suffolk's choice of that text, concerned with the problems of "division" and discord and the desirability of 'Pees and quyet, concord and unyte' (4703), is another reminder that the world of the courtly "maker" was a dangerous place. Suffolk, hungry for power and its tangible rewards, overreached himself: his life and wretched death would have made a fine Lydgatian "tragedye".

As for Alice Chaucer, the connecting link between Montagu, de la Pole and Lydgate, none of her own books seems to have survived, but the documentary evidence for them has. A manuscript colophon provides a record of her active interest in Lydgate: according to St. John's College, Oxford MS 56, Lydgate's poem on The Interpretation and Virtues of the Mass was made 'ad rogatum domine Countesse de Suthefolchia'.<sup>70</sup> It was an interesting choice: unlike the aureate verse prayer and the "saint's life" chosen by two Stafford ladies, this is an analytical piece, designed for a 'fairly advanced pupil' prepared to use her 'eyen verray contemplatylfe' (9), rather than an absolute beginner.<sup>71</sup> The Countess's request for an instructive piece in the vernacular links her with several other pious and practical noblewomen amongst her contemporaries - such as Lady Margaret Beaufort, the Duchess of Clarence, and the Duchess of Buckingham - and so too do the contents of her book-closet at Ewelme. An inventory made in 1466 records twenty of her books: three-quarters of these were the predictable service-books, but the rest formed a nicely-balanced (and handsomely bound) selection of bedside reading.<sup>72</sup> Three fall into the "Bonnes Meurs" category: one, a 'boke of latyn of the moral Institution of a prince', was perhaps kept for the education of young de la Poles, the 'tales of philosophers' in

French likewise; but a copy of Christine de Pisan's 'Citee des Dames' was probably Alice's own choice. Her lighter reading was also in French: the old chanson de geste of Les Quatre Filz d'Aymon ('quater-fitz Emundis') and a 'frensh boke of temps pasteur conteyned divers stories in the same'. The one English book recorded was devotional, and a souvenir of her Montagu marriage: 'a boke of English, in paper, of the pilgrymage, translated by domine John Lydgate out of frensh, covered with blak lether withowte bordes'. It is interesting that the family copy of the Pilgrimage was a "paper-back" rather than a luxurious "coffee-table book" - one to be read rather than looked at.<sup>73</sup> These books were moved to Ewelme (a favourite manor) for Alice's use, and she does seem to have valued them; fearing one January that Ewelme would flood, she wrote asking 'yef my bookes be in myther closette by ground, that ye woll put them in some other place, for takying of harme'.<sup>74</sup> It was a collection worthy of care.

#### (b) The Berkeley-Beauchamp-Talbot-Neville Group

The books and literary patronage associated with the families of Alice Chaucer and her noble husbands have shown, on a small scale, the interweaving of different family traditions. A similar development, but on a much larger scale (approximately one hundred and forty books), and involving much more literary patronage, can be detected in the Berkeley-Beauchamp-Talbot-Neville grouping.<sup>75</sup>

Starting with the Berkeley line, we come upon a family which (judging by the manuscripts and literary texts associated with them) combined discriminating artistic tastes with intelligent literary patronage. Thomas Berkeley, the 10th Lord (d. 1412) had a keen eye for a good artist and a good writer. He maintained two distinguished

Oxford scholars in turn as his chaplains, John Trevisa and John Walton,<sup>76</sup> and - a literary public benefactor - set them translating 'some of the outstanding scientific, historical and religious material of the age' into English.<sup>77</sup> The campaign began with the Polychronicon, one of the most popular "universal histories" in circulation; Trevisa's prefatory Epistle depicts Berkeley taking an active and intelligent interest in the project, recommending prose rather than verse so that the translation would be 'clere and plaine to be known and understandyn'.<sup>78</sup> The next large project was the translation of that most popular encyclopaedia, Bartholomeus Anglicus' De Proprietatibus Rerum,<sup>79</sup> and at some point came the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus,

fful wel translated shul ye seen  
 þe whiche of Berkeley lord Thomas  
 Whome gode assoyle for his grace  
 Lete oute of latyn hit translate  
 By Johan Trevysa þat hit made  
 A maystre in Theologye  
 Appreued clerk for þe maystre.

As Shirley said,

Thank þe lord and þe Clerk  
 þat caused first þat holy werk.<sup>80</sup>

The last major work to be translated by Trevisa was Aegidius Colonna's De Regimine Principum, a favourite "mirror for Princes".<sup>81</sup> After Trevisa's death (of exhaustion?) Berkeley recruited the services of John Walton: this time he chose the soldier's handbook, Vegetius' De Re Militari

to gret disport & dalyaunce of lordes & alle  
 worthy werryours þat ben apaised by wey of



age al labour & trauailing & to grete informacion  
 & lernyng of zonge lordes and knyzttes þat ben  
 lusty & louep to here & see & to use dedus  
 of armes and chivalrye.<sup>82</sup>

Berkeley seems to have made a deliberate selection of tried and tested favourites, that any educated nobleman's library should have included, and had them translated for his own and others' great benefit. Yet none of these enterprising and unexceptionable translations was mentioned in his will; our knowledge of Berkeley's activities comes from the translations themselves or their colophons. Berkeley's will deals solely with religious books - liturgical texts and a 'legenda sanctorum in anglicis' - divided between his daughter and favourite religious establishments.<sup>83</sup> One of these bequests, a copy of Rolle's glossed Psalter presented to the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene near Bristol, survives as Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 953. It is well-written and decorated, with a particularly exuberant full border on f.3<sup>r</sup>, into which is incorporated the inscription 'Liber domini Thome seignour de Berkeley', with his arms, crest and supporters. There are Berkeley obits in the Calendar too. Another Bodleian manuscript, Digby 233, also seems to have Berkeley connections: it too has rather idiosyncratic and extravagant decoration, similar to the Psalter's, and its contents consist of the translations of De Regimine and De Re Militari.<sup>84</sup> Doyle suggests that it may have been made for Berkeley in Bristol, perhaps to serve as a prestigious gift to Henry V, and that the Berkeleys' patronage of authors and artists may have been 'both a continuation of provincial traditions and an emulation of what they knew from the royal court.'<sup>85</sup>

