References to the Material Text in Late Medieval English Religious Literature

Eleanor Baker

St John's College

University of Oxford

Thesis submitted for assessment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of Oxford

Michaelmas Term, 2021

Word count: 87,040

Contents

Abstract

Medieval material texts had a variety of functions: they were containers of texts and images, material objects, and symbolic entities. As a result of this multivalency, the material text was often used as a metaphor to figuratively represent a range of subjects, including memory, receptivity, cognitive and emotional understanding, conception, and creation. This was fully realised in the later medieval period, when higher rates of vernacular literacy, the increased production of affordable books, and the prevailing documentary culture resulted in a greater familiarity with the written word and the kinds of materials on which they were recorded. Concurrently, the devotional practices of this period were uniquely material in kind, with a distinctive focus on the tools of the crucifixion, relic efficacy, and eucharistic transformation. As complicated and ubiquitous items, material texts proved valuable metaphorical vehicles through which to elucidate Christ's sacrifice and power, and how one might worship him best. The overarching aim of this thesis is to unravel the metaphors and images of textual materiality used in religious texts in order to better understand how material texts were perceived in the late medieval cultural imagination.

Each chapter provides a close reading of a particular religious text or genre of texts by examining their language, structure, form, and generic history, but also places this analysis in the context of relevant book-historical details, such as a particular manuscript context or book production process. The first chapter is occupied with how material texts are represented in book-craft recipes, where their methods of creation and constituent ingredients are described. This provides a vital foundation for the rest of the thesis, introducing the significance of the material text's properties, and illustrating how a set of ideas about the material text is evident even before its construction. The following four chapters then examine how material texts are referred to in different texts or genres of religious literature: the 'Long' and 'Short' Charters of Christ, devotional lyrics, sermons, and *The Book of Margery Kempe*.

This thesis expands and enriches the existing corpus of research on ideas about the material text, which includes the studies of Ernst Robert Curtius, Jesse Gellrich, Eric Jager, and Jeffrey Hamburger. It works to contribute to understandings of the material text as an object, and the place of the material text in late medieval devotional culture. It argues that whilst some of the metaphors and images were employed to elicit an affective response, they were also used in order to cognitively illustrate particular relationships between the divine and the human. It concludes that references to material texts often blur the distinction between different kinds of written forms, taking advantage of their shared material qualities but disparate practical uses, and shows that references to material texts were not necessarily self-reflexive about the physical materials on which texts were written, but were reflective of immaterial ideas about material texts.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Daniel Wakelin for his perpetually calm, kind, and rigorous engagement with my ideas and writing. His guidance and mentorship have been invaluable, and his advice will stay with me whatever the future holds. Thank you, too, to Dr Annie Sutherland, who supervised me for a chapter of this thesis and was my teaching mentor. Her meticulous reading of my work was extremely helpful, and her demonstration of enthusiastic and compassionate teaching will continue to be a benchmark for my own. Thank you also to my college advisor, Professor Carolyne Larrington, for many cups of tea and termly check-ins.

I owe much of my enthusiasm for late medieval literature to Dr Catherine Nall and Dr Alastair Bennett of Royal Holloway, University of London. It was their teaching which introduced the medieval world to me, and their encouragement which I shall always be indebted to. Thank you also to my MPhil supervisor, Dr Stewart Brookes, for showing me that humour never need be entirely divorced from scholarship. There are several members of the Oxford medieval community who made my experience of writing a doctoral thesis much more enjoyable. Thank you to Dr Hannah Ryley and Dr Sian Witherden for down to earth advice, kind words, and humour; to Dr Laura Varnam and Dr Daniel Sawyer for their warm welcome to Oxford and continual support; and to Dr Rebecca Menmuir for being my partner in crime in many a medieval-themed scheme.

I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the St John's College Lamb and Flag scholarship for funding this project. The St John's Special Grant, Barry Dobson Scholarship, and various grants from TORCH have also enabled me to access conferences and create events which have enriched my time at Oxford.

More holistically, thank you to the managers, volunteers, and customers of Chiddingly Village Shop for keeping me going through the pandemic, especially Keith Felstead and Tony Mills, who have always supported and encouraged me. For getting me outside, for their kindness, and for their friendship, thank you to the members of Abingdon Green Gym. Thank you also to Jenny Lucas, whose kindness will always be remembered. Thank you to Julie, Peter, and Lucy Baker for their reassuring phone-calls and care packages: Mum, thank you for reading to me when I was small, and Dad, thank you for not burning my books.

Thank you to my partner, Rob, for being there from the first word to the last, and all the drafts in between.

Conventions and Abbreviations

Transcriptions

Quotations from printed editions preserve the editorial presentation. Transcriptions from MSS have retained their Middle English spelling and characters, bar the tironian mark **7**, which has been expanded as 'and'; instances of double **ff**, which are rendered as a single **f**; and **þer to**, which has been modernized to **þerto**. In transcriptions, punctuation and capitalization have been modernised, and abbreviations have been silently expanded.

Abbreviations

DIMEV	*Digital Index of Middle English Verse,* ed. by Linne R. Mooney *et al.* <https://www.dimev.net/>
EEBO	Early English Books Online
EETS	Early English Text Society
N.S.	New Series
O.S.	Original Series
S.S.	Supplementary Series
MED	*Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Hans Kurath *et al.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952-) <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/med/>
MS	Manuscript
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John A. Simpson *et al.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989-) <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>

Introduction: Opening the Book

For pardoun scheweth be a schrine,
Brede on bord with nayl is smite;
Rede lettres write be lyne,
Bluwe, blake, among men pite.
Ur Lord I likne to this signe:
His bodi uppon a bord was bite,
In briht blod His bodi gan schyne;
Hou wo Him was no wight may wite,
Red upon the Roode.
Ur pardoun brede from top too to,
Writen hit was, with wonder wo,
With rede woundes and strokes blo,
Ure Book was bounden in bloode. (ll. 183-195) [1]

This stanza is from a late fourteenth-century poem which relates a conversation between Mary and the Cross at the crucifixion. In this excerpt (spoken by the Cross), Christ and the Cross are compared to the constituent parts of a material text. The wounds inflicted on Christ's body become 'lettres' written in 'lyne' (l. 185) which are 'rede' (ll. 185, 191, 194), a pun which ties the act of reading with the colour of Christ's blood. His 'brigt blod' is also described as an illuminating substance which makes Christ's body 'schyne' (l. 189), much like the gold leaf which decorated deluxe manuscripts. The bruising cuts made to his body, the 'rede woundes' and 'strokes blo' (l. 194), which meant black, are both the lashings of a whip and the strokes made by a pen, and Christ is described as bleeding so profusely he is 'bounden in bloode' (l. 195) like a book bound in leather.

The particular kind of material text which Christ's body represents, however, is more ambiguous. He is twice described as a 'pardoun' (ll. 183, 192), a term which refers to both the act of pardoning, and the material document which signifies the act.[2] To complicate this further, a 'pardoun' could refer to two types of remissive document: either an indulgence (a pardon limiting the duration spent in purgatory), or a civil or criminal pardon. He is also described as a 'brede' (l. 184), a tablet for inscription, and a 'Book' (l. 195).[3] The Cross's statement that 'Ur Lord I likne to this signe' (l. 187), which at first reads as a simple explanation that he is speaking metaphorically, is itself equivocal: a 'signe' can refer to a symbol, but also to the written word, or to the sign of the cross which is often used to represent Christ.[4] The extended metaphor of the material text in this excerpt consequently proves complicated. Different kinds of material text collapse and pull apart from one another as, in

[1] Susanna Greer Fein, *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), pp. 106-122.
[2] *MED*, pardoun (n.), senses 1 and 2.
[3] *MED*, bred (n.), senses 1b and 1c.
[4] *MED*, signe (n.), all senses.

turn, their particular functions or material qualities are highlighted. Like Christ's body, which is at once human and divine, literal and symbolic, singular and tripartite, the material text is at once a material reality, and an immaterial idea.

The Dispute between Mary and the Cross proves the importance of Margaret Aston's warning against 'the mistake of thinking mainly or exclusively in terms of books' when considering images of the material text in late medieval literature.[5] Paper and parchment could form a range of late medieval writing supports: the leaves of both materials could be used to make a codex formed of quires, or a single sheet could be used to make a charter, a map, a notice to be displayed on a door or window, or a hornbook. They could also be sewn or glued together to make longer rolls. There was, moreover, a range of other materials used to bear the written word. Metal rings, coins, or even knives were inscribed with words, or melted and cast into letter forms. Wood and stone were painted and inscribed. Wax was used to create wax tablets for impermanent recording and to make seals. Each of these renderings of the written word required different technologies of writing − different tools and skills which result in the production of the written word − usually achieved by inscription, impression, or embossing. Moreover, these material texts had a variety of uses. They could be binding legal documents, memorials, articulations of love or faithfulness, drafting platforms, or expressions of identity or ownership. Material texts, then, with their varied material components and uses, proved a rich source for figurative representation.

In this thesis, I explore how and why material texts were figuratively employed in late medieval English devotional texts. These references to the material text prove to be broad in their use: they are employed in order to explain how one might internalise God's will, to exhort how one might combat the devil, to elucidate the binding nature of Christ's sacrifice, and to emphasise a character's piety or lack thereof. They also prove to be inextricably tied to the production and use of various written documents in the late medieval period, as well as its devotional culture. Unusually, this thesis considers *perceptions* of material texts: it works not by using material forms to understand literary texts, as in the now familiar manoeuvre of studying material texts, but by using literary texts to understand ideas about material forms. Each chapter is occupied with a different genre of late medieval literature, and seeks to find points of correlation and departure between their representations of material texts. It argues that whilst some references to the material text are indeed self-reflexive, many more rely on the reader's ideas about material texts.

Late Medieval Material Texts: Familiarity and Production

[5] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images of Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), pp. 105-106.

Figurative uses of material texts worked because people were familiar with real material texts. Of course, assessing a population's degree of familiarity with material texts during the late medieval period, as well as their literacy skills, is difficult. Firstly, our modern conceptions of literacy and illiteracy do not map well on to late medieval engagements with the written word. Some people could read in the vernacular but not write. Some could recite Latin, but had no grammatical understanding of the language: Song Schools, for example, which were considered the 'twin' of grammar schools, were quasi-professional schools for those involved with the performance of the liturgy, and consequently taught only the reading or recitation of Latin songs, rather than word meanings and grammatical construction.[6] Many possessed what was termed by M.T. Clanchy and others as 'pragmatic literacy', reading and writing skills that enabled one to carry out their occupational duties and everyday tasks, but no more; but others were educated to speak, read, and write, in multiple languages.[7]

Reading and writing competency varied greatly between classes, occupations, locations, and genders.[8] Those who could afford to, and whose children's future occupations required it, would send their male children to schools where they were taught Latin. The teaching in these schools (which were mainly established in urban areas) required both educated tutors and a range of books detailing vocabulary, grammar, and texts which they tested their skills on. By the late fourteenth century, a movement for free schools was established, broadening the access to Latin education to those who could spare the labour of their children. Learning to read in the vernacular (in England, this would be either Anglo-Norman or Middle English) was more likely to have been taught at home: it required less access to expensive books, and was reinforced by already-familiar spoken language. The teaching of children to read was often considered the duty of the parents, particularly, in the later medieval period, the mother, but could also occur in the workplace when a young person took up an apprenticeship. Early learning in both Latin and the vernacular could employ a range of material texts, such as hornbooks (parchment or paper sheets secured to a wooden panel), wax tablets for practising letter forms, and primer books which contained the alphabet, basic prayers, and other didactic texts.

Material texts, then, were becoming more ubiquitous items in the household, the workspace, and the church. Even those who possessed the most limited reading and writing ability would come into contact with various kinds of material texts. As Nicholas Orme writes, 'by 1250, at the latest, the whole of the population was in contact with writing and literate people, whether or not they were personally literate'.[9] What about the later medieval period, then, offered these points of contact? The

[6] Arthur Francis Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp. 6, 7. See also Katherine Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
[7] M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, 1066-1307*, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 329.
[8] For a more detailed analysis of different language literacies, see Rodney Thompson and Nigel Morgan, 'Language and Literacy', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume II 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 23-38.
[9] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 238-239.

familiarity with the material text can in part be attributed to the documentary culture of the later Middle Ages, whereby the written word, rather than oral testimony, was needed to verify interpersonal exchanges. Emily Steiner states that 'by the mid-fourteenth century, the legal document was clearly one of England's primary texts, and possibly the only written text available to every social stratum'.[10] These documents included charters, wills, letters, writs, petitions, bailiff lists, warrants, certificates of character, patents, requests for information and accounting records, and were used by secular and sacred government alike. As Jessica Berenbeim has shown, documents such as these were also visually depicted in manuscript illustrations.[11]

This familiarity with the material text can also be considered indicative of the increased commercialisation and organisation of the book trade.[12] Whist manuscript production in the early medieval period was performed predominantly within the confines of the monastery, by the twelfth century it had moved out into university cities and beyond, and even monasteries themselves had institutionalised the outsourcing to scribes and other artisans.[13] In the later medieval period, artisans involved in the book trade began to specialise into distinct skill groups which would work in tandem to produce material texts. Although documentary evidence of the location of the book-making trades outside of London is scarce, the workshops which laboured to create manuscripts were usually close to one another, with 'specific streets being dominated by scribes, parchment makers and sellers, bookbinders, illuminators and one or two stationers'.[14] The creation of the material text, by the late medieval period, was therefore an eminently visible process whose narrative could be understood simply by walking down the right street.

The codex, specifically, also became slightly more affordable due to the development of different technologies established through skill specialisation. The cost of producing a book could be limited through the customer's selection of lower cost materials: they could request paper rather than parchment, a lower grade of parchment, or a simple binding.[15] The cost of scribal labour, the most

---

[10] Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 4.
[11] Jessica Berenbeim, *Art of Documentation: Documents and Visual Culture in Late Medieval England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2015), pp. 27-30.
[12] Erik Kwakkel, 'Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation', in *The Production of Books in England 1360-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 173-191 (p. 175).
[13] M. A. Michael, 'Urban Production of Manuscript Books and the Role of the University Towns', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume II 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 168-194 (p. 169).
[14] Ibid., p.170. See also the extensive work produced by C. Paul Christianson on the late medieval stationers of London, especially Paternoster Row: 'A Community of Book Artisans in Chaucer's London, *Viator*, 20 (1989), 207-218; *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300-1500* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1990); 'The Rise of London's Book Trade', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 128-147.
[15] For a detailed discussion of the cost of paper making relative to parchment, see Orietta Da Rold, *Paper in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 87-92; Erik Kwakkel, 'A New Type of Book for a New Type of Reader: The Emergence of Paper in Vernacular Book Production', *The Library*, 4

expensive part of text production, could be lowered through the selection of a script which could be written more quickly, such as anglicana or secretary hand.[16] A trade in second-hand books also developed.[17]

Beyond these examples of books and documents, the wider late medieval 'graphosphere', as Simon Franklin has called it, encompassed many other material texts.[18] The stone and wood fabric of buildings could be graffitied, the walls could be painted with words, floor and wall tiles could be decorated with writing, and stained glass could include wording. Monumental or commemorative stone structures such as tombs and gravestones could have writing carved into them, or brass plaques bearing writing could be nailed on to them. Smaller metal objects, such as jewellery and knives could be inscribed, or metal could be melted and moulded into the shape of letter forms. Leather storage cases could be embossed or debossed with wording, as is seen on writing and comb cases, and thread could also be used to render writing through embroidery.[19] In late medieval England, then, lettering was abundant and varied, appearing on objects as small as vervels (the miniscule rings on hunting hawk's legs), to grand monuments, and were encountered by all members of the population.[20]

Material Texts and the Devotional Culture of Late Medieval England

Yet whilst the book trade had expanded beyond the confines of the monastery and cathedral, the written word and its associated materials still retained their sacred associations. Christianity is a religion of the Book, with the Word the embodiment of God himself. As Michelle P. Brown neatly explains, the 'book became, literally, the Word made flesh, or rather, the Word made word'.[21] Christianity was also a religion which, as Ernst Robert Curtius writes, 'kept producing new sacred writings – documents of the faith such as gospels, letters of apostles, apocalypses; acts of martyrs;

(2003), 219-248. For the relative cost and use of different parchment grades, see Erik Kwakkel, 'Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation', pp. 185-187.

[16] For a detailed discussion of the development of scripts, see Daniel Wakelin, 'Writing the Words', in *The Production of Books in England 1360-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 34-58.

[17] Hannah Ryley, *Re-Using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press), forthcoming.

[18] The term 'graphosphere' used here is defined by Simon Franklin as 'the space of the visible word', see *The Russian Graphosphere, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 1.

[19] See the essays in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, ed. by Richard Wagner, Christine Neufeld, and Luger Lieb (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019). Some examples of both references to the material text in literature and actual material texts have begun to be gathered together in the University of Hieldelburg's *materiale-textkulturen* database, see <https://inschriftlichkeit.materiale-textkulturen.de/index.php> [Date Accessed: 29.03.2021].

[20] Michael John Lewis and Ian Richardson, *Inscribed Vervels: A Corpus and Discussion of Late Medieval and Renaissance Hawking Rings Found in Britain* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2019).

[21] Michelle P. Brown, 'The Book as Sacred Space', in *Scared Space: House of God, Gate of Heaven*, ed. by Philip North (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 43-64 (p. 45).

lives of saints; liturgical books'.[22] Aside from these centrally authorised documents of faith, there was also a raft of writing which offered different modes of reflection, and in some cases more idiosyncratic reflections on the faith: sermons, poetry, prayers, devotional treatise, and visionary lives.

The centrality of the written word to Christianity was reinforced by the late medieval church interior and devotional books. The church would have been adorned with a range of material texts: the walls would be painted with religious images and words, the sacred monogram would feature on materials including embroidered vestments; tombs embedded in the architecture of the church would display names, dates, and other details; various wooden tables would record benefactors or significant liturgical dates and quotations; and rolls would hang from the walls.[23] Beyond this, there were plenty of visual *representations* of material texts within the church space and within devotional books, including statues depicting saints holding books, portraits at the beginning of manuscripts showing owners reading, and illustrations of holy figures as book owners or users of documents.[24] These visual representations offer an interesting contribution to scholarship which considers the degree to which images were considered 'readable' in the later medieval period.[25] The study of the image of the book in visual representations is a related, yet distinct, way of approaching ideas about material texts. Like this thesis, such studies consider the symbolic importance of the book and its relation to the graphosphere of the medieval period. J. R. Mattison, for example, has explored the visual representations of books in one hundred English manuscripts dating between 1375 and 1510, and

---

[22] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 311.

[23] On wall paintings, see Roger Roswell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008); Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), pp. 174-179; David Griffith, 'A Newly Identified Verse Item by John Lydgate at Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, Suffolk', *Notes and Queries,* 58 (2011), 364-367. On embroidered vestments see Clare Woodthorpe Browne *et al.*, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicanum* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); on tombs in medieval churches see Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); on tablets in church spaces see Vincent Gillespie, 'Medieval Hypertext: Image and Text from York Minster', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers, Essays Presented to M.B. Parkes*, ed. by P.R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Ashgate: Scholar Press, 1997), pp. 206-229. For a general discussion on texts as part of the church space, see Richard Marks, 'Picturing Word and Text in the Late Medieval Parish Church', in *Image, Text and Church, 1380-1600, Essays for Margaret Aston*, ed. by Linda Clark, Maureen Jurkowski and Colin Richmond (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2009), pp. 162-202.

[24] See Michelle P. Brown, 'Images to be Read and Words to be Seen: The Iconic Role of the Early Medieval Book', in *Iconic Books and Texts*, ed. by James W. Watts (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2013), pp.93-118; Martha W. Driver, 'Reading Images of Reading', *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003), 186-202; David Griffith, 'A Portrait of the Reader: Secular Donors and their Books in the Art of the English Parish Church', in *Imagining the Book*, ed. by Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 205-235; Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (London: British Library, 2003); Lucy F. Sandler, 'The Image of the Book Owner in the Fourteenth Century: Three Cases of Self-Definition', in *England in the Fourteenth Century, Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: Watkins, 1993), pp. 58–80; Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor, eds., *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* (London: The British Library, 1996).

[25] See Michael Camille, 'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History*, 8 (1985), 26-49; Lawrence G. Duggan, "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?", in *Reading Images and Texts: Medieval Images and Texts as Forms of Communication*, ed. by Mariëlle Hageman and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 63-107.

concludes that they often depict a cohesive image of the book which bears little resemblance to their real counterparts.[26] This thesis, however, is a study of the written representation of material texts, which are often more ambivalent and less stable than their visual counterparts.

Margaret Aston draws attention to the 'devotional literacy' of the late medieval period, whereby writing began to monopolise on its connection with the divine.[27] For the early learner, the process of learning to read and write was inextricably intertwined with devotional learning. As Nicholas Orme explains, 'medieval children learnt the alphabet in a Christian form and as a Christian task', with the sign of the cross made on the body made before the start of the iteration, and prayers said after it.[28] The association between the alphabet and the divine is reflected in *abece* poems of the later medieval period, the most often-cited being Chaucer's translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's popular French poem-prayer to the Virgin Mary, each line of which begins with a letter of the alphabet.[29]

Writing, reading, and listening to texts being read aloud were also each considered potentially devotional acts. The act of scribal copying was considered a kind of prayer, if it was performed in praise of God, and if one's thoughts were kept on Him.[30] The scribal colophons which precede a text often praise God that the work is completed, or for His hand in its creation and execution.[31] The reading of Sacred Scripture was, in monastic contexts, understood as part of meditative practice and prayer: *lectio divina* led to *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. But for unenclosed readers, spiritually edifying reading was carried out, as Vincent Gillespie writes, in a 'more random and less systematic' manner and with a wide range of objectives.[32] For these readers, reading could be perceived as a transformational process, a form of instruction, a way of understanding ideal reading practices, and a means of avoiding slothful idleness.[33] By extension, the act of listening to a text being read was also understood as a devotional act, and the very act of holding or touching a book was an activity imbued with devotional potential.[34]

---

[26] J.R. Mattison, 'Books in Books: The Idea of the Book in the Fifteenth-Century English Visual Imagination', *Book History*, 24 (2021), forthcoming.
[27] Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, p. 104.
[28] Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 253.
[29] *DIMEV* no. 414. This connection is expanded on in Chapter 3.
[30] Cynthia J. Cyrus, *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), p. 192.
[31] See Elizabeth Sears, 'The Afterlife of Scribes: Switcher's Prayer in the Prüfening Isidore', in *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools*, ed. by Michael Gullick (Walkern: The Red Gull Press, 2006), pp. 75-96; Richard Gameson, 'Colophons', in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain, Cha-G*, ed. by Siân Echard and Robert Rouse, et al. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp. 539-542.
[32] Vincent Gillespie, 'Lukynge in Haly Bukes: Lectio in Some Late Medieval Spiritual Miscellanies', in his *Looking in Holy Books, Essays on Late Medieval Religious Writing in England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 113-144 (p. 118).
[33] Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, *et al*. eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280-1520* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 209-221.
[34] See Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

This thesis is focussed on religious literature, that is, literature whose main preoccupation is with religious knowledge and devotional practice. As such, the perceptions of the material text which I examine concurrently work to reveal more about how material texts were understood as religious objects, or the reverse. The texts examined in this thesis offer a variety of religious perspectives, from orthodox and Wycliffite preachers, to lyric-writing monks and itinerant devout women, and offers a different perspective on both religious practice and our understanding of the material text. Often, as this thesis will show, one works to illuminate the other.

Affectivity and Materiality

This connection between the divine and the textual meant that some material texts were understood to have very material, physical effects on the reader or user's life or afterlife. Textual amulets bought this relationship between the divine and the material text even closer: the owning, wearing, touching, consuming, or burning of particular texts was believed to offer spiritual or physical protection, pain relief, or more generalised good luck.[35] One often-cited example of this is medieval birthing girdles, rolls of parchment or paper which were placed around a woman's body during labour to ensure the delivery of the baby and its survival up until the time it could be baptised.[36] More common examples include woodcut-illustrated indulgences, which promised a lessening of the time spent in purgatory to the reciter of its accompanying text.[37]

This connection between the divine and the textual also precipitated the popular fourteenth- and fifteenth-century conception of Christ's body as a readable text which would have an emotional impact on the reader.[38] This is realised in a range of devotional literature, including the *Charter of Christ* poems, the pseudo-didactic *Book to a Mother*, the meditative work by the Monk of Farne,

---

[35] See Katherine Hindley, '"On Parchment or On Bread": Textual Magic in Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2017); Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English*, pp. 181-182; Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal', *The Electronic British Library Journal* (2011) <https://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/pdf/ebljarticle52011.pdf> [Date Accessed: 18.03.2021].

[36] See Joseph J. Gwara and Mary Morse, 'A Birth Girdle Printed by Wynkyn de Worde', *Library*, 13 (2012), 33-63; Mary Morse, 'Two Unpublished English Elevation Prayers in Takamiya MS 56', *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 16 (2013), 269-277; Sian Witherden, 'Touch in Late Medieval English Theatre' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford 2019), pp. 81-97.

[37] See Walter S. Gibson, 'Prayers and Promises: The Interactive Indulgence Print in the Later Middle Ages', in *Push Me Pull You: Imaginative, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Laura Gefland (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 275-324.

[38] This connection between Christ's body and the book is more fully explored later in this thesis, but important works include Sarah Noonan, 'Bodies of Parchment: Representing the Passion and Reading Manuscripts in Late Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Washington University, 2010); E. Dutton, 'Christ as Codex: Compilation as Literary Device in Book to a Mother', *Leeds Studies in English*, 35 (2004), 81-100; Michael Camille, 'The Book as Flesh and Fetish in Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon*', in *The Body and The Book*, ed. by Dolores Warwick Frese and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), pp. 34-77.

Richard Rolle's *Meditations of the Passion II*, and various lyrics. To a certain degree, this connection between Christ's body and the text, which often acts to particularise Christ's wounds and stress his physical suffering, is indicative of the affective character of late medieval devotion. First expounded in R.W. Southern's influential *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 'affective piety' is defined as 'the theme of tenderness and compassion for the sufferings and helplessness of the saviour of the world', sentiments which were evoked through a focus on the humanity and anguish of Christ, and an empathetic relation to Mary.[39] In the seventy years since Southern's book was published, a range of scholarship on medieval literature, art, history, sociology, and theology has expanded, repudiated, and particularised his thesis.[40] In medieval literary studies, affective piety has most often been explored through lyrics and mystic writing, but more recently this has expanded to include broader considerations about the affectivity of material texts, affectively engaged reading practices, and performances of affectivity.[41] Sarah McNamer, for example, has explored the manifestation of affective piety in Middle English literature through the lens of the history of emotions, specifically that of compassion.[42] McNamer writes that works of affective literature often function as 'intimate scripts' for devotional practice, concluding that 'they are quite literally scripts for the performance of feeling – scripts which often explicitly aspire to performative efficacy'.[43] Mark Amsler has similarly explored affective responses to medieval texts and coined the term 'affective literacy', which he defines as 'ways we develop emotional, somatic, activity-based relationships with texts as part of our reading experiences'.[44] Amsler describes affective literacy as comprising of three encounters: the immediate somatic experience of reading (seeing, handling, smelling the material text), the emotive things that we do with texts (wearing them as protective charms, kissing them, swearing on them), and the responses that we have to texts (crying, laughing, anger, arousal).

The examples explored in this thesis show the workings of affective piety to various extents. Some examples are clearly emotive, and draw attention to Christ's and Mary's suffering explicitly. Others, however, are more intellectualised than they are affective: instead of seeking to elicit an impassioned response, they aim for impactful mental connections which elucidate various aspects of

[39] R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 232.
[40] See Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993); A. A. MacDonald, ed., *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998); Glenn Burger and Holly A. Crocker, eds., *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
[41] See Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 1-19; Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge, 1972); Clarissa W. Atkinson, "In the Likeness of a Man': The Tradition of Affective Piety', in *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 129-156.
[42] Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Compassion* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
[43] Ibid., p. 12.
[44] Mark Amsler, 'Affective Literacy: Gestures of Reading in the Later Middle Ages', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18 (2001), 83-110 (83). See also Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Michael G. Sargent, 'Affective Reading and Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* at Syon', in *Reading and Writing in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Mary C. Erler*, ed. by Martin Chase and Maryanne Kowaleski (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2019), pp. 130-149.

the divine and the mortal. Often, the texts seek to elicit both an affective response and a different kind of intellectual understanding, and one of the overarching aims of this thesis is to pinpoint precisely where and how these two textual responses act alone or converge when referring to material texts.

More broadly, late medieval devotional culture was, through its theology, liturgical practice, and popular piety, concerned with materiality.[45] Central to the practice of Christianity was of course the eucharist, where sacramental bread and wine were consecrated and then consumed as the body and blood of Christ through transubstantiation. Understandings of the eucharist and its material and immaterial properties directly impacted the reception of imagery and the materials out of which these images were made. [46] Caroline Walker-Bynum, in her landmark *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe,* writes that the period 1100-1500 was defined by a 'piety characterized by intense awareness of the power of the material', which she credits to the development of new technologies and materials.[47] This 'intense awareness' of the material and its devotional efficacy was also the subject of religious dispute, with Wycliffites seeking to dismiss it as idolatry, and, by extension, criticizing a certain way of perceiving the material.[48]

Walker-Bynum explains that 'the stuff of which medieval images were made was not incidental to their form or merely functional, nor only was it only an iconography to be decoded', but often positioned somewhere between the two.[49] These remarks are particularly relevant for the perception of material texts which operate as functional items and which possess iconographic significance. In response to Walker-Bynum's work, this thesis brings these concerns about form, function, and symbolism in conversation with one another, the production and use of material texts informing the perception of them in devotional culture, and devotional symbolism informing the perception of the material text.

Metaphor and Image

[45] See, for example, Beth Williamson, 'Material Culture and Medieval Christianity', in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. by John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 60-75; Eliza A. Foster, Julia Perratore, and Stephen Rozenski, *Devotional Interaction in Medieval England and its Afterlives* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004); Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[46] For an extended discussion on eucharistic logic and symbolism in late medieval literature, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 83-145.

[47] Caroline Walker-Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), p. 18. See also David Lavinsky, *The Material Text in Wycliffite Biblical Scholarship: Inscription and Sacred Truth* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017).

[48] Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 2.

[49] Walker-Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 28.

An analysis of figurative representation of material texts is, therefore, a useful means through which to consider medieval perceptions of the material and the immaterial. Figurative representation, in the context of this thesis, refers to two image-making techniques: metaphor, the rhetorical technique whereby a word or phrase is applied to another in place of its literal naming, and imagery, the broader description of material texts. Often the divisions between the two categories are blurred, as descriptions of the material text employ metaphor, or images are used as emblematic symbols. It is therefore worth considering how metaphors function, and why they are used. There is no space here to outline the long tradition of reflection on metaphor, but some key developments require discussion. I. A. Richards described the metaphor as consisting of two component parts: the tenor, the subject to which the attributes are described, and the vehicle, the object whose attributes are borrowed.[50] Paul Ricœur explains that metaphor is at once 'a displacement and an extension of the meaning of words', whereby 'the metaphorical "is" at once signifies both "is not" and "is like"'.[51] The analysis performed in this thesis often works to break down the metaphor, examining precisely which aspects of material text are and are not being referred to in order enable a greater appreciation of the differences between types of material text, and a better understanding of how and why they are being employed.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson propose in *Metaphors We Live By* that metaphors, rather than functioning as a rhetorical technique whose effects are isolated only to the written word, 'are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action'.[52] A study of metaphor, then, can expose how particular objects are perceived and how their materials and symbolic qualities are understood by a particular culture. Doing so, however, can be complicated, as metaphors are not necessarily universal in effect. As Lakoff and Johnson explain, 'which values are given priority is partly a matter of the subculture one lives in and partly a matter of personal values'.[53] Their book has been criticised, however, for its unconscious perpetuation of the values exhibited in metaphor, ironically proving their central thesis that metaphor informs, and is a result of, the culture in which it operates. Meryl Altman, for example, explains Lakoff and Johnson fall foul of their bias regarding gender: the examples they choose show that male experience is understood as the default, and female attributes are often metaphorized when the aim of the rhetorical device is to be derogatory.[54]

The approach taken in this thesis towards the use of metaphor is informed by Lakoff and Johnson's sense of the pervasiveness of metaphor. However, it also attempts to unravel the prejudice or bias implicit in the metaphors I analyse, having the benefit of time-distance that Lakoff and Johnson, writing of modern metaphor, did not. As this thesis is a study of perception, it is important to consider for example, the writer and reader's education level, gender, profession, and degree of

[50] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 96.
[51] Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. by Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1, 6.
[52] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 3. See also David Punter's explanation of 'Public Metaphor' in *Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 42-56.
[53] Ibid., p. 23.
[54] Meryl Altman, 'How Not to Do Things with Metaphors We Live By', *College English*, 52 (1990), 495-506.

religious orthodoxy (to the extent that it is discernible), to then understand how these qualities might skew the employment and understanding of metaphors of textual materiality. This thesis is also conscious of the reciprocity between metaphor and material reality. The metaphors analysed here are sometimes at their inception or at a key developmental point, and so I take care to consider *why* the material and devotional culture in late medieval England precipitated this lasting connection between material texts and devotion.