Berkeley's influence seems to have continued for several generations. His daughter Elizabeth certainly continued his generous tradi-

tions, and gave Walton another challenging commission: he was to translate Boethius' Consolation<sup>86</sup> for her 'seruice and plesance' (72). Walton naturally claimed 'Insuffishaunce of cunning and of wyt / Defaut of langage and of eloquence' (1-2), but obeyed the lady's 'hest' (4) with grace and good humour. He proved as competent at verse-translation as he was at prose, in spite of the constraints of metre and rhyme.<sup>87</sup> Berkeley interests may also account for the presence of a copy of Trevisa's Polychronicon (together with the Dialogus Inter Clericum et Militem and Fitzralph's sermon Défensio Curatorum), now British Library MS Addit. 24194, amongst the books of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and Elizabeth Berkeley's husband. Although Beauchamp, a soldier and statesman, might have chosen this useful and informative book for himself, he was probably influenced in his choice by "inside knowledge" of the translation's origins.<sup>88</sup> Two generations later, Walton's translation of Vegetius appears amongst the books of Richard Beauchamp's granddaughter Anne, Richard III's queen: British Library MS Royal 18.A.XII was made for Richard and Anne.<sup>89</sup>

Richard Beauchamp's family had a long history of book-ownership, going back at least as far as the thirteenth century, and many of the Beauchamps display a distinct preference for French romances and elegant verse. William Beauchamp (d. 1269) left a Lancelot to his daughter Joan (which she had already borrowed for some time),<sup>90</sup> and this may reappear as the Lancelot mentioned in the wonderful collection of books belonging to his grandson Guy.<sup>91</sup> Guy naturally left his chapel books to his widow on his death, (1315), but ten years previously he had made a remarkably generous gift of forty books to the Cistercian abbey of Bordesley, a foundation in which the family was much interested. All the books were described as 'Romaunces', but their contents spanned a wide range, from the Bible to medicine, via

"saints' lives", romance, "Bonnes Meurs" and history. The two largest distinct groups are a cluster of "saints' lives" and another of "Gestes et romances". These included both chansons de gestes (rather old-fashioned, but still popular), some more fashionable Troy, Alexander and Arthurian romances, a fine Anglo-Norman romance, Amadas et Ydoine, and, of course, the Beauchamp "ancestral romance", Gui de Warewik. (There may have been another "ancestral romance" included, that of the Chevalier au Cygne, if 'Romaunce de Aygnes' is a transcription error for 'Cygnes' rather than 'Aignes'). Blaess wondered 'si Guy ne voulait pas se défaire de livres vieillis ou qui ne plaisaient plus',<sup>92</sup> and Legge suggested Guy's gift represented a spring-cleaning of 'old-fashioned books which were too good to use as scrap'.<sup>93</sup> Yet other nobles seem to have hung on to such books (Thomas of Gloucester, for instance),<sup>94</sup> and Guy did ensure that his descendants could borrow the books - perhaps he was depositing his books at Bordesley in much the same spirit as modern benefactors depositing their medieval manuscripts at university libraries. Later fourteenth century records of Beauchamp books refer mostly to service books, as usual,<sup>95</sup> but Mathilda Say (née Beauchamp) did leave some unnamed French books, and Katherine Mortimer (d. 1369), wife of Earl Thomas, left an enigmatic 'book of ch.!' (chansons?).<sup>96</sup>

Richard Beauchamp seems to have inherited his family's taste for the elegancies of French literature, but he is also the first Beauchamp with any recorded interest in English literature.<sup>97</sup> Three surviving manuscripts are associated with him. One, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS français 12421, is a handsome copy of Premierfait's translation of the Decameron, given by Beauchamp to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester; another fine manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale MS f.fr.

831, is an important collection of Froissart's poetry, perhaps made under Froissart's supervision.<sup>98</sup> The other manuscript is much less fun, and much less fine, the Trevisa Polychronicon (British Library MS Addit. 24194) mentioned above. The modest product of a London atelier, it contains Beauchamp's arms in its decoration and was probably made for him - and one suspects that its contents and quality are much more representative of the kind of book Beauchamp's contemporaries were acquiring.<sup>99</sup> Beauchamp probably owned one other English text of a similar pragmatic nature, Lydgate's Title and Pedigree of Henry VI,<sup>100</sup> as the result of an act of "public" patronage. In his rôle as Henry VI's tutor, Beauchamp was responsible for Lydgate's English translation of Laurence Calot's French Pedigree (commissioned by John, Duke of Bedford for consumption by the king's French subjects)<sup>101</sup>

To put away all maner (of) variaunce,  
Holy the doute and þe ambyguyte,  
To settle the ligne where hit shuld(e) be  
... And to put his title in remembraunce,  
Which that he hath to Ingland and to Fraunce (6-8, 35-6)

Beauchamp had good reason to know of Calot's Pedigree and to require an English translation for English consumption, and his choice of Lydgate was a natural one. Lydgate had made himself the English "laureate" after all, and had previously worked on the Beauchamps' "ancestral romance" Guy of Warwick for Beauchamp's daughter Margaret.<sup>102</sup> (However, Blake does remind us that the initiative could have come from Lydgate, who 'may have spotted an opportunity to make himself useful, and so suggested the translation himself').<sup>103</sup> Beauchamp's second wife also turned to Lydgate, this time with a commission of a more private nature, for a short devotional poem. The result, the Fifteen

Joys of Our Lady, made 'at pinstance of þe worshipfull Pryncesse Isabelle nowe Countasse of Warr' lady Despenser'<sup>104</sup> is a "rosary" poem suitable for private devotional recitation, but it also links Countess Isabel with the public world of fashionable ladies who commissioned religious and devotional poems from Lydgate.<sup>105</sup> Countess Isabel probably also owned a copy of one other English poem, with an even more personal application: it was a 'Balade made of Isabelle Countasse of Warr. and lady Despenser by Richard Beauchamp Eorlle of Warrewyk', if Shirley is to be believed.<sup>106</sup> An elegant expression of devoted love, in tune with the poems in Beauchamp's Froissart, it shows us something of Beauchamp the private man.