Aside from metaphor, I also examine the imagery of material texts more generally. But what is meant in literary studies by the vague term 'imagery'? At its broadest definition, imagery refers to a group of sense impressions excited by language.[55] The imagery of a particular text is comprised of a series of discrete images that are produced by literal or figural descriptions of an object, scene, or action. These images are often described as mental 'pictures', but they are not necessarily visual: they can draw upon any of the five senses, or kinaesthetic and phenomenological experiences. The analysis of imagery was particularly significant for Shakespearian studies in the first half of the twentieth century when critics such as G. Wilson Knight and Caroline F. E. Spurgeon argued that each of Shakespeare's plays possessed characteristic and unique cluster of images, and this approach is well represented in medieval literary studies by Douglas Gray's *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric*.[56] In this thesis, I analyse the imagery of material texts – both literal and figurative – in a range of late medieval English writings, but I do not attempt to characterise or group these images in a way that belies their variation. Rather, this thesis seeks to acknowledge the range of material text imagery present in late medieval literature, and acknowledge the moments where these images differ or correspond between texts, or indeed between images.

Methodologies of Reading: Close, Distant, Surface, and Deep

In analysing metaphors and images of 'material texts' – and indeed in using this term – this thesis is influenced by the critical approaches summoned into being by Stephen G. Nichols in his influential call for a 'New Philology' or 'Material Philology'.[57] Nichols defines Material Philology as that which considers 'the important supplements that were part and parcel of medieval text production' such as

[55] Chris Baldick, 'Imagery', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[56] See G. Wilson Knight, *Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearian Tragedy*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2001); Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935); Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1972).
[57] Stephen G. Nichols, 'Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 1-10.

scribal hand, illustration, rubrication, glossing, and material support, and which acknowledges how these aspects of a manuscript work together, or push back against one another, to create meaning.[58]

It is worth pausing here on the slippery term 'material text'. While this is a commonplace expression in literary studies concerned with the graphosphere, there is no concrete definition of what a 'material text' is, or critical consistency in how the term is employed. Confusingly, it is often used interchangeably alongside 'container', 'textual support' or 'textual situation'. I have chosen to employ the term material text as, importantly, it gestures towards the physicality of the object which the word is written on and does not stress the primacy of the text over the importance of the material – the material and the textual are both equal partners in this definition, as opposed to the textual taking precedence as in 'textual support' or 'textual situation'. It also allows for a variety of textual placements (texts can be written 'on' things and inscribed 'into' things), that 'container', which implies an enveloping, does not. In this thesis, when I refer to a 'material text', I mean the object which bears written word, such as a codex, a document, or a piece of inscribed metal. When I employ the term 'text', I am referring only to the written word itself.

D. F. McKenzie's theory of the Sociology of the Text, whereby bibliography, textual criticism, literary criticism, and literary history combine, has also been a helpful framework through which to consider the materiality of the text. McKenzie writes that criticism concerned with 'the pursuit of historical meanings' must move between 'the most minute feature of the material form of the book to questions of authorial, literary, and social context'.[59] The 'moving between' which McKenzie describes, although implying oscillation, is often performed in one direction, whereby materiality informs the reading of the text. Indeed, this approach is the most appropriate for studies occupied with the history of reading, or the history of the book.

My method, however, re-orders the approach suggested by McKenzie. As a thesis which privileges *perception* over codicological or readerly reality, I instead take the text as my starting point before moving to consider its material, literary, and devotional contexts. That is, whilst drawing on the details of book history, this thesis is rooted in textual analysis. I often move between providing a 'thin description' and 'thick description' of texts, each of which enables more accurate and thorough conclusions to be made.[60] 'Thin description' is often required in order to explain particular methods of production or writing techniques which have fallen out of common modern use, and so require elucidation but not a hermeneutic approach. 'Thick description' places these techniques and practices

[58] Ibid., 7.
[59] D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 23.
[60] See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3-32; Heather Love, 'Close Reading and Thin Description', *Public Culture*, 25 (2013), 401-434; Heather Love, 'Close But Not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn', *New Literary History*, 41 (2010), 371-391. For a defence of extensive description and its various uses, see the special issue of *Representations*, edited by Sharon Marcus, Heather Love, and Stephen Best, 'Building Better Descriptions', *Representations*, 135 (2016), 1-21.

within their literary, religious, and cultural significance. By moving between the two, an appreciation of both *how* a material text is described, as well as *why* it might be described this way can be gleaned.

But the most commonly employed reading practice in this thesis is that of close reading: the sustained analysis of a short passage of text, with particular focus on individual word choice, literary techniques, syntax, punctuation, and formal qualities. Close reading is predominantly associated with New Criticism, which was particularly popular in the middle of the twentieth century. New Criticism rejected the Old Historicist methods that relied on detailed bibliographical and sociological knowledge, and questions of authorial intention or affect, and instead favoured analysis rooted in textual details which encompassed so-called 'non-literary' texts. In the latter decades of the twentieth century, New Criticism was critiqued for its propensity to be 'elitist, canonical, ahistorical'.[61] The practice of close reading, however, has endured as a cornerstone of literature research and teaching.

The endurance of close reading can be attributed to methodological changes. Heather Dubrow explains that close reading of the middle of the twentieth century often 'assumed not only a unified text but largely unified reactions', dismissing any variant conclusions as the fault of an imprecise or insensitive reader.[62] Recent pedagogical developments have attempted to push back against this approach, and instead consider close reading as a means by which readers can provide idiosyncratic readings of a text based on their own socio-linguistic backgrounds and personal experience. Sharon A. Beehler has defined the difference between the two methods as 'closed reading' and 'close reading', whereby closed reading limits the interpretive possibilities of a text by assuming that there is a definitive meaning, whilst close reading offers more scope for individualised interpretation.[63]

The practice of close reading used in this thesis is not closed, but it does operate within certain parameters. The aim of this thesis is to consider the *perception* of material texts by late medieval English people. Consequently, the possibilities offered by close reading will be contextualised, taking in to account the likely writer and reader of the text, the encounters they would have had with material texts, and their experience of devotional culture. It will not, however, be closed to ambiguity or multivalency. As evidenced throughout this thesis, references to material texts often prove malleable, and the most definitive conclusion which can be drawn from them encompasses a range of interpretive possibilities. This textual analysis always allows space for ambiguity or ambivalence, and is performed with continual reflection on the wider text, the material realities of textual production, and the devotional culture in which the text was produced.

---

[61] Jane Gallop, 'The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading', *Profession*,1 (2007), 181-186 (182).
[62] Heather Dubrow, 'Rewriting Close Reading: A Response to Judith Anderson and Theresa M. DiPasquale', *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate*, 28 (2019), 85-94 (88).
[63] Sharon A. Beehler, 'Close vs. Closed Reading: Interpreting the Clues', *The English Journal*, 77 (1988), 39-43.

Three Approaches to Materiality

As this thesis is concerned with the material text, it is necessarily informed by critical approaches to materiality. Scholarship which has considered pre-modern materiality can largely be organised into three groupings: material readings of texts, animal materiality studies, and studies in agential materials. This thesis does not neatly conform to any of these groupings but is conscious of, and influenced by, their distinctive methodological approaches and contributions to studies in materiality. The first group, which is characterised by material readings of texts, considers the materiality of writing supports in order to better understand the texts which are written upon them. Some of these are solidly book-historical in approach. Daniel Wakelin, for example, has considered how evidence of scribal correction in books reveals the power of the texts and the ideas around it, and Daniel Sawyer has explored what fourteenth- and fifteenth- century manuscripts can tell us about how verse was read.[64] Likewise, Vincent Gillespie's numerous and wide-ranging publications display a continued interest in literary reception, book history, and devotional materials.[65]

Another strand of criticism within this sub-field is that which considers the relationship between image and text. Jessica Brantley, for example, has focused on the act of private reading in the later medieval period, examining text and imagery in relation to performance and pageantry.[66] Martha Dana Rust's 'manuscript matrix' concept, which she defines as 'a virtual dimension in which physical form and linguistic content function in dialectical reciprocity', is also influential to this thesis.[67] This manuscript matrix functions, Rust argues, because of the distinct manuscript culture of the late medieval period, which required a combination of 'involved' reading practices, a consciousness of codicology, and literacy in reading, writing, and images.[68] Other works on material readings of texts are concerned with highlighting the variety of materials, craft practices, and text-types which form the material text.[69] All of these works share a common preoccupation: they are concerned with what the material text can tell us about literature. Whilst my thesis grapples with some of the same questions regarding readerly practice, the interplay of images and text, and how texts function when the parchment or paper page is not their recording substrate, it reverses their fundamental approach to

---

[64] Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Daniel Wakelin, 'When Scribes Won't Write: Gaps in Middle English Books', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 36 (2014), 249-278; Daniel Sawyer, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript, c.1350-c.1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[65] For a collection of Gillespie's essays, see Vincent Gillespie, *Looking in Holy Books: Essays on Late Medieval Religious Writing in England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).
[66] Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 10.
[67] Martha Dana Rust, *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books: Exploring the Manuscript Matrix* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 9.
[68] Rust, *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books*, p. 9.
[69] Jonathan Wilcox, ed., *Scraped, Stroked, and Bound: Materially Engaged Readings of Medieval Manuscripts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

consider what literature can tell us about the material text, rather than what the material text can tell us about literature.

As material texts of the late medieval period were made with animal parts, scholarship regarding the materiality of the text has intersected with the so-called 'animal turn' in medieval studies, a critical trend which combines ethics, eco-criticism, and post-humanism.[70] Broader studies, such those by Joyce E. Salisbury and Karl Steel, have explored the disintegration of human-animal boundaries in the medieval period in relation to philosophical and theological developments.[71] Much of the criticism on animal materiality in regard to manuscript culture has focussed on the use of animal skins in the parchment production process. Bruce Holsinger, for example, has provocatively described writing on medieval parchment as 'millions of stains on animal parts'.[72] In light of such insights, Sarah Kay has most extensively explored how medieval readers and writers might have responded to the animality of a manuscript's parchment, and focusses particularly on what this might mean when the text itself is concerned with animality, or rent human skin, and Jim Bloxam has explored how girdle books placed animal and textual materiality in direct conversation.[73] Criticism on animal materiality has been useful to this thesis for two reasons: firstly, for its detailed explanation of the ubiquity of animal products in medieval book making, and secondly for its consideration of animal sacrifice and pain. This thesis is not solely occupied with animal ethics, nor only with animal parts used in book making, but this strand of criticism has been helpful in considering the emotional and intellectual responses which medieval people might have had upon seeing, feeling, and handling objects whose materials were harvested through animal slaughter.

The final grouping of scholarship is that which considers the agency of materials. The turn of the twenty-first century ushered in two new influential ways of considering agential material: the literary scholar Bill Brown's 'Thing Theory', and 'Object-Oriented Ontology', a school of

---

[70] For an explanation on the development of the field, see Cary Wolfe, 'Moving Forward, Kicking Back: The Animal Turn', *Postmedieval*, 2 (2011), 1-2. For a broad consideration of perceptions of the animal in high medieval Europe (including their role as food, entertainment, sport, pet, and resource), see Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2007). For a survey of specifically medieval British texts see Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[71] Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within, Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994); Karl Steel, *How to Make a Human: Animals & Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2011).

[72] Bruce Holsinger, 'Of Pigs and Parchment: Medieval Studies and the Coming of the Animal', *PLMA*, 124 (2009), 616-623 (621). See also Holsinger, *Music, Body and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (California: University of Stanford Press, 2001).

[73] See Sarah Kay, 'Original Skin: Flaying, Reading, and Thinking in the Legend of Saint Bartholomew and Other Works', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 36 (2006), 35-74; 'Legible Skins: Animals and the Ethics of Medieval Reading', *Postmedieval*, 2 (2011), 13-32; 'Post-Human Philology and the Ends of Time in Medieval Bestiaries', *Postmedieval*, 5 (2014), 473-485; 'Surface and Symptom on a Bestiary Page: Offices on f.61^{v}-62^{r} of Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 20', *Exemplaria*, 26 (2014), 127-147; *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin French Bestiaries* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2017); Jim Bloxam, 'The Beast, the Book and the Belt: An Introduction to the Study of the Girdle or Belt Books for the Medieval Period', in *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Alexander Pluskowski (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), pp. 80-97.

philosophical thought.[74] Thing Theory considers human-object relations, and focusses on how the 'thingness' of an object becomes apparent when its usual application is suspended (for example, when an object is dirty, broken, or misused). Object-Oriented Ontology instead stands in opposition to anthropocentrism, arguing that objects exist independently of human perception and that human experience should not be prioritised over the non-human.

Kellie Robertson has convincingly argued that the medieval period is important for gaining an understanding of pre-Enlightenment attitudes towards materials, which are generally given more critical attention.[75] Considering materiality through medieval literature, Robertson writes, is useful for considering divisions and connections between the animate and the inanimate, as well as conceptions of 'things' and 'matter'. Most significantly, Robertson gestures towards literary studies' ability to speculate on 'the myriad ways that objects shape human perceptions and knowledges rather than being merely shaped by them'.[76] This is well explored in the work of medievalists James Paz and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, and by Leah Price, who has examined the role of nineteenth-century 'it narratives', notably those where the object concerned is a book.[77] Myra Seaman has also analysed the objecthood of one particular manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61), and emphasises its position in an 'ecology' of materials.[78] This thesis is also interested in human-object relations, especially when material texts operate in ways that render their materiality (their 'thingness') particularly evident. Its concern with objects, however, is far more fluid and reciprocal than suggested by some, as this thesis looks both at how objects shape human understanding and perception, and how human understanding and perception shaped the use of objects.

Medieval Perceptions of Material Texts

This thesis follows on from, and contributes to, a pre-existing group of critical works which considers the perception of the book in the late medieval period. One of the earliest and oft-cited examples is Ernst Robert Curtius' *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, in which he explores the history

[74] On Thing Theory, see Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 1-22; *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); on Object-Oriented Ontology, see Harman Graham's body of work, especially *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court, 2002), and 'The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 183-203.
[75] Kellie Robertson, 'Medieval Materialism: A Manifesto', *Exemplaria*, 22 (2010), 99-118; 'Medieval Things: Materiality, Historicism and the Premodern Object', *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), 1060-1080.
[76] Ibid., 1075.
[77] James Paz, *Nonhuman Voices in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Leah Price, 'From the History of a Book to a "History of the Book"', *Representations*, 108 (2009), 120-140.
[78] Myra Seaman, *Objects of Affection: The Book and the Household in Late Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

of the book in figurative language in Latin literature from ancient Greece to Shakespeare's England.[79] Following this, Jesse Gellrich has analysed medieval ideas about orality, writing, and books through the critical lenses offered by Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, and Claude Lévi-Strauss.[80]

In the last twenty years, scholarship on the perception of the medieval material text has become more specific, focussing on the perceptions of particular types of material texts, individual material qualities of these texts, or their significance to particular readers. Eric Jager's work on heart books (both the actual physical manuscripts shaped as hearts, and the perception of the book as an intimate object akin to the heart), which he describes as at 'the height of its ideological power and poetic expression' between 400 and 1500AD.[81] Jeffrey Hamburger has examined how the material properties of the codex as an openable, dyptical object correlated to medieval ideas of revelation and intimacy, especially in regard to the Apocalypse.[82] Laura Saetviet Miles has considered the importance of the image of the reading Virgin at the Annunciation, and focusses particularly on how female readers, including anchoresses, saints, and visionary women, might have understood reading and books as a means of imitating the Virgin and participating in the events of her life.[83] Most closely related to this thesis is Kathy Cawsey's *Images of Language in Middle English Vernacular Writings,* which seeks to 'tease out the implicit, underlying theory of language from the ways individual authors talk about language'.[84] Like this thesis, Cawsey takes the text as her object of study in order to deduce an 'implicit theory or language of philosophy', but focusses on language both oral and written, rather perceptions of textual materiality.[85]

This thesis examines how material texts are referred to in late medieval English religious literature (roughly 1350-1500). The examples analysed in this thesis are chosen for two reasons: either because they are an example of a particularly common way of representing material texts during this period, or because they are striking and unusual. Each of the five chapters within this thesis considers a different genre of Middle English writing. The first chapter examines Middle English book-craft recipes which describe how to make parchment, pigments and inks, leathers, and glues. Rather than exploring the art-historical usefulness of these recipes, I analyse their language and constituent materials in order to consider how these recipes are both the influencers of, and influenced by, perceptions of material texts. The second chapter considers two of the best-known examples of literature which self-reflexively engage with their material properties: the 'Long' and 'Short' Charters

[79] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. by Willard R. Tusk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 302-327.
[80] Jesse Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language, Theory, and Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).
[81] Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. xiv.
[82] Jeffrey Hamburger, 'Openings', in *Imagination, Books, and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Gregory Kratzmann (Victoria: Macmillan Art Publishing, 2009), pp. 51-130.
[83] Laura Saetveit Miles, *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation: Reading, Interpretation, and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2020).
[84] Kathy Cawsey, *Images of Language in Middle English Vernacular Writings* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2020), p. 7.
[85] Ibid.

of Christ. I explore the complexity of this self-reflexivity, and also ponder their efficacy when the poems no longer refer to the materials they are written on. In the third chapter, I analyse a range of other devotional lyrics and the diverse metaphors of material texts, namely books, which they offer. I do so through the lens of 'defamiliarization', whereby the properties of the material text are made unfamiliar by being compared to the body of Christ, or the mind or heart of the reader. In the penultimate chapter, I analyse a selection of sermons, both orthodox and Wycliffite. I argue that sermons often express an ambivalence towards the material text, at once warning of the biblioclastic effect of sin and the textual manipulation of the devil, whilst offering the devout a metaphorical means of writing their own salvation. Finally, I analyse the references to material texts in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, a text populated with various descriptions of books, including books read to Margery by various priests, a book which she owns, letters which she sends and requests, inscribed objects such as rings, and the book which Margery herself produces. These descriptions of material texts, I argue, are influenced by Kempe's identity as an unenclosed woman operating in fifteenth-century England with limited readerly and writerly skills. I examine how *The Book of Margery Kempe* complicates and enriches understandings of late medieval lay women's engagement with material texts, and how this relates to their devotional practice. In the conclusion of the thesis, I offer some brief engagements with other forms not analysed in the main body of the thesis (such as drama), and look forward to how references to material texts changed after the late medieval period with the wider use of the printing press, and changing perceptions of devotional materials. This thesis, therefore, moves between a range of different kinds of literature, examining different genres and sub-genres of texts authored by a range of individuals and read by a variety of readers, or listened to by a varied audience. Whilst it could be argued that this presents a disjunctive methodological approach, I contend that it allows for conclusions to be drawn between these disparate texts, whether these highlight similarities or differences. Although this thesis does not seek to provide a comprehensive analysis on how material texts were perceived, it does aim to be wide-reaching and inclusive of a range of perspectives, whether these are commonly expressed or more individual in kind.

Thereby, this thesis works to contribute to understandings of the material text as an object, and the place of the material text in late medieval devotional culture. It shows that references to material texts in late medieval English literature are often ambiguous, and draw upon qualities from a range of written forms. It also exhibits that whilst some of these examples are self-reflexive towards that material on which they are written, they often reveal *ideas* about the material text which do not rely on the substrate in front of the reader at the time of reading, but their holistic understanding and experiences of material texts.

Chapter One: Craft Recipes and Perceptions of the Material Text

The collection of craft recipes found in the late fifteenth-century manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 54, is prefixed by a brief line of introduction: ‘Dowtles here may ye se al þe

thynges þat lo[n]gyth to a wryter in al degreys boþe lytyl and mekyl; þou dare seke it no ferder'.[86] This claim is followed by a recipe detailing how one might prepare a parchment page for illustration. It begins by suggesting that the reader should 'pomys […] well' their parchment sheet, before ruling the page (also to be performed 'well'), and applying pigment.[87] The recipe asserts that if the reader performs the directions explicated in the following recipes, they will 'not faylle' in creating their desired product.[88] The recipes which occupy the next ten folios then explain how to make various components of a material text, including ink for ruling, silver and gold ink, pigments, how to make gloves from parchment, how to colour leather, cloth, and wax, how to etch a sword, and how to make glue.

The knowledge the introduction purports to reveal is described as, 'thynges þat lo[n]gyth to a wryter', that is, information that belongs to scribes, who are commonly referred to by this term.[89] It concerns both their most rudimentary methods, the 'lytyl' skills, and the 'mekyl', the most advanced techniques. That this short preface describes the knowledge as belonging to scribes, rather than to the owner of this manuscript, perhaps indicates that they were not a professional scribe or book-craftsperson themselves. Indeed, Mark Clarke writes that the manuscript's contents and appearance indicate that MS Douce 54 was produced by an amateur. [90] So why might an individual record craft recipes if they were not a professional craftsperson? Firstly, the scribe might have wished to make their own material texts. These recipes might have offered the opportunity to create objects which would have only been made by professional craftspeople. Secondly, they might have recorded them because they found them intellectually fascinating. Material texts, with their myriad forms, ingredients, and methods of creation, were familiar material objects, and these recipes offered the opportunity for the reader intellectually, if not practically, to understand their construction. Whether the owner of MS Douce 54 intended to perform any of the recipes, or simply recorded them because they offered tantalising insights into the creation of objects which they were accustomed to handling, the book-craft recipes' presence in this manuscript indicates that late medieval people were interested in how their material texts were made. Crucially, it also shows that people were thinking *theoretically* about their material texts, and in a manner which could produce the kinds of imaginative representations found in more literary texts.

MS Douce 54 is not unique in its documentation of Middle English craft recipes, which number in the thousands. The proliferation of late medieval book-craft recipes can be partially explained by the increase in vernacular literacy rates and pragmatic literacy, as outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Carrie Griffin writes that the proliferation of book-craft recipes was a direct

[86] Mark Clarke, ed., *The Crafte of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyng: Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators*, EETS O.S. 347 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 262 (ll. 1-2). All subsequent references are made to this edition.
[87] Ibid., l. 3.
[88] Ibid., l. 7.
[89] *MED*, writer(e (n.), all senses.
[90] *CLMS*, p. xci.

response to the 'increasingly de-centralised and domestic' practices of book production, which encouraged people to explore how material texts might be adapted to best suit an individual's requirements.[91] As literacy rates increased, so people wished to create idiosyncratic manuscripts reflective of their own particular interests and needs, and this often resulted in book-owners contributing to the penning or illustration of their own manuscripts.[92] Whether these craft recipes were intended to be practically used or not, they do attest to a widespread interest in the production of material texts outside of a professional milieu. As instructional texts which detail the methods and ingredients required to create material texts, recipes offer an opportunity to consider how these material texts were understood as objects, and, resultantly, how they were then referred to in late medieval devotional literature.

This chapter is, therefore, unlike the work of some conservators, not an art-historical analysis of what scholars and conservators now can learn from these recipes, but an exploration of what these texts reveal about the perceptions of the material text by people in the past.[93] It acts as a necessary precursor to the following chapters by considering perceptions of the material text more than realities – and those imaginative works in later chapters will consider. As texts which describe the process of crafting a book or other textual support, these recipes offer an insight into how material texts were understood *before* they came in to being, that is when they are conceptual ideas rather than realised material objects. They reveal the understandings of those who read the more imaginative texts explored on this thesis, and what methods were deemed most suitable for different kinds of word-bearing objects. They display the parts of textual production which were of most interest to the late medieval reader, and what kinds of material texts might be required, or encountered, in everyday life. They also expose relationships between material texts and other material forms.

Significantly, these recipes reveal medieval experiences of the material text which are alien even to those twenty-first-century readers who regularly consult manuscript collections. Whilst the teaching of palaeography and codicology might involve some discussion of codex-crafting processes it is often not phenomenological in approach, although some scholars have sought to redress this.[94] Modern rare book conservation methods also often use materials unavailable to the medieval craftsperson, and so even they are removed from the methods and experiences of late medieval book-

[91] Carrie Griffin, *Instructional writing in English, 1350-1650: Materiality and Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2019), p. 78.
[92] Carol M. Meale, 'Amateur Book Production and the Miscellany in Late Medieval East Anglia', in *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 158-174. For more detail on amateur illustration in particular, see Mark Clarke, 'Recipes and Reception: Late Medieval English Colour Recipes and Amateur Illuminators', in *Manuscripts in the Making: Art and Science, Vol II*, ed. by Stella Panayotova and Paola Ricciardi (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2018), pp. 55-65.
[93] For an art historical-analysis, see Mark Clarke, *The Art of All Colours: Mediaeval Recipes for Painters and Illuminators* (London: Archetype Publications, 2001).
[94] Sarah Charles has endeavoured to recreate medieval book-craft products precisely in order to understand these experiences. For an account of her experiences, see Sara Charles, 'Teaching Manuscripts', <https://www.teachingmanuscripts.com/blog> [Date Accessed: 28.06.2012].

crafts. Consequently, these experiences – the memory of buying or gathering ingredients, the sensory experience of working with the materials, the labour of the production – are lost to the twenty-first-century manuscript handler. These craft recipes provide a glimpse of not only the ingredients and methods required to craft a material text, but the *experience* of making one, and enable an examination of how the material text might have been perceived by those who made them, or possessed an intellectual understanding of how they were made.

In examining the content of book-craft recipes, this chapter draws on the work of scholars who have considered the rhetorical content of instructional texts, the interrelationship between recipes and other written forms, and the material practices evidenced within them. Sylvie Neven has studied the connections between alchemical recipes and art technology, arguing that recipes are rich source texts for establishing perceptions about particular epistemological practices, certain ingredients, and the associations imbued in the recipes' own literary form.[95] Hannah Bower has considered the poetics of late medieval medical recipes, and Hannah Ryley has examined book-craft recipes for evidence of manuscript re-use.[96] Most influential to the approach and concerns of this chapter has been the work of Carrie Griffin, who has considered the history, purpose, and performativity of book-craft recipes, and writes that recipe texts 'offer insights into some of the ways in which […] consumption occurred or was conceptualised'.[97] Whereas Griffin focusses on the use and understanding of the recipes themselves, this chapter will look *through* the recipes to explore the conceptualisation of the material texts in the late medieval imagination.

In my analysis of these book-craft recipes I employ the method of close reading outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Lisa H. Cooper advocates for the close reading of practical or instructional medieval texts which might seem to resist it, and writes that such an approach enables scholars to 'ask whether […] medieval readers did not themselves take aesthetic enjoyment from practical literature'.[98] Cooper's work seeks to highlight the poetic expressions which are found in recipes and, in turn, the recipe-like expressions or evidence of recipe knowledge in poetic literature. Relatedly, Julie Orlemanski has explored the use of jargon in late medieval medicinal recipes, and explains that this obscurity possesses a 'poetic power' which enables the recipe to superficially

[95] Sylvie Neven, 'Recording and Reading Alchemy and Art-Technology in Medieval and Premodern German Recipe Collections' *Nuncius*, 31 (2016), 32-49.
[96] Hannah Bower, *Middle English Medical Recipes and Literary Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), forthcoming; Hannah Ryley, *Re-Using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press), forthcoming.
[97] Carrie Griffin, 'Reconsidering the Recipe: Materiality, Narrative and Text in Later Medieval Instructional Manuscripts and Collections', in *Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe 1350–1550: Packaging, Presentation and Consumption*, ed. by Emma Cayley and Susan Powell (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 156-170 (p. 157). See also Griffin, *Instructional Writing in English, 1350-1650: Materiality and Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
[98] Lisa H. Cooper, 'The Poetics of Practicality', in *Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 491–505 (p. 499). See also Cooper, *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late-Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

imitate other forms (such as Latinate charms), and renders the recipe subject to satirical lampooning.[99] Conversely, close reading has also been used in conjunction with linguistic pragmatics. Irma Taavitsainen, for example, has analysed medical recipe texts to consider their text type and genre relations, as well as their linguistic and structural features, whilst Jenny Arendholz and others have compared the formal and functional differences between Middle English and twenty-first-century culinary recipes. [100] The emphasis of this chapter is not solely the use of poetic techniques in book craft recipes, nor is it a linguistic study, but a consideration of any kind of description of material texts and their creation in recipes, and the ways in which they are they are limited and literal, or metaphorical and expansive.

The recipes which I analyse in this chapter are selected from those in Mark Clarke's extensive collection of around one-thousand five-hundred Middle English technical recipes gathered from ninety manuscripts. The recipes which I consider are only a sample of those which relate to material texts, but have been selected either because they represent a common or a particularly unusual way of representing the material text. This chapter begins with an exploration of the manuscript contexts in which these recipes appear, an overview of the history of the book-craft recipe, and an examination of the kinds of material texts which these recipes create. The next section investigates the prefaces (where present) of book-craft recipe collections, and considers how these recipes, and therefore the products which they make, are conceptually framed. I then analyse how the book craft recipe often presented the material text as an esoteric object which could be used to reveal the wonders of the natural world, or to channel magical or divine power. Lastly, I consider how material texts were both made of, and were themselves, materials which were continually repurposed, recycled, and reused. I explore how the perception of the material text was influenced by the materials which it was made up of and, in turn, which the material text could be recycled into. Ultimately, this chapter works as a necessary foundation to this thesis by introducing the key methods and ingredients of textual production, highlighting the late medieval interest in textual materiality, and exploring how the perception of the material text was shaped by the texts describing their creation.

[99] Julie Orlemanski, 'Jargon and the Matter of Medicine in Middle English', *Journal of Medieval and Middle English Studies*, 42 (2012), 395-420 (396).
[100] Irma Taavitsainen, 'Middle English Recipes: Genre Characteristics, Text Type Features and Underlying Traditions of Writing', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 2 (2001), 85-113; Irma Taavitsainen and Paivi Pahta, 'Vernacularisation of Medical Writing in English: A Corpus-Based Study of Scholasticism', *Early Science and Medicine*, 2 (1998), 157-185; Jenny Arendholz, Wolfram Bublitz, Monika Kirner, and Iris Zimmermann, 'Food for Thought – or, What's (in) a Recipe? A Diachronic Analysis of Cooking Instructions', in *Culinary Linguistics: The Chef's Special*, ed. by Cornelia Gerhardt, Maximiliane Frobenius, and Susanne Ley (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), pp. 119-138.

Late Medieval Craft Recipes

Before an analysis of the textual content of book-craft recipes, it is important to consider the development of such texts, their common textual characteristics, their manuscript witnesses, and the kinds of techniques and material texts that they describe. The written craft recipe tradition began with two works compiled in Egypt and written in Greek in the second and third century: those now known as the *Papyrus Graecus Holmiensis* and *Leyden Papyrus X*.[101] The *Compositiones ad tinguenda*, which contained a combination of Italian artistic practice and Graeco-Byzantine knowledge was then the first manuscript to disseminate these recipes among a western European readership.[102] This was followed by a raft of European writing circulating on either side of the Alps, including the ninth-century *Mappae clavicula*, the tenth-century *De coloribus et artibus Romanorum*, and the twelfth-century *De diversis artibus* by Theophilus Presbyter, a Benedictine monk and master craftsmen whom some believe to be Roger of Helmarshausen, the renowned goldsmith and metalwork artist.[103] Originating in England c.1300, the popular Latin craft text *Secretum philosophorum* (one of many on other topics with the same title) characterised itself as a treatise on the Seven Liberal Arts, but contained a range of practical tips and tricks, including recipes for writing and illustration.[104]

The fourteenth century then ushered in the earliest examples of Middle English recipes, as well as those in other European vernaculars. These recipes, as Clarke explains, often accurately reflected late medieval workshop practices rather than copying the content of their antiquated predecessors, and many of the recipes, especially those for inks and pigments, would prove effectual in making their described products.[105] In Middle English, medical recipes are the only subcategory commonly referred to as *recepte* or *recipe*.[106] Craft recipes, not usually designated by this term, can instead be identified by their form, the headings which name the resultant product, and their propensity to begin with the infinitive phrase 'Forto make', followed by instructions. Only occasionally do recipes appear as or in an extended treatise: they are more frequently presented as short, sometimes telegraphic texts, interspersed throughout a manuscript, grouped according to preoccupation, or found isolated in margins, flyleaves, and as infill.