Some of Beauchamp's children turned, often out of necessity, to the more public use of literary and artistic patronage for self-promotion. The books associated with Margaret (his eldest daughter by his first marriage) together with her husband John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury, first reveal the beginnings of this development in the Beauchamps' application of patronage. Three fine and unusual French Books of Hours made for Margaret and John survive (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MSS 40-1950, 41-1950, and Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS Dep 221/1 from Blair's College, Aberdeen) - all of which include a profusely-illustrated English poem on the Litany as a "meditation piece", and one of which, Talbot's, includes five verses from Lydgate's Life of St. Alban and St. Amphibal.<sup>107</sup> They reveal Margaret and John's fine artistic tastes in a context of personal piety, and miniatures of themselves in this context were private statements of their family status. The decision to have themselves depicted in full heraldic panoply on panel-paintings was more unusual,<sup>108</sup> and other manuscripts associated with Margaret and John reveal a more

public concern with their social status. Talbot was responsible for the presentation of British Library MS Royal 15 E.VI to Queen Margaret of Anjou as a thoughtful wedding-gift.<sup>109</sup> It is a large and lavishly illustrated compendium of entertaining and instructive literature, business with pleasure. The opening "presentation miniature" shows Talbot, ever the loyal Lancastrian, presenting the costly book to the new Queen, in the presence of her husband and court, while on the opposite page is a pictorial genealogy of the English and French royal houses, united in Henry VI and supported by the English nobility - a reminder of Margaret's new political rôle. Talbot's loyal support of King and Queen receives artistic emphasis: in the first miniature, accompanied by his faithful "talbot" dog he kneels before the royal pair, his arms and badges and Margaret's daisies pepper the border, and a poetical pledge of his loyalty twines through the decoration; while a few pages later he is depicted in armour supporting a standard of Henry VI's arms impaled with Margaret's. Not surprisingly, Guy of Warwick formed part of the book's contents, a reminder of Talbot's illustrious connections. Guy of Warwick was also used for more overt propaganda by Talbot's wife Margaret.<sup>110</sup> Apart from gaining the kudos of being seen to commission the translation (however inept)<sup>111</sup> from a fashionable poet, she was also emphasising her illustrious ancestry - the colophon describes her as 'lineally descended' from the famous Guy - at a time when she was vigorously pursuing the Beauchamp claims to various Berkeley estates.<sup>112</sup> This concern with family and ancestry can be seen in a heraldic context in the "Talbot Banners" (part of College of Arms MS B.29), a 'visual catalogue of reference'<sup>113</sup> to Talbot's family and friends. Talbot's and Margaret's relations with both the Lancastrian and the Beauchamp dynasties clearly stimulated them into

some interesting acts of artistic and literary patronage.

Richard Beauchamp's heir by his second marriage, Henry, 1st Duke of Warwick, did not live long enough to be much troubled by problems arising from his inheritance, and there is no sign of family concerns in his only surviving manuscript. Suitably, for a pious youth who recited much of the Psalter daily, that book is a deluxe English Book of Hours (New York, Pierpont Morgan MS 893), but there is no portrait of Henry nor display of his arms, and his ownership is presumed from his signature 'Warrewyk' and his motto.<sup>114</sup> Henry's sister and heiress Anne Beauchamp, however, suffered much over her inheritance, and her acts of patronage are intimately connected with her Beauchamp descent. Dragged down in the wake of her husband, Richard Neville the "kingmaker" (and un-maker), she was deprived of her own estates by an act of legal chicanery so that her daughters of Clarence and Gloucester might inherit both paternal and maternal estates at once - to the benefit of their royal spouses.<sup>115</sup> The Countess did not accept misfortune meekly: she fired off a series of letters to Parliament and the royal family, in a bid to restore her rightful position and her family name.<sup>116</sup> The "Rous Rolls" and "Beauchamp pageants" were artistic salvos fired in the same campaign. The Rous Rolls, one in English (British Library MS Addit.48976) and one in Latin (College of Arms MS, Warwick Roll), provide a genealogical account, for whom it might concern, of the Beauchamp family, illustrated by fine pen-drawings of its illustrious members, accompanied by their coats-of-arms. The "history" was compiled by Master John Rous, chaplain of Guy's Cliff Chantry, Warwick (founded by Richard Beauchamp). Not only do the rolls dwell on Anne's misfortunes and her nobility of character, they aggrandise her Beauchamp ancestors and present an ideal Warwick-centred past, using history and genealogy

as propaganda.<sup>117</sup> Genealogical rolls, and their use as propaganda, were not new,<sup>118</sup> but the "Beauchamp pageants" (British Library MS Cotton Julius E.IV, art. 6) represent a new departure. The "pageants", introduced by brief English texts, are a series of beautiful pen-drawings representing significant moments in the chivalrous life of Richard Beauchamp and his close and happy relationship with royalty, '(almost) single-handedly assuring the succession of the English crown and of the Lancastrian dynasty!' This was a momentous creation:

To that point in the history of English art, nothing comparable had been made; there had been illustrated lives of Christ, the Virgin, the saints, of remote historical figures such as Alexander and Marco Polo, but never before had there been a pictorial life of a nearly contemporary historical personage.<sup>119</sup>

Beauchamp is shown as the new family hero, comparable to the much-loved Guy of Warwick.<sup>120</sup> Anne received valuable assistance in this act of family image-creation from the artist she employed, the "Caxton Master". His lovely drawings present an ideal image of Richard Beauchamp as a 'verray parfit gentil knyght'. One further trace of Anne's misfortunes, again combined with evidence of artistic good taste but this time in a non-patronal context, may appear in the enigmatic note 'neuer Foryeteth Anne neville' in the margin of f.101<sup>v</sup> of Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 61. Since John Shirley, who had the Corpus Troilus in his hands long enough to add his "bookplate", was closely connected with Richard Beauchamp's household, it is possible that Anne Beauchamp had access to the book, either before or through Shirley.<sup>121</sup> However, there were many fifteenth century Anne Nevilles - including the Duchess of Buckingham and Anne Beauchamp's daughter - and it is by no means clear which



Anne's claims have priority.

Lady Anne Beauchamp's marriage to Richard Neville linked two families with rather different habits of book-ownership and patronage. For one thing, there were a lot more Nevilles, both in the main-line and in the cadet branches, and the books associated with them form a more disparate group: there is much less sense of a "Neville tradition" than of a "Beauchamp tradition".<sup>122</sup> The two main features which emerge from a brief survey of the Neville books are the way in which the political importance of the family attracted writers to offer "speculative" dedications" to various Nevilles, and the fact that the nearest approach to coherent collections can be found in the hands of some of the Neville women. Taking the Neville ladies first, four had particularly interesting book-collections: Joan Beaufort, wife of Ralph Neville, her daughters Anne, Duchess of Buckingham and Cecily, Duchess of York, and her granddaughter-in-law Anne Neville, Queen of England. Joan, as discussed above in Chapter 4, possessed several books which were in circulation between Neville and other households - the Tristram bequeathed by her brother, the crusading histories borrowed by her nephew Henry V, the Gower bequeathed by a member of the Neville affinity<sup>123</sup> and may have owned two more, a Book of Hours, and that favourite secular devotional work, Love's Myrrour.<sup>124</sup> This formidable lady was also offered an apparently unsolicited copy of Hoccleve's Series, in what looks like an attempt at securing the patronage of a lady who had some influence herself and knew others with more. Anne, Duchess of Buckingham, née Neville, possessed a similarly interesting mixture: at least one Book of Hours and Psalter; a French Epistle and Gospels; an even more recent book of secular devotional material, the Gilte Legende; a Roman history ('Lukan'); and, possibly, several