The medieval readers and owners of manuscripts containing craft recipes were mixed, and the recipes were likely recorded both by those wanting to create home-made material texts, and those

---

[101] See A. Leo Oppenheim, *Glass and Glassmaking in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: The Corning Museum of Glass, 1970), pp. 4-8.
[102] Robert P. Multhauf, *The Origins of Chemistry* (London: Oldbourne, 1966), pp. 143-174 (p. 153).
[103] Robert Halleux, 'Recettes d'artisan, recettes d'alchimiste', *Artes mechanicae, Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique*, 34 (1989), 25-50. In this article, Halleux argues that *Mappae Clavicula* is a mistranslation ('the key to the small cloth') of the original Greek, and that it should be translated as 'the key to the tricks-of-the-trade'. See also Cyril Stanley Smith and John G. Hawthorne, '*Mappae Clavicula*, A Little Key to the World of Medieval Techniques', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 64 (1974), part 4, pp. 3-128 (pp. 15-26); Guido Frison and Giulia Brun '*Compositiones Lucenses* and *Mappæ Clavicula*: Two Traditions or One? New Evidence From Empirical Analysis and Assessment of the Literature', *Heritage Science*, 6 (2018), 1-17.
[104] The *Secretum philosophorum* is discussed in more detail on pp. 43-44.
[105] *CLMS*, p. xxxiii.
[106] *MED*, recepte (n.), sense 1d. See also Carrie Griffin, 'Reconsidering the Recipe', p. 140.

interested in learning about their material production. This is not to say that no professional craftspeople ever recorded their recipes, but that their knowledge was more likely to have been gleaned from oral transmission and practical experience, rather than written explications. The appeal of the craft recipes text to both between the specialist and the general audience is reflected in the language of craft recipes. On the one hand, the recipes employ a range of technical terms, especially regarding the names of particular ingredients, tools, and techniques. Neal R. Norrick writes that one of the distinctive traits of recipes (of all subjects, and throughout time), is the presupposition of knowledge of technical verbs, skills, and a range of ingredients. [107] On the other hand, late medieval craft recipes do temper this through the replacement of technical names with descriptive ones: for example, one recipe for creating parchment refers to a *lunellum*, a skin scraping tool, as 'suche a fleyssyng knyf as þis parchemyners use', which both describes the activity performed by the knife, and tacitly reveals that this recipe was not intended for professional parchmenters, who would not need their own instrument describing to them.[108] Indeed, the use of the ambiguous 'þis', or 'these', emphasises both the familiarity of parchmenters and the writer's distance from them: they are not 'we' parchmenters, but 'these' parchmenters, with which they are familiar. One manuscript even provides a short glossary of terms, with an entry explaining that 'An ymage syttynge ys ycalled a 'sytter', and an ymage stondynge ys ycallyd a 'stonder", and implying that the reader has no professional knowledge of illustration whatsoever.[109]

As a result of their often brief and technical character, craft recipes had long been neglected by editors and ignored by literary scholars as too dry, monotonous, and diminutive for study, and more useful to historians tracing the use of certain materials, or conservators wishing to re-enact late medieval production techniques.[110] This has not been aided by previous cataloguing conventions, whereby recipes were often detached from their surrounding manuscript contexts in editions concerned with their typology, or listed in catalogues as 'recipes' with little speculation as to why they appear or how they may interact with contiguous texts.[111] Furthermore, the manuscripts which contain recipes themselves often prove difficult to classify. Often, cataloguers privilege longer texts when attempting to characterise these kinds of manuscripts' contents. When the variety of such manuscripts is acknowledged, there is a lack of consistency in describing manuscripts which contain practical or technical literature, and they are variously referred to as miscellanies, commonplace

[107] Neal R. Norrick, 'Recipes as Texts: Technical Language in the Kitchen', in *Sprache, Diskurs und Text: Akten des 17. Linguistischen Kolloquiums: Brüssel 1982, Bd. 1*, ed. by René Jongen, Sabine De Knop, Peter H. Nelde, and Marie-Paule Quix (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1983), pp. 173-183 (pp. 178-179).
[108] *CLMS*, p. 134 (ll. 19-20).
[109] *CLMS*, p. 149 (ll. 12-13).
[110] *CLMS*, p. xxxiii.
[111] For evidence of the Index of Middle English Prose's changing convention when recording recipes, see Henry Hargreaves, 'Some Problems in Indexing Middle English Recipes', in *Middle English Prose: Essays on Bibliographical Problems*, ed. by A.S.G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall (Garland: New York, 1981), pp. 91-113; Kari Anne Rand Schmidt, 'The Index of Middle English Prose and Late Medieval English Recipes', *English Studies*, 75 (1994), 423-429; Kari Anne Rand, 'The Index of Middle English Prose: An Assessment After Twenty Volumes', *Studia Neophilologica*, 86 (2014), 134-143.

books, and anthologies, each of which carry different preconceptions regarding the production, layout, contents, reader, and owner of the manuscript.[112] Some generalizations, however, can be made about the kind of books late medieval craft recipes appear in. Manuscripts which contain a substantial number of book craft recipes generally exhibit 'amateurish handwriting, initials, layout and illustrations', gesturing either towards an amateur maker, or cheap professional production.[113] It is rare that craft recipes form the sole subject of the manuscript; medical and cookery recipes are the only subcategory which ever monopolise on the entirety of a codex in late medieval manuscripts.[114] Instead, significant collections of craft recipes, and most other sub-types of recipe, are usually found within miscellanies, often appearing alongside texts related to household and estate management, such as horticultural guides, astronomical texts, devotional tracts, historical narratives, almanac material, and grammatical texts.

One example of the kind of manuscript containing book craft recipes is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 407, a broadly occupational book about whose owner an unusual amount of detail is known, as he tells us much of it himself. The manuscript belonged to Robert Reynes of Acle, Norfolk, who appears to have worked in a variety of municipal occupations, and was employed as church reeve, alderman to the guild of St Edmund, village justice, aide to the Lord of the Manor, and professional scribe.[115] The manuscript is comprised of at least three booklets bound together, most likely completed by one hand, and composed between 1470 and 1500.[116] The manuscript contains texts which may have practically aided Reynes in his work, such as details of taxation, oaths and legal cases, but it also records more idiosyncratic texts which might have helped him in his leisure time, including weather prognostications, charms, medical texts, family documents, catechistic mnemonic lists, historical excerpts, and prayers. Present alongside them are sporadic recipes for ink, glue and tempering which may have assisted him in the scribal skill required for his various professions, but do not point to his direct involvement in the book production trade.[117]

Another example, quite different from the previous, is that of the anonymously written Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 45. Comprised of five parts, this fifteenth-century manuscript

---

[112] For a discussion on the contents and descriptions of these kinds of manuscripts, see Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu, eds., *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain* (Oxford: British Academy, 2016).
[113] *CLMS*, p. xli.
[114] See, for example, *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery Books, Harleian Ms. 279 (ab. 1430), & Harl. Ms. 4016 (ab. 1450), with Extracts from Ashmole Ms. 1429, Laud Ms. 553, & Douce Ms. 55,* ed. by Thomas Austin, EETS S.S. 91 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1888); *Curye on Inglysch*, ed. by Constance B. Hieatt and Sharon Butler, EETS S.S. 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[115] Cameron Louis, ed., *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acle, An Edition of Tanner MS 407* (London: Garland Publishing, 1980), p. 29.
[116] Ibid., p. 25.
[117] For details regarding Reynes's scribal practice, see Carole M. Meale, 'Amateur Book Production and the Miscellany in Late Medieval East Anglia', in *Insular Books: Vernacular manuscript miscellanies in late Medieval Britain*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 157-174 (pp. 158-159); Daniel Wakelin, 'Urinals and Hunting Traps: Curating Fifteenth-Century Pragmatic Books', *New Medieval Literatures*, 20 (2020), 216-254 (230-231).

contains both English and Latin texts. The contents of the manuscript are extremely varied: part one comprises of medical recipes and arithmetical terms, part two Companus of Novara's *De Quadrante* followed by a treatise on the text, part three medical and craft recipes, part four tracts on physiognomy, anatomy, and chiromancy, and part five astrological treatises and poems. This manuscript contains a range of amateurish illustrations alongside its texts, including marginal drawings of faces which accompany the section on physiognomy, and drawings of palms illustrating the text on chiromancy. The contents of this manuscript are less occupationally motivated than those of Robert Reynes's book: the texts are not concerned with a particular trade but describe how and why different objects function. Significantly, all of the objects and phenomena which this manuscript is concerned with, such as plants, books, mathematical constructions, and human and celestial bodies, are everyday objects or occurrences. The detailed exploration of them offered in the manuscript, however, renders them fantastical. Their intricacy, unusual movements or reactions, and resultant impact on human action or thought, renders them interesting and, to a certain extent, *extra*-ordinary. MS Douce 45 can therefore be considered an encyclopaedic recording of materially exciting phenomena, and recipes pertaining to the book-crafting process are included among these fascinating materials.

These two manuscripts indicate two different kinds of imagined reader for the craft recipe: the practical user and the encyclopaedist.[118] This conforms to Lauren Braswell's assessment that the consumers of these texts were 'motivated on the one hand by *utilitas* and on the other by *curiositas*', with cross-sections of readers from all parts of late medieval society coveting the recipes as memoranda for accurate reproduction, encyclopaedic recordings, and texts of curiosity.[119] By extension, the products which these recipes create can also be considered objects of both *utilitas* and *curiositas*: material texts prove to be interesting to the late medieval reader because of their practicality, but also because of their material peculiarity. The two previously discussed manuscripts evidence this: Robert Reynes's manuscript gestures towards the practical use of such recipes, whilst MS Douce 45 presents the material text as an intriguing object. What they share, however, is an interest in the materiality of texts.

[118] For a more generalised consideration of recipe readers, see Linne R. Mooney, 'Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval Scientific and Utilitarian Texts', in *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A.G. Rigg* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 184–202.
[119] Laurel Braswell, 'Utilitarian and Scientific Prose', in *Middle English Prose, A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*, ed. by A.S.G. Edwards (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), pp. 337-388 (p. 337)

Material Texts in Craft Recipes

Moreover, it is important to stress the plurality of material texts represented in late medieval craft recipes. Included within these collections are, of course, instructions for making books and documents, but also directions for painting on wood or stone, marking woollen sacks, and chemically etching metal objects such as swords and knives. A significant characteristic of the book-craft recipe collection is its compendiousness: these recipes describe the creation of material texts which would not have been made by an individual professional. Professional book-craftspeople would have specialised in particular parts of the codex-construction process, with parchmenters, bookbinders, scribes, and illustrators, working in close proximity but independently of one another.[120] Other types of material texts, such as engraved metal objects, would have been made by metalworkers. The amateur craftsperson, however, could feasibly dabble in making, or thinking about the making of, a range of material texts. The compendiousness of the craft recipe collection allows these distinct and disunited craft processes to be considered in relation to one another, both in terms of their material qualities and their subsequent use. In the following analysis, I will consider how each of these material texts is described, and reflect on how their different material properties impacted medieval perceptions of different material texts, and lent themselves to the particular kinds of metaphorical use examined elsewhere in this thesis.

Most recipes in book-craft collections pertain to creating a codex, and correspondingly most material text metaphors used in late medieval devotional literature concern books (although, as later chapters of this thesis will stress, not all). Such recipes include directions for making parchment, staunchgrain, inks, pigments, ruling tools, glues, instructions for thread and leather dying, and methods for correcting a text. The range of materials required to make a codex renders them intricate objects which could be subject to a great deal of variety, from the selection of animal skin for the parchment to the ink colour of the illustration, and consequently suitable for a variety of metaphorical applications. But the individual material components of the book also offer the opportunity for more specific material analogues to be made. Parchment recipes, for example, often stress the need for the end product to be as smooth and white as possible. One recipe states that skin must be shaved on the flesh side 'until hit be al smothe', whilst another begins by promising that its method will 'make a parchemyn skyn of mothyn wiþouten scabbe', that is, it will make parchment skin of old sheep skin (mutton skin) without any scabbing or discolouration.[121] In one particularly detailed recipe for creating 'fyne velom', the instructions stress the need to lay old skins in water 'tyl þu see them nesche', *nesche* meaning soft or pliable, and to rub the skin with a knife 'to make hit liȝt and sowpul

[120] See Erik Kwakkel, 'Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 173-191; C. Christianson, 'The Rise of London's Book Trade', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol III, 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 128-157.
[121] *CLMS*, p. 134 (ll. 24-25); p. 143 (l. 13).

and tender and playn'.[122] Whilst these material changes create the best writing support for ink and pigments, they also inadvertently render the skin more materially similar to the pale, thin, and nearly hairless skin of humans: the coarse hair is removed from the dermis, the skin is thinned through scraping and stretching, and it is lightened through a series of chemical submersions. Indeed, the uncanny similarity of parchment to human skin was not lost on the late medieval authors, who often metaphorised tortured human skin as parchment in texts like the Charters of Christ poems, and various other lyrics explored in this thesis.[123] But it should be noted that it is the crafting process, rather than the animal skin itself, which elicits this connection.[124] It was the craft process which created the similitude between animal and human skin, and the book-craft recipe which expresses a desire for that likeness, unlike though parchment and skin were in their origin.

Often, the metaphors which compare human skin to parchment also equate writing to the wounding or incising of the skin, with blood metaphorised as ink. Staunchgrain (a greasy yet chalk-like substance used to brighten and even the texture of parchment) was a product applied in order to stop ink from dispersing when applied to parchment, a phenomenon which in the twenty-first century is commonly referred to as 'bleeding'. For example, one recipe describes staunchgrain as 'þat seruyth for scryveners for swagyng of letters', whilst another states that staunchgrain can be applied after writing 'yf þi ynke sqwage'.[125] Interestingly, both the terms *swaging* and *staunchen* were commonly employed in medical writing too, the former to describe the alleviation or stopping of pain, and the latter to describe the stopping of the flow of bodily fluids, namely blood.[126] For example, a recipe by Johannes de Vigo states that 'Leches or bloodsouckers, set vpon the veynes emorroidal, swage payne of the head maruelouslye', and one method in Roger of Parma's surgical treatise is entitled 'To staunch nose blode'.[127] Perhaps, then, it was not only the liquid quality of ink which led to it being used as a metaphor for blood, but also the fact that the same verb was used to describe the stopping of bodily pain or blood, and of ink flow.

Ink recipes themselves are exceedingly common in craft recipe collections. Many of these ink recipes claim that they make a 'gode' or 'fyne' product, qualitative adjectives which in the context of these ink recipes mean an ink that is richly coloured and thick, but fluid enough to sit well on the nib of a pen and adhere to the parchment. There are, for example, several recipes for creating a deep black ink that will make small lettering discernible:

---

[122] *CLMS*, pp. 289-290 (ll. 27; 31;6-5). *MED*, neshe (n.), senses 1a and 1c.
[123] See pp. 68-70 and pp. 79-80 of this thesis.
[124] Sarah Kay has argued that medieval conceptions of the skin, and of the relationship between the animal and the human, also encouraged this recognition, but there are no gestures to prompt a recognition of the shared animality of the skin in late medieval recipe texts. See *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 1-22.
[125] *CLMS*, p. 123 (ll. 12-13); p. 223 (l. 16).
[126] *MED*, swaging(e (ger.), sense 3b; staunchen (v.), sense 1a, b, and c.
[127] Juhani Norri, *Dictionary of Vocabulary in Middle English, 1375-1550: Body Parts, Sicknesses, Instruments, and Medical Preparations, Part I and II* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2016), pp. 110, 107.

> If a lettyr be wryt wyth a ryght smal penne þe whyche schewith nat hitselfe to be redde for wantynge of blacknes and for smallness of the letteres, thus þu schalt make hit blacke.[128]

Likewise, another recipe explains the problem of applying a weakly coloured or watery ink, stating that 'ȝif hit be to weeke þen hit wol make þe kolur to vade'.[129] Similarly, recipes for gum, which was used as a thickener in inks and pigments, often describe how it will improve the quality of the pre-gummed stained water. One recipe helpfully explains how to avoid making a poor-quality ink:

> make it not ouer cleveand of gum for þen it is yll forto werke with, and yȝfe it be to weyke of þe gum þen wylle þe colour fade and fall of. [130]

Creating a long-lasting, clearly legible ink was evidently a concern for the late medieval writer, and this anxiety is reflected in the sermons analysed in this thesis, particularly in the sermon for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene in which the sermoniser states that God's word should be written in 'þe lasting ynk of parfyte drede'.[131] The writerly concern with creating a long-lasting ink, as expressed in this recipe, is metaphorically transposed in devotional writing to express how the word of God should be understood as indelible.

Conversely, book-craft recipe collections also contain instructions for erasing or correcting ink-penned text. One recipe for staunchgrain describes how it can also be used to 'amende thy parchement and make hyt to [re]sseyve inke'.[132] The recipe states that:

> whan þu wylte, sawe hyt thynne on þi boke and rubbe hyt over with thy hande, and write then, and when all ys drye, with a wollyn clothe so þu may gete hyt owte of þi parchement, and þi writing noþer the worse.[133]

Another recipe emphasises its ability to cover a scribal error without using a pumice stone to rub the lettering away. This recipe does not describe itself as a kind of staunchgrain, but rather a recipe 'To done away what is ywreten in velym or parchment without any pomyce'.[134] It goes on to describe how this correction can be achieved:

> When þu wolt do awey with the lettre, wete a pensel with spotil or with water, and moist þerwith þe lettres þat þou wilt do awey, and þen cast þe powder þervpon, and with þi nail þu maist done awey þe lettres þat hit schal nothing been asene, without any aperyrement.[135]

Correspondingly, devotional literature contains many metaphors of scribal correction, whereby the act of textual emendation is made comparable to behavioural correction.[136] This is, like the metaphors for

[128] *CLMS*, p. 91 (ll. 18-20).
[129] *CLMS*, p. 71 (ll. 5-6).
[130] *CLMS*, p. 193 (ll. 33-35).
[131] See pp. 114-118 of this thesis.
[132] *CLMS*, p. 80 (l. 35).
[133] *CLMS*, p. 81 (ll. 1-4).
[134] *CLMS*, p. 307 (ll. 12-13).
[135] Ibid., (ll. 16-20).
[136] See Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 32-39.

lasting texts, often found in sermons, where a preacher describes how the writing of the devil might be erased in favour of those of Christ.[137]

There are also a range of recipes for other material texts. These recipes appear with less frequency than those pertaining to books or documents, but their inclusion in book-craft recipe collections attests to their encyclopedism. These material texts range in their application, some gesturing towards more decorative use, whilst others are distinctly practical. Many recipes, for example, explain how to gild letters on various surfaces. One recipe describes how to gild letters on 'parchemyn, burd, or leþer', but states that this lettering should not be allowed to get wet after application.[138] Another recipe for gilding letters on parchment declares that it can be altered to be suitable for making 'lettyrs on a borde'.[139] Others describe how to make a paint for writing on *freston*, a fine-grained stone, and how 'To make curyus warke on glass wyndosse'.[140] These kinds of textual decorations would have adorned the interior of late medieval churches, which would have contained rood screens, painted wooden boards with the names of church benefactors or parts of the liturgical service, gilded and painted sculptures, wall paintings, and elaborate stained glass windows.[141] Indeed, there are many examples in this thesis of texts whose metaphors of material texts are clearly influenced by these kinds of church decorations, which provide a clear link between devotion and perceptions of the material text.

Other recipes, however, indicate more a practical use at first glance, such as the recipes 'Forto make ynke to merke with wolle sakkes'.[142] The merchant's marks made on sacks of wool, which could feature letters or pictorial designs, would indicate whom the wool was owned by and attest to its quality and weight (by the fifteenth century, a 'woolsack' was a standardised weight of three-hundred and sixty-four pounds).[143] But, as Thomas Kittel writes of the merchant marks found in medieval manuscripts, these marks went beyond simply indicating ownership: they were also expressions of self-fashioning which endeavoured to display the owner's education, munificence, piety, and social and professional standing (whether actualised or aspirational).[144] This recipe for writing on wool sacks, then, indicates a curiosity in, or professional requirement for, the expression of identity through concise graphic representation. This is an impulse reflected in many of the examples examined in the

[137] See pp. 112-113 of this thesis.
[138] *CLMS*, p. 309 (l. 22)
[139] *CLMS*, p. 94 (l. 25).
[140] *CLMS*, p. 314 (l. 17); p. 315 (l. 14).
[141] For a detailed analysis of how congregations engaged with the decorated interior of the church space, see Laura Varnam, *The Church as Sacred Space in Middle English Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).
[142] *CLMS*, p. 122 (l. 11).
[143] Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 'Woolsack', in *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and Maria Hayward (Leiden: Brill, 2012) <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2197/10.1163/2213-2139_emdt_SIM_000833> [Date Accessed: 06.08.2021].
[144] Thomas Kittel, 'Early Modern Merchant's Marks in Medieval English Manuscripts', *Renaissance Studies*, 34 (2019), 208-227. See also Matthew Campion, *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches* (London: Ebury Press, 2015), pp. 133-139 for the appearance of merchant's marks in churches. The implications of seals for pragmatic literacy in the late medieval period is explored more thoroughly on pp. 60-64.

chapter on lyrics, whereby the symbol of the cross is sometimes marked in place of the word, and the 'ABC' of the alphabet becomes synonymous with Christ's passion as well as the early stages of literacy.[145]

Significantly, the Middle English verb *marken* can apply to a variety of actions enacted on various objects: it can refer to the carving of stone, the stamping of metal, the embroidering of fabric, the drawing or painting of decorative designs, the writing of words, letters, or numbers, the securing of seals, and the gesture of marking the cross on the body.[146] Indeed, many of the references and metaphors in this thesis evidence these various kinds of marking. For example, the *Long* and *Short Charters of Christ* metaphorize the marking of Christ's body at the crucifixion with the sealing of a charter document, Lydgate's lyric 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ' states that Christ's entrails are 'Marked tho karectys' (l.288), and the lyric 'Revertere' describes a proliferation of briar leaves which are miraculously marked with the Latin verb *revertere*, 'turn again'.[147] Each of these instances are concerned with the marking of materials which would not be considered conventional textual supports (such as human bodies and leaves), much like the book-craft recipes which offer directions for writing on materials other than documents or books (such as woollen sacks, metal knives, and glass windows). Perhaps, then, the compendiousness of the book-craft recipes, which often included surprising materials, encouraged more imaginative conceptions of material texts in which signs were imagined as material marks.

Three Prefaces to Book-Craft Recipe Collections

Analysing the contents of recipes, as this chapter has shown so far, is important for ascertaining how the material text was perceived and figured in other writings, but this can be enriched through a consideration of the paratexts which accompany these texts, too. Gérard Genette influentially described the paratext as any writing which surrounds the main body of a text, and noted its propensity to act as a transactional space where the relationship between author, reader, and text is negotiated.[148] Prefaces, as paratexts which appear before recipe collections, shape how the reader perceives and interacts with the recipes that follow it. An analysis of the preface can go some way to reveal who the imagined reader of the recipes is (what is their gender, their occupation, their societal status?), what kind of authority the recipes claim to expound (are they figured as revelations of secret knowledge, or are they noted as important information for the running of an excellent household?),

[145] See pp. 92-94 of this thesis.
[146] *MED*, marken (v.), senses 2a and c; 5a and b; 6a and b; 7a and b.
[147] See pp. 102-107 of this thesis.
[148] Gérard Genette and Marie Maclean, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22 (1991), 261-272 (261). See also Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

and how the reader is encouraged to interact with a text (are these practical instructions or encyclopaedic recordings?). They can also, as Patrizia Carmazzi writes, shape how the reader perceives the book as a conceptual material object.[149] In the following analysis, I have selected three prefaces to book-craft recipe collections which characterise the readers of book-craft recipes, and material texts themselves, in different ways.

The preface to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.506 stresses the written book-craft recipes' ability to teach the reader crafting skills without the need for practical demonstration. This early fifteenth-century manuscript is comprised of many different texts, including medical and veterinary texts, treatises on grafting and hawking, charms, carols, and one-hundred and nine craft recipes, and George R. Keiser speculates that it was likely read and compiled by a member of the gentry or his chaplain.[150] Interestingly, this manuscript was used as a repository for the herbs listed in its herbal glossary, which is evidenced by the remnants of dried plants in its guttering and spine, some of which correspond to the entries in the herbal.[151] The preface for the collection of craft recipes is ambitious, and promises the reader competency through the careful reading of these recipes alone:

> Here begynnyth þe manner of staynyng and þe vaters therfor. What man can porterid and vil lorne to stayne, he may do aftir þis boke, withowt techyng, of all þat longyth þertoo.[152]

This preface asserts that these recipes will allow the reader to create material texts 'withowt techyng', that is, without an instructional figure present, and bolsters the claim that these recipes were used by amateurs who wished to craft their own material texts, but did not have access to, and or did not wish to seek, practical professional guidance. The myriad comprehension errors in the recipes likewise gesture to an amateur recorder who had no practical understanding of the book-making process. For example, in a recipe for creating a green ink, the scribe writes that adding more verdigris will create a lighter green, when it will in fact make it darker. The collection also includes a description of the ideal space for this kind of work, 'ȝyf þu wylt be a steynour þu must have a large howse and a lyȝgth', and an insufficient list of tools which the maker would need, 'a rewle, and a cumpasse, and a squyere, and many strenchis grete and smale', which likewise signal only a superficial understanding of what is required to make these products.[153]

Significantly, the recipes recorded in this manuscript do not only pertain to 'þe manner of staynyng and þe vaters therfor', but a range of material texts. These include instructions for how 'To

---

[149] Patricia Carmazzi, 'Book Material, Production, and Use from the Point of View of the Paratext', in *Inscribing Knowledge in the Medieval Book: The Power of Paratexts,* ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant, Patrizia Carmassi, Gisela Drossbach, Anne D. Hedeman, Victoria Turner and Iolanda Ventura (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2020), pp. 304-330 (p. 314).
[150] George Keiser, 'Practical Books for the Gentleman', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol III, 1400-1557,* ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 470-494 (pp. 482-483).
[151] Mooney, 'Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval Scientific and Utilitarian Texts', p. 196.
[152] *CLMS*, p. 163 (ll. 31-33).
[153] *CLMS*, p. 361; p. 164 (ll. 1-2); p. 164 (ll. 7-8).

write yn a swarde', how 'To make glewe for bokys', and how to make 'good ynke for cort letters', Clark noting that *cort* could either refer to legal document, or *carte*, paper.[154] The recipes in this manuscript, far from being a focussed only on staining as the preface claims, are a compendious collection which pertain to a range of material texts, including books, documents, and chemically etched metals. Consequently, this preface and the contents of the recipes themselves gesture towards a readership who were not professional crafts people, but who were fascinated by craft processes of a range of material texts that were considered contiguous, although they were made of different materials and used for different purposes.

A different kind of preface precedes the craft recipes found in the notebook of London mercer John Colyns and reveals how the material text, by the end of the late medieval period, was a liminal object which sat at the juncture between the professional and the personal.[155] The early sixteenth-century manuscript contains a range of Middle English poems and prose, including complaints, petitions, weather prognostications, and some items in Latin, which are recorded by Colyns himself and eleven other scribes.[156] The book is organised around two romances, *Ipomydon* and the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*, which were not copied by Colyns, but rather produced as booklets in 1460 and 1480 by two professional scribes. The relationship between the other scribes and Colyns is harder to determine, but as Carol M. Meale shows, it is clear that Colyns determined both the selection and the order of the texts present in his notebook.[157] The notebook itself represents a joint endeavour, with many hands working to make an idiosyncratic notebook for an individual, who himself was also involved in its penning. As Carrie Griffin writes, 'the book inhabits an interesting space: it is indebted to formal, workshop-produced material for its core, but its substance is a homemade book, one that, moreover, Colyns is keen to present as the result of his personal endeavours'.[158]

As a material text itself, then, John Colyns's book is both a professionally crafted and a homemade object, and this understanding of the material text is reflected in the preface to its craft recipes, which were copied by Colyns himself. The preface states:

> Here begynnythe the crafte of lymmyng. Fyrste howe thow shalte temper al thy colors to lymme with bokes, how to make sise, and how þu shalte make a syse to cowche gold or siluer, and to make all manner of colowrs both lyghte and sadde, and forto make all texte ynke and all hoþer ynke, and to write in goled of syluer owte of the penne and all hoþer metall þat wyl be grounden or desolvyd with lycoure, with many hother craftes þat be nedefull for a lymnour to haue.[159]

[154] *CLMS*, p. 175 (l. 5); p. 175 (l. 7), p. 177 (ll. 1-2), p. 362.
[155] London, British Library, MS Harley 2252.
[156] Carol M. Meale, 'London, British Library, Harley MS 2252, John Colyns' "Boke": Structure and Content', *English Manuscript Studies*, 15 (2009), 65-122 (71-77).
[157] Ibid., p. 77.
[158] Carrie Griffin, *Instructional Writing in English, 1350-1650* (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 86.
[159] *CLMS*, p. 73, ll. 12-18 (London, British Library, MS Harley 2252, f. 142^{r}).

This preface promises a digest of the book-crafting process which is limited to the skills 'nedefull for a lymnour to haue', and indeed, unlike the previous example, the recipes of John Colyns' book do not extend beyond recipes for illustration. However, like the previous example, there are several errors in the text which indicate that Colyns himself possessed a 'lack of technical knowledge'.[160]

Yet while the recipes are not technically accurate, they are more readable than many other examples. There is an unusual degree of narrativization through the use of summaries, which punctuate the individual recipes in order to reiterate the previous material more succinctly and offer a sense of cohesion. One such summative paragraph begins, 'Here I shall reherse to the shortly all þat I haue sayd to the before craftelye', and it is followed by a truncated synopsis of the recipes which preceded it.[161] The use of the verb *rehersen* here is significant in the characterisation of these recipes, as the term is often employed mean the repetition of a narrative.[162] For example, in the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* the Host warns that if any competitor repeats a story that they have been previously told, they should do so with the utmost precision: 'Whose shal telle a tale after a man,/ He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan/ Everich a word, if it be in his charge'.[163] Unlike many other recipe texts, John Colyns's collection employs a consistent first-person narrative voice which directly addresses the reader. Whether the voice of the instructions is intended to be that of Colyns himself is uncertain, but the repetition of 'Here I shall tell the…' at the beginning of each recipe establishes a sense of narrative and textual self-consciousness, which is often lacking in more telegraphic examples. This brief repetition would have less use for the practical craftsperson, who would require extensively detailed instructions, than for the interested reader who might benefit from pithy precis that explains how each recipe benefits the completion of the text. Perhaps, in this instance, Colyns was influenced by the literary character of some of the other works included in his notebook. Whether this is the case or not, Colyns has presented these book-craft recipes as fascinating insights into the illustration process, of interest to the amateur reader who seeks a compelling narrative over technical instruction.

Another kind of preface precedes the craft recipes recorded in two fifteenth-century composite manuscripts, both of which are categorised by Clarke as belonging to the *Limning B Family*, and which, accordingly, contain many of the same recipes.[164] The preface is as follows:

> Here begynnyth the crafte of lymnyng of bokes. Who so canne wysly consider þe nature of hys colouris and kindly make his commixtions with natural proporcions, and mental indagacions connectyng fro diuerse recepcions by reason of þer naturis, he schal make curius colouris *et cetera*.[165]

[160] *CLMS*, p. 345.
[161] *MED*, craftili (adv.), senses 1a, b, and c.
[162] *MED*, rehersen (v.), sense 1, all senses.
[163] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 3-328 (ll. 731-733).
[164] New Haven, Yale Centre for British Art, MS R486.M43, and Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn 2.I (formerly known as MS Porkington 10).
[165] *CLMS*, p. 88 (ll. 1-6).