Chaucers. She, too, was offered a respectable literary work (although she may have encouraged the writer); The Nightingale; she was another influential lady whose support was worth seeking. Devotional literature links the collections of Joan and Anne with those of Cecily and Queen Anne. Cecily's piety has received special study;<sup>125</sup> one of its manifestations was in her choice of reading-matter. Not surprisingly, most of her recorded books (seven-eighths, in fact), are liturgical books, bequeathed to her family, family foundations, and friends. The rest are vernacular devotional works, of the kind she had read to her household: a Legenda Aurea, a life of St. Katherine of Sienna, and a book of St. Mathilda bequeathed to her daughter Bridgett, and a 'boke of Bonaventura and Hilton in the same in Englishe' (probably another Neville copy of Love's Myrrour) and a 'boke of the Revelacions of Saint Burgitte' bequeathed to her daughter Anne, Prioress of Syon. Cecily's granddaughter-in-law, Anne Neville, brought a mixture of Beauchamp and Neville tastes to her marriage: the copy of Vegetius in British Library MS Royal 18.A.XII was made for Anne and Richard III, and she may have given Richard the Hours, now Lambeth Palace MS 474 (see above, "Lady Margaret Beaufort") which is stylistically related to the "Warwick Hours" and may originally have been a Beauchamp manuscript. The unfortunate pair may also have owned British Library MS Egerton 2006, another book of St. Mathilda.<sup>126</sup> Most of the other book-owning Neville ladies are recorded as owning one or two liturgical books in their own right (an honourable exception is Katherine Neville, Lady Hastings, who bequeathed seven, including a printed Mass-book and porteous), and it is their husbands, such as Lord Hastings, the Earl of Oxford, John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, and William Fitzalan, who have the interesting literary and artistic connections.<sup>127</sup>

Most of the Neville men (apart from the scholarly Archbishop George Neville) again owned just one or two books apiece, but exhibit more diverse tastes, ranging through history, heraldry and law to Chaucer, linked by a preference for English texts. Amongst the grandsons of Ralph and Joan Neville, George Lord Bergavenny owned a lovely Book of Hours, a fine copy of an English chronicle and De Arte Heraldica (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 733), and, possibly, a plain copy of Hoccleve's Regement too (St. John's College, Cambridge MS 223);<sup>128</sup> Thomas owned a modest copy of the Canterbury Tales (British Library MS Sloane 1685) and perhaps the Salisbury Roll (Boughton House, Duke of Buccleuch's MS, Part VI);<sup>129</sup> John, Marquis Montagu owned an unusually fine copy of the Nova Statuta (London, Lincoln's Inn MS Hale 194), and Richard, Earl of Warwick owned a fashionable Flemish manuscript of L'enseignement de vraie noblesse (Geneva, Bibliothèque de la Ville MS fr. 166). An unidentified John Neville owned a late fourteenth century manuscript of the Roman de la Rose (London, Gray's Inn MS 10).<sup>130</sup> Thomas Neville, Lord Furnival, brother of Ralph, the 1st Earl of Westmorland, is the only male Neville apparently connected with English literary patronage, and again the initiative came not from him but from Hoccleve. La Male Regle,<sup>131</sup> a long and moving account of Hoccleve's sickness of body and purse (409) and "derserving poverty", is addressed to Neville, presumably because as Treasurer he had the influence to have Hoccleve paid the salary 'pat due is for this yeer' (420) rather than because he was known to be a literary connoisseur.<sup>132</sup> When the Nevilles did display any interest in literature - and at least it was usually in English literature - they managed to satisfy their needs with copies of extant texts, a pragmatic attitude they seem to have shared with many of their contem-

poraries.

Middle-Ranking Book-Owners: Purchasers and Patrons

(a) Discriminating Purchasers: Sir Thomas Charleton and Sir

Edmund Rede

It is hardly surprising that several members of the lesser nobility and gentry should have adopted this pragmatic attitude to book acquisition and taken what was available, much as the Nevilles did. However, the selections made by such middle-ranking book-owners were often remarkably enterprising, and they were clearly prepared to pay for quality when it suited them to do so. More surprising was the apparent willingness of some of these middling men to dispense literary patronage when the occasion arose - which soemtimes had remarkable results.

The collections of two gentlemen which may serve as examples of the former category are those of Sir Thomas Charleton, Speaker of the House of Commons (d. 1465) and Sir Edmund Rede of Boarstall, Sherrif and M.P. (d.c. 1487). Their quality suggests that a willingness to buy extant texts rather than commission new ones did not necessarily imply niggardliness or a lack of literary interest. Inventories show that Charleton possessed at least nine books. Five were liturgical, but the rest are an intelligent selection from the best of fourteenth and early fifteenth century English literature - 'an engelische booke calde Giles de regimeie principum' (either Trevisa's or Hoccleve's translation), 'an engelysche boke the whiche was called Troles ... j. of perse plowman, a noder of Caunterbury tales' - with no Lydgate in sight. As McFarlane said, it was 'the library of a man of evident discrimination'.<sup>133</sup>