The polysyllabic, Latinate nouns used in this preface, such as 'commixtions', 'proporcions', and 'indagacions', characterise these recipes as the domain of the learned, or at least those who desire to be perceived as such. Indeed, the preface specifies that these recipes are reserved for those who can 'wysly consider' and 'kindly make' their products. These two adverbs, 'wysly' and 'kindly', indicate the need for an intelligent and careful reader or amateur craftsperson, but also gesture towards the pseudo-scientific and esoteric nature of craft recipes: the Middle English adjective *wise* was often used to describe an individual who exhibited spiritual insight or trickster-like cunning, and *kindeli* was often employed to describe that which is made according to the laws of nature.[166] Knowledge of the natural world proves to be a preoccupation of this preface. The six lines of the preface contain three references to 'nature': 'þe nature of hys colouris', 'natural proporcions', and the 'naturis' of colours. Used in this context, the term 'nature' refers to the material qualities of an object, how it reacts with other materials, and how it can be transformed into a useful craft ingredient. Consequently, the material text is characterised as a materially fascinating object which requires the reader to have a working knowledge of the natural world in order to construct them.

The preface also stresses the importance of an inquiring and educated mind. It states that its readers should be those who can perform 'mental indagacions connectyng fro diuerse recepcions by reason of þer naturis'. This may be the third earliest example of the term 'mental' in Middle English writing, the first being by Hoccleve in 'Lerne to Dye' and his framing *Dialogue*, and his verse translation of the Latin prose *Ars Moriendi*, which was written c.1422.[167] These recipes are characterised as intellectually fascinating, and require the reader to draw upon their knowledge and imaginations in order to comprehend how they might enact the processes the recipes detail. The closing of the preface likewise seals the character of the material text as a curious, pseudo-scientific object: the pigments, inks, and stains which the recipes make are described as 'curius colouris'. The adjective *curious* could here have multiple applicable definitions: it can mean something that is rendered artistically or according to a particular technique, to make something splendid, sophisticated, or abstruse, or even something pertaining to the magical or occult.[168] Each of these diverse definitions share a concern with skill and knowledge, as well as a preoccupation with things whose qualities or actions are not immediately discernible, or understandable. The processes and products of these recipes, then, are framed as being interesting intellectual studies, as well as practical experiments, in craft materials. In comparison with the content of John Colyns' book, this preface and recipe collection are more invested in the material properties of texts, which can be both materially realised and imagined in the mind of the reader. Furthermore, unlike John Colyns' book, but like the first example, the kinds of material texts included within the recipe collection also extend beyond those of the paper or parchment codex, and include instructions for painting gold 'lettyrs on a borde', and 'To

[166] *MED*, wise (adv.), senses 1a (b), (d); kindeli (adv.), senses 1a and b.
[167] *MED*, mental (adj.), associated quotations (a).
[168] *MED*, curious (adj.), all senses.

wryte on a swerde or on a knyfe'. In this preface, the material text is figured as an object which operates at the hinterland of the scientific and esoteric.

Each of these prefaces, and the recipes which follow them, reveals a different conception of the material text. The first example from MS Rawlinson C.506 shows that varied kinds of material text were often considered in conjunction with one another: the book was placed in proximity to the inscribed metal object, and the inscribed metal object to the document. The preface to John Colyns's book reveals that readers perceived the crafting process of the material text fascinating and worthy of narrativization, even if they were not intending to make them themselves. The final preface from the *Limning B Family* illustrates that material texts were also perceived as objects which operated in the liminal space between the practical and the fantastical, and which could expose how the natural world functioned.

Books of Secrets: Secrecy, Illusion, Magic, and the Divine

Indeed, the book-craft recipes' relation to the pseudo-scientific and esoteric is also evidenced within the material text recipes themselves. As Pamela O. Long has recognised, craft recipes are texts concerned with the secrets of the natural world, that is, the ways in which materials interact with one another which are not immediately comprehensible.[169] Indeed, the Middle English term *secret* could refer to knowledge that was hidden from human understanding, such as natural wonders and divine mysteries.[170] As later examples in this thesis show, material texts are often invoked in order to imply divine secrecy or, conversely, revelation. Book-craft recipes, through their manuscript contexts and language, reveal how material texts could be perceived as objects imbued with secrecy, illusion, and in some cases magic or divine power.

The illusionistic or magical sense of the material text explains why craft recipes are found alongside, and sometimes overlap with, practical jokes. Practical jokes and illusions were a popular form of entertainment in the late medieval period.[171] Unlike rhetorical jokes which rely on the manipulation of language, practical jokes are those which can be enacted through action, movement, and the manipulation of material objects. Late medieval practical jokes and illusions came in different forms, from expensive and elaborate courtly performances, to cup-and-ball stands at fairs, and tricks played between friends.[172] One of the best-known literary attestations to the late medieval interest in

[169] Pamela O. Long, 'Invention, Secrecy, and Theft: Meaning and Context in the Study of Late Medieval Technical Transmission', *History and Technology*, 16 (2000), 223-241.
[170] *MED*, secret (n.), sense 1b.
[171] Bruno Roy, 'The Household Encyclopaedia as Magic Kit: Medieval Popular Interest in Pranks and Illusions', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 14 (1980), 60-69.
[172] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 90-94; Christa Agnes Tuczay, 'Medieval Magicians as Entertainers: Magic as Demonic Illusion or Stagecraft',

magic tricks is found in Chaucer's 'The Franklin's Tale', where the brother of Aurelius, the Orléans clerk, is twice named as a practitioner of 'magyk natureel' (l. 1125; l. 1155) and likened to 'tregetoures' (l. 1141), sleight-of-hand entertainers.[173] He is characterised as a skilled illusionist, and is described as capable of producing elaborate visions which can disappear as he 'clapte his handes two' (l. 1203).[174] This is not to say, however, that this kind of entertainment was regarded as frivolous or superficial. Indeed, many texts which document practical tricks include other pseudo-scientific instructional material pertaining to medicine, alchemy, astrology, chiromancy, and physiognomy, and are often prefaced with claims to their importance to the serious investigator of the natural world. The manuscripts which contain these kinds of materials are referred to by William Eamon as *libri secretorum* or 'books of secrets'.[175] The content of these books of secrets operate in the liminal space between the practical and educative, and the esoteric and fantastical. This is exemplified by the Latin *Secretum philosophorum.* an Aristotelian pseudepigrapha originally written in Arabic and fully translated into Latin between 1300 and 1350.[176] The popular text is framed as a treatise on the Seven Liberal Arts, but is preoccupied with multidisciplinary tricks, secret knowledge, and illusionism, and includes a number of book-craft recipes. The entire text is framed as an exposure of secret knowledge, the proheme reading as follows:

> Iste liber quem per manibus habemus vocatur Secretum Philosophorum, et intitulatur isto nomine quia in eo continentur quedam secreta que reputatione vulgari sunt impossibilia, apud philosophos secreta et necessaria.
>
> This book which we have in our hands is called *The Secret of the Philosophers* and is entitled with this name because in it are contained certain 'secrets' that are reputed by the vulgar to be impossible but which by philosophers [are reputed to be] secret and important.[177]

As John B. Friedman writes, this proheme defines the brand of secrecy contained within the text as a rejection of the occult and nefarious, and an invitation 'to those who contemplate the wonders of

---

in *Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Cultural-Historical Perspectives on Toys, Games, and Entertainment*, ed. by Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 161-188.

[173] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Franklin's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 178-190. *MED*, tregetour (n.), sense 1a.

[174] On the representation of magic in 'The Franklin's Tale', see Anthony E. Luengo, 'Magic and Illusion in "The Franklin's Tale"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 77 (1978), 1-16; William Sayers, 'Tregetours in "The Franklin's Tale": Stage Magic and Stage Machines', *Notes and Queries*, 56 (2009), 341-345.

[175] Pamela O. Long, *Openness, Secrecy, and Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to Renaissance* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 83; William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature, Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 16.

[176] Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Careers of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 7.

[177] Mark Clarke, 'Writing Recipes for Non-Specialists c.1300: the Anglo-Latin *Secretum philosophorum*, Glasgow MS Hunterian 110', in *Sources and Serendipity, Testimonies of Artists' Practice: Proceedings of the third symposium of the Art Technological Source Working Research Group*, ed. by Erma Hermens and Joyce H. Townsend (London: Archetype, 2009), pp. 50-64 (p. 52).

nature in a disinterested and speculative way'.[178] It can be argued, then, that book-craft recipes are included in collections of secretive texts not because they reveal nefarious or magical processes, but reveal knowledge pertaining to the natural world. Material texts, likewise, could be considered objects which are crafted from the natural world, and consequently exhibit their chemical and physical properties in or wonderous ways.

Indeed, the material text is often shown to be an object which operates in the liminal space between practicality and wondrousness. The manuscript known to modern scholars as *The Tollemache Book of Secrets,* a domestic compendium of instructional texts compiled in the late fifteenth or early-sixteenth century at Helmingham in Suffolk, contains book-craft recipes in close proximity to esoteric charms.[179] Much of the Tollemache family's book's contents are relevant to the management or interests of a large wealthy household, and it includes texts on tree grafting and gardening, hawking, lacemaking, carving, and medicinal recipes for both humans and animals. It also contains a significant number of Latin charms and prognostications which range from the plausible to the bizarre, and includes charms for how to become invisible, and how to mindread.[180] The book-craft recipes contained within the manuscript are dispersed throughout, but always appear in groups. The scribe of the book was evidently interested in book-crafts and visual design, as the manuscript contains drawings of geometric patterns and the occasional amateur decorated initials, as well as a price list of pigments. Many of the book craft recipe texts are conventional, and contain directions for making inks and pigments, glues, gilding, and etching in metal. There are also two rarer recipe examples: one describing how to trace an image using a 'lant*er*nys horne', and another detailing how to 'glev levis ȝe qwych be torne'.[181] It has been speculated that the inclusion of craft recipes in the book is perhaps reflective of Helmingham being a significant local centre for the production of manuscripts in the early sixteenth century, as other highly illustrated manuscripts are believed to have been made here.[182] The Tollemaches's book, however, still recognises the material text as a potential source of esoteric entertainment. Some of the charms in the manuscript concern material texts, or include them as an ingredient. For example, one of the more mundane Latin charms promises to make faded or invisible letters legible through the application of *sepum rubeum* (red grease), whilst another claims that placing a piece of parchment marked with a special sequence of letters on a wounded person will staunch the flow of blood.[183] A further example states that the charm-maker's enemies will be put to flight if a *folio laurio* (a bay leaf) is inscribed with the names of the three archangels.[184] In these

[178] John B. Friedman, 'Safe Magic and Invisible Writing in the *Secrectum philosophorum*', in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. by Claire Fanger (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), pp. 76-86 (p. 78).
[179] Jeremy Griffiths and A.S.G. Edwards, ed., *The Tollemache Book of Secrets, A Descriptive Index and Complete Facsimile* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 2001), p. 4.
[180] Ibid., p. 46.
[181] Ibid., p. 44.
[182] Ibid., pp. 5-7. See also Nicholas Barker, ed., *Two East Anglian Picture Books: A Facsimile of the Helmingham Herball and Bestiary and Bodleian MS. Ashmole 1504* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 1988).
[183] Griffiths and Edwards, *The Tollemache Book*, pp. 48-49.
[184] Ibid., p. 49.

examples, the material text becomes an agent of thaumaturgy, although it is not clear whether its effectiveness is secured by magical or divine intervention. Whilst the book-craft recipes show the material text to be an everyday object, the material text's appearances in these charms nonetheless figure them as objects capable of channelling supernatural powers.

The recipe examples examined here illustrate that the material text, as well as being a considered an object formed from earthly materials with human hands, was also perceived an object made from wonderous materials, and which could possess thaumaturgic power or channel divine influence. This conception of the material text as both mundane and magical, practical and divine, is evidenced throughout the devotional texts analysed in this thesis. The material text proves to be an object which always has the potential to become more than an everyday object. As Margert Aston puts it, 'for all the everydayness of some kinds of reading and writing and texts, there was still a sacred aspect to letters' and, by extension, the material texts which contained them.[185]

Thinking Materially in Book Craft Recipes

Yet though these recipes suggest that material texts were thought to embody magic or wondrous forces, the recipes also reveal the relationship of material texts to other everyday objects, another feature which devotional works allude to. One notable feature of the book-craft recipe is its propensity to make use of readily available household products, whether they are foodstuffs, clothing, or human bodily waste. Material texts were themselves also recycled to make new material texts or other objects entirely. The material text, then, was part of a continual cycle of making and remaking and was consequently associated with other material objects which created it, and which it could create. Craft recipes offer one means through which the complex objecthood of the material text might be understood, as they expose the many material and conceptual connections made between ingredients and end-products, and encourage the reader to think *materially* about the component parts of the material text. I argue that the material text's ability to transform from, or into, other material objects directly impacted its metaphorical representation in Middle English literature, as the flexible materiality of the material text lent itself to rhetorical elasticity through metaphor or image.

The material malleability of the material text is perhaps best illustrated through recipes concerning parchment. Recipes which describe how to make parchment, both from the skins of sheep and from cows, are relatively common. In Clarke's collection, however, there are over three times as many recipes which use parchment as an ingredient than there are for making parchment itself.[186]

---

[185] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), p. 195.

[186] Clarke's collection contains five recipes for the creation of parchment, and sixteen recipes for craft-products which use parchment as an ingredient.

Hannah Ryley has extensively explored the sustainability, recycling, and reuse of parchment within medieval manuscripts, and explains that waste parchment was regularly repurposed as quire-guards, pastedowns, or wrappers.[187] But her evidence for this kind of reuse in other books is gleaned from the material texts themselves rather than recipe collections, as this kind of recycling would likely be performed by the professional book-binder. There were plenty of documented recipes, however, for turning parchment into something else entirely: for instance, it could be turned into a deep black ink through burning it and then combining it with a liquid, which could easily be performed by the expenditure-conscious or amateur scribe. In one recipe, which is given the heading 'If a lettyr be wryt with a ryght smal penne', the reader is required to 'Take parchemyne that ys olde wryten and brenne it all to colys and grynde hit small'.[188] Here, the recipe specifically requires an 'olde' material text for the creation of a new one.

Sometimes, however, parchment is used as an ingredient to make items which are not material texts, the most common of which is the making of imitation cheverel gloves. This mock kid-skin leather is supposedly made by re-saturating parchment and can, in the words of one recipe, be made from 'gode parchemyn newe or oolde, whеþer þat hit be wryten or vnwryten'.[189] Like recipes for parchment, several recipes for making the gloves are often given in a single collection: for instance, one manuscript provides two recipes with different quality specifications, one to make the mock-leather 'hastly', and the other 'But forto make hit god and þryfty and fayle nat'.[190] These recipes for mock-cheverel appear somewhat dubious: it is unlikely that re-saturated parchment would make a suitable leather for crafting gloves, and lack of surviving archaeological evidence also supports the supposition that this recipe was not practically enacted, or only produced poor-quality and ephemeral gloves.[191] But this material connection between clothing and material texts is significant. Indeed, the proximity of clothing to the body means that the two are often indistinguishable from one another, as clothing becomes an extension of the body's identity. Interestingly, one fourteenth-century manuscript which contains two recipes for making mock-cheverel gloves also contains two Latin treatises on chiromancy, the practice of predicting the future through examining the appearance of the palm.[192] These texts are a compelling foil to the recipe for turning a material text into a glove: whilst chiromancy concerns the 'reading' of the palm of the hand, the craft recipe advocates removing the writing from parchment in order to create a hand-warmer.