Sir Edmund Rede's collection was rather larger (at least thirty

books) according to his informative will,<sup>134</sup> and fortunately some have survived as witnesses to the physical quality as well as the quantity of his books. As usual, liturgical books account for a generous portion - nearly one-third-of Rede's library. Most went as keepsakes to members of his family, but there was one which went back to where it had come from: 'volo quod vnum portiforium notatum in custodia mea existens, et quondam pertinens ville de Standelfe, remaneat predicte ville quandocumque contigat eis illum indigere'. The rest of Rede's books offer a tantalising glimpse of a country gentleman's library. Devotional books were not much in evidence: they were represented by 'vnum librum vocatum Bonaventura' and 'vnum librum de Disputacione inter corpus et animam', language unspecified, left to Rede's clerical son Thomas, and a 'tractatum trium Regum de Coleyn', probably in English, bound with a Gower bequeathed to Rede's wife. Entertainment (and edification) was present in the form of not just one, but two, Gowers: the second may survive as British Library MS Harl 3490, a very handsome mid-fifteenth century specimen. (It is bound with a copy of the Speculum Ecclesie, also Rede's, but not mentioned in the will, which makes one wonder what other treasures slipped past unmentioned or as 'aliis tractatibus'.) There was also a 'librum de vita Alexandrie', language unspecified, and 'vnum librum de obsessione Troje', which one might reasonably expect to have been a copy of Lydgate's Troy Book. Rede seems to have liked books of information: there was a book of "natural science", a 'liber Platonis depictis in eodem bestiis aibus et herbis'; a grammar ('Medulla gramatice'); a heraldic textbook, Upton's De Officio Militari, (now the first part of British Library MS Cotton Nero CIII);<sup>135</sup> and three chronicles of England, two of them cheap paper books ('in papiro scriptus'). These

were interesting choices of recent texts: one was Hardyng's verse chronicle, and the other was called 'Rakyll de Troye' - perhaps copied from Caxton's printed text. The one book of "Bonnes Meurs" mentioned, 'Albertanus causidicus cum aliis tractatibus', is an important item, for Albertanus was one of the sources used by Rede's Oxfordshire neighbour Peter Idley when compiling his Instructions to His Son, and it is possible that Idley was kindly granted access to Rede's copy.<sup>136</sup> Most of all, however, Rede collected law-books - an English country gentleman to the core. He owned at least six, which included some items pertaining to his role as landowner, such as the "Boarstall Cartulary", and others pertaining to his role in county administration, such as the books of statutes, 'libros forestarum' and 'libros swannemotorum'. All these books were carefully distributed amongst Rede's family and friends. Rede, representative of the "rising gentry", had a collection whose quantity and quality would put those of several noblemen - including Staffords - to shame.

(b) Enterprising Patrons: Sir Miles and Lady Stapleton

Rede was clearly prepared to go to some trouble and expense to obtain the books he wanted (for at least three were expensive metropolitan manuscripts)<sup>137</sup> but satisfied with a selection of extant texts. The Stapletons, a comfortably-off Norfolk family, chose instead to satisfy their literary needs through the use of patronage. Sir Miles and Lady Catherine turned regularly - whenever they wanted something new, in fact - to that 'sympyl scoler of philosophye' John Metham, an educated Norfolk man who may have been a distant and dependent relative.<sup>138</sup> Princeton University Library MS Garrett 141, a Stapleton manuscript, gives some indication of Metham's versatility in response to Stapleton demands. It contains five works: a treatise on palmistry;

the romance Amoryus and Cleopes; a treatise on physiognomy; prognostications; and "lunations". These pseudo-scientific treatises and a romance loosely based on the Pyramus and Thisbe story (with excursions into chivalry, piety and astrology), suggest that the Stapletons were educated and interested enough to want their own copies of works of information and entertainment, but not educated enough to want them in Latin (or Greek). Metham claimed that his source for Amoryus and Cleopes was in Greek, and "all Greek to him" until an itinerant Greek scholar came to Norfolk and Latinised it for him (57-70). Apart from the surviving works in the Garrett manuscript, the indefatigable Metham had apparently already offered the Stapletons a rich diet of chronicle, ancient history (the 'storyis' of Alexander, Joshua and Josephus) and the mysterious 'Crysaunt' (2137-69) - all liberally seasoned with flattery of the Stapletons - and planned to write yet more about Sir Miles' glorious deeds (2147-8) (just tell me, somebody, what did he do?)

None of these survive. One wonders how accurately Metham's output reflects the Stapletons' tastes, how far it represents his own interests, and how much their tastes were influenced by what Metham had to offer, how much was the result of the Stapletons' active encouragement, and how much was begun on Metham's initiative and subsequently offered to the family. It seems that once Metham had come (or brought himself) to the Stapletons' notice, he was able to foster and feed their demand for books. Metham tried to make his work rise to the occasion; a sense of decorum, of what was due to his subject and to the Stapletons, made him try to drag Amoryus and Cleopes into the "high style" of Chaucer's Knight's Tale and Troilus and Lydgate's Troy Book (2170-97). It was a mistake. (Pearsall describes the result as 'total chaos').<sup>139</sup> One wonders whether it affected the Stapletons' enjoyment

of a work written just for them; perhaps, to the Stapletons and their circle, who the piece was written for mattered more than how it was written.<sup>140</sup>

One would have expected Metham's prodigious efforts to have satisfied the Stapletons, but they turned to another writer. Johannes de Caritate translated that perennial favourite the Secretum Secretorum as þe Priuyte of Priuytes, persuaded by the

noble werryur of knightly prowes alle the dayes  
of this present lyf, eke a noble phylysophyr,  
in alle prouydens and moral vertuys, bothe of  
pracktyk and eloqwens, hos name men clepyd  
Sir Milis Stapyltun, þe qwyche lyvyd in  
dayes of Henry þe Sixte, Kynge of Englund.

Sir Miles had acted from the best of motives in having this staple book on the governance of princes translated. He valued it, and expected others to value it too; he had the translation made 'for vertu, and to profyte hem þat shuld come after hym',<sup>141</sup> an indication that the Stapletons' idiosyncratic use of patronage was not entirely self-centred.

Metham's and Caritate's oeuvres provide an index, of sorts, to the reading-matter of a provincial family of moderate standing and moderate means - a combination of current literary fashion (however altered or debased in transmission) and personal interests in (pseudo) science and philosophy. They also indicate how those interests could be catered for locally.<sup>142</sup>

#### (c) Purchases and Patronage: Sir John Fastolf

Another East Anglian gentleman who resorted to this kind of "household" patronage, but who combined it with purchases of extant



texts, was Sir John Fastolf - a self-made man of humble origins and great wealth.<sup>143</sup> Two inventories reveal a substantial collection of books in his possession. The one made at his death records just the chapel books and a psalter decorated with Fastolf's and his wife's arms; the inventory of twenty-four books made nine years earlier (1450) is far more interesting.<sup>144</sup> There were two books of the 'Chapelle' kind, a Bible and the 'Meditacions Seynt Bernard', and just two romances, a 'liber de Roy Artour' and the ubiquitous 'Romaunce la Rose'. A third of the collection, however, consisted of histories, both classical - 'The Chronicles of Titus Leuius', 'a booke of Jullius Cesar' - and European - 'the Cronykles of France', 'liber de Cronykēs de Grant Bretagne in ryme'. Books of science and astrology, such as the 'Liber Geomancie', accounted for another third, and "Bonnes Meurs" for the remainder.

All these books were in French, and one might suspect that they were some of the spoils of Fastolf's military career, rather than deliberate choices, were it not for the survival of manuscripts made for Fastolf and works written for him. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 179, a medical treatise in French, handsomely decorated, with Fastolf's arms and motto on the first text page,<sup>145</sup> indicates that the scientific treatises in the inventory, at least, were probably not chance acquisitions. This is borne out by the works Fastolf commissioned from two household dependants. William Worcester, Fastolf's hard-pressed secretary, already kept busy with estate business and Fastolf's endless litigation, was "persuaded" by Fastolf to produce a work on the fixed stars and a lost acta of Fastolf (shades of Metham and Stapleton!)<sup>146</sup>. Fastolf's stepson Stephen Scrope was "persuaded" to venture into the "Bonnes Meurs" minefield. He translated Tignonville's Dits Moraulx

for Fastolf's 'contemplacion and solace' (Worcester later revised this translation) and Christine de Pisan's Epître d'Othéa for Fastolf's 'contemplacion of morall wysdome and exercisyng of goostly werkes'.<sup>147</sup> Between them, Scrope and Worcester worked over at least two more works originally destined for Fastolf's 'contemplacion', the Boke of Noblesse and a translation of Cicero's De Senectute - more "Bonnes Meurs".<sup>148</sup> Fastolf was not over-generous to his literary workers, presumably believing that his household litterati should write for little or no extra reward, and both were driven to offer their work elsewhere in the hope of better things. Worcester was unlucky in his choice of Bishop Waynflete; Scrope may have been luckier in his choice of the Duke of Buckingham and a 'hye princesse'.<sup>149</sup> Yet Fastolf was clearly prepared to pay generously for the manuscripts made for him; apart from the medical treatise, he ordered one of the loveliest manuscripts of Christine's Epître d'Othéa (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc.570), whose artist is named the "Fastolf Master" after this book,<sup>150</sup> and may have commissioned an exquisite little Hours and Psalter (British Library MS Harl.1251) again illustrated by the "Fastolf Master" and/or other Rouen artists. Fastolf cared for good books - and good-looking books too, it seems - and ruthlessly utilised the resources available to him at home and abroad.

#### (d) Patronage and Printing: Citizen Patrons

The percolation of literary patronage and book-ownership through to the middle ranks of society during the fifteenth century reached not just to country gentlemen like Rede and Fastolf but also to city gentlemen. Book ownership by some rich merchants might be expected, since they had the wealth and several of them handled books as part of

their stock in trade. (In fact, the records of mercantile book ownership are few and far between before the mid-fifteenth century).<sup>151</sup> Their ventures into literary patronage were also a later development, and more often than not seem to have been connected with their civic identity and mercantile activities. By the 1430's, civic taste had discovered Lydgate, and the poet received some corporate patronage. Both the Mercers and the Goldsmiths turned to "laureate Lydgate" for Mummings to be performed at mayoral feasts, and the Armourers' Guild of St. George requested a 'devyse', a set of 'balades', for the painted decorations of their festal chamber.<sup>152</sup> As Pearsall points out, the taste for Lydgate 'was being created as well as satisfied', and continued well into the fifteenth century;<sup>153</sup> we find a late fifteenth century vintner, John Burner, treating himself to a copy of the Troy Book, and a mercer, Roger Thorney, indulging himself with three Lydgate manuscripts - two copies of the Siege of Thebes and a compendium of Lydgatiana complete with fine pen-drawings (Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.21),<sup>154</sup> for example.

However, Thorney's literary interests found more active expression than the mere purchase of Lydgate manuscripts: he was also connected with the printing ventures of Caxton, a fellow-mercator, and Caxton's successor, Wynkyn de Worde. Thorney bought himself a copy of Caxton's Godfrey of Bologne, and sponsored Worde's reprint of Caxton's Polychronicon and first printing of the Trevisa translation of De Proprietatibus Rerum. One of Thorney's copies of the Siege of Thebes, St. John's College, Oxford, MS 266, may well have served as setting-copy for de Worde's edition.<sup>155</sup> Thorney's provision of money and manuscripts to printers was generous, but not without precedent: there seems to have been a little network of fellow-merchants who shared his interests.

John Colyns, mercer, may have lent his copy of Ipomydon to Worde for printing;<sup>156</sup> Thomas Kippyng, draper, commissioned a manuscript translation of Somme le Roi (a work also translated and printed by Caxton) with pen-drawings by the "Caxton Master";<sup>157</sup> Hugh Bryce, mercer and goldsmith, sponsored Caxton's Mirror of the World at his own 'request, desire, coste and dispense ... entending to present the same unto the vertuous, noble and puissant lord, Wylliam Lord Hastynges, Lord Chamberlayn';<sup>158</sup> William Pratt, a mercer and a 'specyal frende' requested the Book of Good Manners, and perhaps the Boethius too; and an unnamed mercer asked for the Royal Book.<sup>159</sup> Caxton seems to have needed the practical help of these business friends and acquaintances as well as the imprimatur of noble approval.

Caxton was a businessman, and his output introduces us to a new literary world, where literature becomes a business, a matter of capital input and market forces, and literary patronage assumes a different role.<sup>160</sup> Caxton seems to have needed patrons for two main functions: the provision of money to offset the 'great costes and charges'<sup>161</sup> involved in setting-up an edition; and the provision of protected access to his chosen market.<sup>162</sup> The suggestion of noble interest in the text in question - which Caxton was so adept at suggesting in his prologues and epilogues - would give his editions a cachet it needed for an entrée not just into aristocratic circles, but into the wider market of middle-class followers of fashion.<sup>163</sup> As Udall wrote seventy years after Caxton,

In tymes past the studious wryters of bookes were enforced with much high suite and service to dedicate suche werkes as thei wrôte, to thentente that under the name and proteccion of suche noble personages

the said weorkes might bee the better habled  
to the readers, and the better accepted of people.<sup>164</sup>

Protection, a guaranteed market - Caxton needed these: what he did not really need from his patrons was suggestions for titles.<sup>165</sup> Although he was ready and willing to print what was requested (since these requests were usually in conformity with current tastes and came with financial backing) he was astute enough to select titles by himself which would appeal to 'al noble lordes and ladyes and al other estates':<sup>166</sup> and sell. The patron's involvement with literature was becoming more passive, dwindling towards the Oxford English Dictionary's definition 'the person who accepted the dedication of a book', but the process took some time.<sup>167</sup> In 1512, Duke Edward Stafford would no doubt have been flattered to be offered the dedication of a book, but it was he who took the initiative in 'cohorting' Wynkyn de Worde to print Helyas, Knight of the Swan - a Renaissance aristocrat acting like a medieval literary patron.

## CONCLUSION: A Piece in the Jigsaw

Discussion of the literary patronage and book-ownership associated with the Staffords and Bourgchiers, and also with some of their contemporaries, has shown that literary patronage was still a moving force in the production and dissemination of vernacular literature in the fifteenth century - as it had been since at least the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> It has also shown that, although conditions were changing, and patterns of patronage with them, aristocratic literary patronage of the kinds practised by the Staffords and their contemporaries was still perceived by both patron and patronised (particularly the latter) as a desirable pursuit.

Thus, one of the most noticeable fifteenth century changes in the patterns of patronage is the 'extension of patronage to a wider section of society' in imitation of magnate patronage.<sup>2</sup> Not only did men like Fastolf or Roger Thorney buy the same kinds of books as their social superiors, they also followed them in dispensing literary patronage.<sup>3</sup> One might expect this broadening of the social range of literary patrons to be reflected in a broadening of the scope of literature written under patronage, but this does not seem to have been the case. Aristocratic tastes seem to have dominated literary fashion, much as they dominated fashions in clothing, domestic architecture and other luxurious commodities associated with "fine living", and aspirants to the cultivated life wanted to be led by their books in a reassuring way to an 'already existing world of taste and gentility'.<sup>4</sup> Chivalric romances, courtly poetry, devotional literature, 'ensamples trewe and olde', books of "Bonnes Meurs" and handbooks of information were created (and occasion-

ally printed) for duke and merchant alike. (The devastating side-effects of becoming known as a fashionable writer were bemoaned by Politiano:

Does a man want a motto for his sword's hilt,  
or a posy for a ring, an inscription for his  
bedroom, or a device for his plate, or even for  
his pots and pans, he must like all the world  
to Politian. There is hardly a wall I have not  
besmeared like a snail with the effusions of  
my brain. One teases me for catches, and  
drinking songs, another for a grave discourse,  
a third for a serenade, a fourth for a carnival ballad.<sup>5</sup>

Painters fared little better.<sup>6</sup> Fashionable aristocratic taste was not necessarily good taste ..). Hammond deplores the stranglehold imposed on fifteenth century literature by the 'upper-class code, with its didactics, its allegories, its translations, its verbal stereotypes',<sup>7</sup> and it has to be said that the magnates and their imitators were conservative in their literary tastes - what they wanted was "more of the same", a fulfilment of expectations, rather than experiment and equivocation.<sup>8</sup> However, they were sponsoring "more of the same" in English, and it is to the credit of noble patrons that even if they were as likely to buy French books as English they patronised English writers, and so encouraged, directly and indirectly, the existence of hundreds of thousands of lines of English literature.

The motivations for this dispensation of literary patronage to English writers which have emerged from considerations of the patronage wielded by the Staffords and some of their contemporaries are various, but fall into four major groupings. One is the continuing

use of patronage for pragmatic and personal reasons to secure a particular kind of text. Burgh's Cato, for instance, although based on a much-used school text, was written apparently with the 'erudicion of my lord Bousher' in mind rather than the 'erudicion' of schoolboys in general. That schoolboys in general do seem to have benefitted from it was probably not the intention of 'lord Bousher's' father (see above, "Henry Bourgchier"). Similarly, Sir Miles Stapleton commissioned scientific translations for his own particular pleasure. On other occasions, literary patronage was invoked for something more akin to public benefaction, providing valuable information and works of 'godly plesur' for a wider audience than the patron's circle, and also promoting English writing. Thus, for example, the same Sir Miles Stapleton commissioned þe Priuyte of Priuyteis, and Lord Berkeley his stupendous series of translations (both discussed in the previous chapter), and Prince Henry sponsored Lydgate's Troy Book, which offered a morally valuable 'example' of a chivalrous past (Pro1. 75-83),

By-cause he wolde that to hyze and lowe

The noble story openly wer knowe

In oure tonge, aboute in euery age,

And y-writen as wel in oure langage

As in latyn and in frensche it is;

That of the story þe trouthe) we nat mys

No more than dothe eche other nacioun (Pro1. 111-17).<sup>9</sup>

However worthy and public-spirited such commissions were, one cannot help suspecting that they were rarely made solely out of a concern for English literature for English literature's sake, or for the public good, but were as often connected with the implicit  $\pm$  or



explicit - promotion of the patron's family as with the promotion of belles lettres - another compelling motive. Surely even Lord Berkeley had an eye to his future reputation... Certainly Duke Edward Stafford's commission of the Story of Helyas was as much concerned with emphasising his Bohun descent and claim to the Constableship of England as with encouraging and stirring every lusty and gentle heart by the exemplification of 'vertuous feates and triump-haunte actes of chyvalry'. Likewise, the Earl of Oxford was as much concerned with promoting his Vere ancestry as with having 'other Hystories of olde tyme passed of vertues chyualry reduced in likewise into our Englishe tongue'.<sup>10</sup> An even more intimate connection between political circumstances, the family, and literary patronage can be established in the cases of two Beauchamp ladies, Margaret and Anne, who proved adept at manipulating literary patronage to serve Beauchamp purposes in difficult times. Special circumstances were largely responsible for the Beauchamp ladies' patronage of "histories"; the area where female patronage really comes into its own is the patronage of vernacular devotional works. The notion of notching up a "good work" by patronising a work of unimpeachable piety<sup>11</sup> was still an important consideration, particularly where women were concerned. Women were an important audience for vernacular devotional works, which they could read themselves for their own spiritual benefit and use for the education of their households.<sup>12</sup> Female interest led them to seek out such texts: some, like the Scrope ladies, were predominantly concerned with the acquisition and circulation of extant texts, while others, like Alice Chaucer or Isabella Despenser, sponsored new works. Indeed, almost all the commissions associated with the Stafford and Bourghier ladies and their kinswomen, including Lady Margaret's

forays into print, were for vernacular devotional works, and their patronage of such works is a dominant feature of Stafford and Bourghier patronage as a whole. And the potential audience to be found in a Stafford lady's household was the target of at least one writer, the author of The Nightingale, who was inspired to offer his poem to the Duchess of Buckingham and her 'peple'. The Nightingale is one of the two known "speculative dedications" made in the hope of extorting Stafford patronage, and one suspects that it was the likelier of the two to succeed.

The offering of "speculative dedications" in this way, and the shift of the initiative from patron to writer, is another development which has come to notice from time to time during examination of the literary activities of the Staffords and their contemporaries. The active search for patrons seems to have been a matter of urgency for several fifteenth century writers.- Hoccleve, Scrope, Caxton, Capgrave - even Lydgate - and Anon. One wonders just what combinations of literary and social circumstances provoked this outburst of patronage-seeking. One factor seems to have been the growing sense of vocation as a writer, taking courage from Chaucer's example, which led to a search for an appreciative audience, one which would value a writer as a literary craftsman, find him his 'dispenche' and 'from al daunger that sholde hem noye or greue / Been euer redi to helpe hem and releue' (FP III, 3843, 83-4). Clearly, in Lydgate's view, starving in a garret was not a necessary condition for achieving literary excellence; poets deserved better.<sup>13</sup> Sheer physical need did occasionally dominate the need for literary appreciation: poor Hoccleve, who probably did starve in a garret from time to time, used his literary talents to remind those with influence in such

matters that his salary was overdue, or to bring himself to the notice of wealthy and influential members of society, more often than he used them to advance his claims to be a poet.<sup>14</sup> Noble patrons probably seemed to offer the best prospect of financial or political reward: 'a lorde to p̄lese, how swete it is to laboure'<sup>15</sup> - if noblesse obliged. Noble patrons, whether literary connoisseurs themselves or not, also seem to have offered one of best means of access to a wider literary public. Their immediate circle of kinsfolk and friends would add to the work's 'primary audience';<sup>16</sup> and their name attached to a new work lent it a certain aristocratic cachet, and would recommend it to a wider 'secondary audience' eager to keep up with the Joneses. This may account in part for Capgrave's dedications offered to royalty and nobility: religious houses offered a ready-made, but limited, audience.<sup>17</sup> Caxton was particularly adept at dropping noble names into his "publisher's blurbs" and implying aristocratic recommendations for his books, and it is possible that Lydgate also attempted to secure noble names in order to promote long and unfamiliar works.<sup>18</sup> 'Anonymous patronage' might serve to create a sense of general demand, but the manipulation of noble name-dropping made for a more eye-catching advertisement in the fifteenth century. Aristocratic taste in literature clearly mattered, and aristocratic backing - or the implication of it - mattered tremendously to fifteenth century writers seeking a niche. Whether it should have mattered so is another problem.

Clearly, aristocratic literary patronage was an important strand in the patterns of patronage available during the fifteenth century, which justifies an investigation of its place in literary culture. The context and consequences of the patronal relationship (or lack

of it) are matters which should not be ignored when examining a medieval text:

If it be argued that these are matters of merely historical concern, of interest only to the historian of taste or book-production, and of no essential importance to our consideration of the intentions that we presume to exist in the author's act of composition, then one would have to retort that no work of literature exists in a state of such pure being, and that reading is always an act in which we share with the writer in the making of meaning.<sup>19</sup>

Valuable as textual and linguistic analyses are in the search to recover a text's meaning, they do not and cannot provide the full story. The text's manuscript and social context - if that can be recovered - reveal much about how it was read and used and valued in its own day - and by whom.

The decision to examine this social context of fifteenth century literature by focussing on the literary activity of one family group, that of Stafford and Bourgchier, provided a manageable selection of fifteenth century readers and manuscripts. In some respects, the "family" approach turned out to have its drawbacks. The evidence for Stafford and Bourgchier literary activity was fragmentary and incomplete, leaving the 'uneasy feeling that (this) material consists largely of, perhaps unrepresentative, chance survivals'<sup>20</sup> and that every conclusion required a caveat. This would have been a problem whatever the approach, however, where medieval texts are concerned. Then, too,

the amount of patronage associated with the Staffords and Bourghchiers, and the quantity and quality of the books associated with various individuals seemed, at first, rather disappointing. It took comparison with other family groups to discover that the Staffords were not alone in this (but representative) and that literary activity had begun to shift away from local foci, the lord (or lady) in the castle, to a more cosmopolitan milieu, in which patronage by noble families was still valued, but in which other interesting options were becoming available to writer and reader. Also, from time to time, topics emerged which appeared to deserve investigation in a wider context, such as the role of women in circulating vernacular literature, which, although it took place in a family context, involved others outside the immediate family, and could also be profitably studied in terms of regional social groupings or manuscript production and circulation.<sup>21</sup>

However, certain important features of the texts associated with Staffords and Bourghchiers would not have come to light had they not been studied in the context of the family. For instance, some of the resonances of the Story of Helyas would be missed utterly were it not placed in the social context of Duke Edward's upbringing and family circumstances, and were it not for the non-textual evidence offered by sources as diverse as objets d'art and household accounts, all of which contribute to our understanding of how and why this version of the Swan Knight legend was created. Again, by studying the Stafford family group it was possible to discover the significant rôle played by women in transmitting cultural influences through the family. Thus, we find Eleanor de Bohun bequeathing a fine vernacular book and a taste for educated piety to her Stafford daughter: in turn, Countess Anne's daughter of March imitated her mother in commissioning

a devotional work from Lydgate, and her Bourgchier son continued her association with a literary cleric, Benedict Burgh. Joan Beaufort's ownership of books of chronicles and vernacular devotional and moral works was matched by her Stafford daughter's book of Lucan and Gilte Legende, which Duchess Anne bequeathed to her erstwhile daughter-in-law. Duchess Anne's putative Chaucers have a fellow in her daughter Anne Cobham's putative Chaucer. The evidence for Eleanor Percy, the third Stafford Duchess, is sadly lacking, except that we have some evidence of literary interests in her composition of a pretty devotional poem. However, one cannot help suspecting that her daughter's copy of the Fall of Princes (given to her daughter) has a connection with the Percy family's interest in Lydgate. Such mother-daughter networks were obviously important in literary transmission, and might have escaped notice had these ladies' interests not been examined in the context of the family. The family context thus provides a foundation on which further studies can be based.

Fifteenth century literary culture is a large topic, a jigsaw puzzle with many pieces missing,<sup>22</sup> awaiting more studies of textual transmission and of manuscript groupings linked by author, scribe, illuminator - or owner.<sup>23</sup> This study of one particular set of owners is proffered as one of the pieces, for 'comyn profitte'.