---

[187] See Hannah Ryley, 'Waste Not, Want Not: The Sustainability of Medieval Manuscripts', *Green Letters*, 19 (2015), 63-74; Hannah Ryley, 'Constructive Parchment Destruction in Manuscripts', *Book 2.0*, 7 (2017), 9-19.
[188] *CLMS*, p. 91 (ll. 18-20).
[189] *CLMS*, p. 33 (ll. 20-21).
[190] *CLMS*, p. 261 (l. 15).
[191] I have combed through various exhibition and museum catalogues pertaining to the British Museum, The Victoria & Albert Museum, The Museum of London, The Fitzwilliam Museum, The Ashmolean, and the Musée du Moyen Age, and have found no evidence of what is recognisably this type of glove.
[192] See Paul Acker and Eriko Amino, 'The Book of Palmistry', in *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England*, ed. by Lister M. Matheson (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1994), pp. 141-184.

The close connection between material texts and bodily clothing is attested to in artistic and material culture. A range of material texts were worn on the body: vestments could be embroidered with the Holy Monogram, girdle books could be worn at the waist, textual amulets could be carried in pockets, and jewellery could be inscribed. Moreover, codices in particular used textiles and textile products in their construction: binding could incorporate textile decoration, a book's quires were sewn together with thread, embroidery threads could be used to close or exaggerate parchment tears, and to insert small 'curtains' to protect illustrations.[193] More surprisingly, extant garments from the medieval period show that material texts were used to create clothing, too. For example, a thirteenth-century Danish bishop's mitre was found to be lined with parchment, on which a Norwegian translation of an Old French poem, 'The Lai of Two Lovers' is clearly legible, and used parchment has been found inside the dresses used to decorate sculptures on feast days by the nuns of the Cistercian nunnery of Wienhausen.[194]

Middle English devotional literature draws attention to the shared material properties of material texts and clothing, but also exploits their conceptual connections, too. Parchment and clothing materials such as leather and skins were both crafted from the skins of animals, and were made using some of the same ingredients and techniques, as documented in craft recipe texts. In Lydgate's poem *The Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep*, the material value of the sheep as both a source of leather and skins, and as parchment is expressed in the same stanza:

> There is also mad of the shepes skynne
> Pilches and gloves to drive away the cold;
> Therof also is made good parchemyn,
> To write on bookis and quaires manyfold. (ll. 365-368)[195]

Here, the sheep argues for its superiority over the horse and the goose by emphasising its body's material flexibility, as its skin can be made to create both gloves and 'also' (l. 367) parchment. Its reference to 'good parchemyn' (l. 367) also evokes the qualitative language of craft recipes, too. This material point of connection is also often represented as a conceptual one, with clothing and books both figuring as objects to be 'read', in that they both reveal information. This is best expressed through in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, whereby Margery's bookish accessories, such as the prayer book she carries despite her claim of illiteracy and her inscribed ring, and her unusual sartorial

---

[193] See Christine Sciacca, 'Raising the Curtain on the Use of Textiles in Manuscripts', in *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing: Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Barbara Baert and Kathryn M. Rudy (Turhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 161-190.
[194] The mitre is catalogued as Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, MS AM 666 b 4to. See Peter Springborg, 'Courtly Love Under a Bishop's Mitre?' (2017) <https://manuscript.ku.dk/motm/courtly-love-under-the-bishops-mitre/> [Date Accessed: 07.10.2021]. For more detail regarding the parchment found in the nun's statue-dresses, see Henrike Lähnemann, 'Text und Textil. Die beschriebenen Pergamente in den Figurenornaten', in *Heilige Röcke. Kleider für Skulpturen in Kloster Wienhausen*, ed. by Charlotte Klack-Eitzen, Wiebke Haase and Tanja Weißgraf (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2013), pp. 71-78.
[195] John Lydgate, 'The Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, vol. II, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E.S. 192 (London: Keagan Paul, 1934), pp. 539-540.

choices, can be understood as an attempt by Margery to be 'read' as devout by the various communities she encounters.[196]

But bodies themselves could also be figured as texts, and this was perhaps encouraged by the book-craft recipes which sometimes include human body excretions among their ingredients. These recipes are not visually marked to indicate that they include human products, nor are they rare in appearance, but are instead included in part of the expected material remit of craft recipes. Earwax (sometimes termed *eresope* in Middle English) is found in recipes for size, an adhesive for gilded lettering, and is added in order to remove bubbles from the end product.[197] Human urine appears even more commonly. Referred to variously as *pysse* or *vryne*, this human excretion was often employed to make *synoper*, a red pigment. In one recipe for *synoper* an enormous amount of urine is required, the recipe specifying that '3 galons of olde pysse' is needed.[198] Other recipes for pigments and dyes also include urine, as well as one dubious recipe 'Forto wryte lettre þat schal not be seen', which asks the reader to 'take and wryte with vreyne'.[199]

Whilst there are no references (either metaphorical or literal) to the use of human earwax or urine in medieval writings outside of craft recipes, there are plenty which relate the human body, in part or in its entirety, to the material text. Indeed, much of this thesis is occupied with metaphors which render parts of the human body, such as the mind or the heart, as writing supports which record Christ's teaching or, conversely, the sins of the individual. Likewise, Christ's crucified body, as seen in the Charters of Christ chapter, is often understood as a legal document upon which his suffering, and the resulting redemption of mankind, is recorded. The use of bodily excretions to make a material text could thus be understood as encouraging the conceptual connection between book and body, as human products were indeed used to form it.

Common foodstuffs are also frequently found in these recipes. Alongside the regular calls for milk, egg whites, yolks, and shells, there are also some more surprising culinary ingredients used to make material texts. For example, there are numerous recipes for creating stockfish glue, which was used as an adhesive for securing gold leaf to a page, or sometimes as a medium. *Stockfysh* were a popular pantry staple of the late medieval period due to their strong flavour and long shelf life. Usually made from young codfish (*codlyng* or *chelyng*), the fish was preserved by being dried in cold air and salted for preservation, and produced at home as well as imported from northern Europe.[200] To create an adhesive, recipes detail that the *sowndes*, the swim bladders, of the dried fish to be rehydrated, cut up, dried once again, and then wetted. Some recipes state that to re-saturate the dried

[196] See pp. 151-156.
[197] *CLMS*, p. 70 (l. 12); p. 192 (l. 12); p. 210 (l. 10); p. 218 (l. 34); p. 323 (l. 18).
[198] *CLMS*, p. 188 (l. 3).
[199] *CLMS*, p. 230 (ll. 6-7).
[200] James H. Barrett, 'Medieval Fishing and Fish Trade', in *The Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology in Britain*, ed. by Christopher M. Gerrard and Alejandra Gutiérrez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 128-140 (p. 133).

fish pieces, they should be placed on the tongue of the user, just before they apply it to the page.[201] Another recipe details how to clean a book by rubbing it with a slice of bread, and directs the reader to 'rub thy boke þerwith sore vp and downe, and yt shal clense yt'.[202] Plenty of other common pantry items, or items easily grown in a cottage garden or bought at a market, also appear. These include fruits such as apples, pears, elderberries, bilberries, blackberries; alcoholic drinks such as cider and spiced wine; common food flavourings such as mustard plant, nutmeg, saffron, and cloves, and the everyday baking fare of butter and flour. Even waste products from butchering meat could contribute to the making of the material text: boars tusks were used to burnish gilded lettering, the galls of oxen and bulls were a common pigment ingredient, animal horns were used to contain and store liquid glues, inks, and pigments, and animal bladders used for containing and drying glues. These food materials offer two advantages to the late medieval recipe-maker: they are readily available, and their material properties are largely already known. Of course, nobody mistook the creation of a material text for the making of a meal, but perhaps the considerable number of ingredients and equipment used for both cookery and craft aided the comprehension of the popular late medieval conceit which described the reading of a text as 'consuming' it.

There is a biblical precedent for this conflation of reading and eating texts: famously, John eats the Little Book offered by an angel which tastes sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach (Revelation, 10.9-10). Devotional literature also contained plenty of references to eating material texts, perhaps the most well-known being the episode in the B-Text of *Piers Plowman*, where Scripture serves the feasting table with 'sondry metes many/ Of Austyn, of Ambrose, of alle the foure evaungelistes' (Passus XIII, ll.38-39).[203] Indeed, Mary Carruthers identifies that 'the monastic custom of reading during meals is described in some texts as an explicit literalizing of the metaphor of consuming the book as one consumes food'.[204] If, as Carruthers describes, the proximity of the material text to eating and food engenders a recognition of their shared material properties, then it might also elicit a sense of their shared metaphorical properties.

This chapter has shown how late medieval book-craft recipes can reveal how people thought about material texts. In these recipes, material texts are perceived as material objects which could encompass a range of duplexities: they are practical and thaumaturgic, everyday and extraordinary, and revealing and secretive. The compendiousness of the late medieval book-craft recipe collection placed different kinds of material text in conversation with one another, and allowed the reader to consider their material similarities and differences. This, I argue, is crucial to their representation in devotional literature, which often stresses the differences and similarities between various material

[201] See, for example, *CLMS*, p. 147 (ll. 20-26).
[202] *CLMS*, p. 223 (ll. 12-13).
[203] William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B-Text*, ed. by A.V.C. Schmidt, 2nd edn. (London: Dent & Sons Ltd, 1987), p. 147.
[204] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 208.

texts in metaphor and image. The prefaces of these craft recipe collections show that readers readily understood their multivalent objecthood, which rendered them at once personal and professional, and practical and entertaining. While material texts were everyday objects which were deeply imbedded in the domestic material milieu, they never relinquished their potential to be spiritual or devotional, and therefore always possessed the ability to morph into objects representative of devotional practice or divine power. In the following chapters, I will explore how this understanding of the material text as a complicated, ambivalent objects, as revealed in book-craft recipes, is expressed in a range of different devotional writings through metaphor and image.

Chapter Two: The 'Long' and 'Short' Charters of Christ: Self-Reflexive Textual Materiality and Ideas of the Material Text

On f.23^{v} of the late fifteenth-century manuscript London, British Library, MS Additional 37049 is a full-page illustration depicting Christ surrounded by the *arma Christi*. Christ hangs free of the cross, but his hands and feet still bear the nails which held him there, from which he is profusely bleeding. Between his hands and feet is a rendering of a charter, on which is written the 'Short Charter of Christ', a poem which figures Christ's crucifixion as the production of a charter that grants man access to heaven. In this drawing of the charter, the body of Christ and the charter amalgamate. The occasional red textual decoration is made with the same red ink used to represent Christ's blood, the seal tag becomes indistinguishable from the upright stipe of the cross, and the seal which hangs between Christ's feet contains a drawing of his pierced heart, dripping with blood. The charter page and Christ's skin are both left uncoloured, allowing the texture and hue of the paper on which the

illustrations are drawn to represent both. In this illustration, Christ's body and the charter coalesce into a single material text, which is at once documentary and devotional.

This visual and verbal relation between Christ's body and the charter might at first appear tenuous and unproductive. What does the crucifixion, which in the late medieval period was often graphically represented in order to elicit an affective response, have to do with dry legal documents? The connection can partially be explained by their mutual ubiquity: Jessica Berenbeim emphasises the impact of the charter and its distinctive *mise-en-page*, writing that 'the charter loomed as large as the sacred image'.[205] Charters were important and common material texts whose textual content and visual presentation were well known to all of society, literate and illiterate alike. As documents which represented the exchange of possession between individuals and groups, they also were a useful means through which to explain theological concepts, and the charter's symbiotic relationship between the word and the image provided a plethora of ways for doing so. Consequently, the charter was a complicated yet immediately recognisable material text ripe for metaphorical use.

This chapter focusses on two of the commonest Middle English poems within the literary type of the Charter of Christ, the 'Short Charter of Christ' and 'Long Charter of Christ'. These two poems engage with the extended metaphor of Christ's body as charter in different ways: the 'Short Charter' verbally - and often visually - imitates the legal document, whilst the 'Long Charter' rhetorically develops the conceit more thoroughly, but with less visual allusion to the charter form.[206] Despite the seemingly vivid material connections between the poems and the manuscripts which contain them, as explored by Nancy Vine Durling and Marlene Villalobos Hennessey, I will show that these texts also draw upon on the reader's knowledge and understanding of material texts, that is, their *ideas* about material texts.[207] The two poems, I argue, offer two disparate means of engaging with the material text: the 'Short Charter' is verbally and visually more reflective of the materiality of the charter, whilst the 'Long Charter' is more concerned with *ideas* about the material text, and encourages readers to conjure and remember images of these material texts themselves. I also argue that the two poems were intended to elicit affective responses, although these responses are encouraged differently between the 'Short Charter' and the 'Long Charter', and, indeed, between individual witnesses. Pertinently, Rosemary Woolf wrote of the two poems that 'it is less certain to what extent the imagery of the Charter complaints is moving, and to what extent quaint or at best coldly ingenious'.[208] In this

[205] Jessica Berenbeim, *Art of Documentation: Documents and Visual Culture in Medieval England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2015), p. 3.
[206] The most extended consideration of these poems so far was performed by Mary Caroline Spalding in *The Middle English Charters of Christ: A Dissertation* (Maryland: Furst, 1914), in which she catalogues the witnesses known at the time, and speculated on their genesis, development, and literary importance. All subsequent references are made to this edition.
[207] Marlene Villalobos Hennessey, 'Passion Devotion, Penitential Reading, and the Manuscript Page: "The Hours of the Cross" in London, British Library Additional 37049', *Mediaeval Studies*, 66 (2004), 213-252; Nancy Vine Durling, 'British Library MS Harley 2253: A New Reading of the Passion Lyrics in Their Manuscript Context', *Viator*, 40 (2009), 271-307.
[208] Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 212.

chapter, I posit that both texts can be considered affective, and that this affectivity is precipitated by various 'ingenious' material engagements of the two poems. This represents a difference from the selection of devotional lyrics examined in Chapter Three, which often, surprisingly, prioritise rhetorical genius over affective readerly response.

Late Medieval Charter Documents and the Charters of Christ Typologies

In late medieval England, the charter was a ubiquitous material text whose function and material qualities were well known to all strata of society. M.T. Clanchy has influentially argued that the rise of documentary culture, particularly in legal settings, directly impacted the pragmatic literacy of the English people, the charter replacing oral testimony as the common form of witness.[209] Late medieval literature often describes what Richard Firth Green refers to as legal 'tokens', materials objects which represent a legal right, such as inscribed horns, encumbered swords, knives, and wearable portable objects like rings and gloves. Whereas these tokens were often subjectively interpreted, Green writes, legal documents gave less room for individual interpretation.[210] The charter document, then, was established as a means by which to uniformalise legal transactions and allow less space for ambiguity. As material objects, they represented stability, authenticity, and reliability, as much as the textual details of the legal transfer.

Although charters had a variety of functions and were used in a multitude of circumstances, they 'generally documented the transfer of property or rights from one individual or group to another', and the vast majority of charters concerned land rights.[211] The written content of the charter was, by the late medieval period, formulaic and standardized. It consisted of three parts: the protocol, the greeting and naming of those involved in the transaction; the corpus of the text, which contained the purpose of the charter and the consequences of flouting it; and the eschatocol, which names the witnesses to the charter, the date and location of its issuing, followed by formulaic closing remarks. The distinctive visual design of the English charter also aided in making it instantly recognisable, as charters were usually written on one side of a single sheet of parchment with a cord or parchment tag which seals were attached to.

The universal pervasiveness of the charter document, as well as the broad understanding of its properties, coincided with the intense awareness of the material in late medieval devotional practice

[209] M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*: *England 1066-1307,* 3rd edn. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 296-297. See also Paul Bertrand, *Documenting the Everyday in Medieval Europe: The Social Dimensions of a Writing Revolution, 1250-1350* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), pp. 81-109.
[210] Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 264-270.
[211] Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (London: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 222, 87.

(as gestured towards in the introduction to this thesis). The connection between the documentary and the divine appears to have been taken from Colossians 2.14: 'delens quod adversum nos erat chirografum decretis quod erat contrarium nobis et ipsum tulit de medio adfigens illud cruci' ('blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And he hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross'). For Green, this connection was also precipitated by the material status of devotional and documentary objects, Green writing that the 'conflation of the power of the written word with the physical power of God could only have occurred in a culture where books and charters were regularly fetishized as objects of awe and mystery'.[212] Although Green's insistence that legal documents were objects of 'mystery' perhaps underplays the degree to which they were understood, they were *mistical* in the Middle English sense of the word, that is, they were at once symbolic and figurative objects as well as material documents which detailed legal transactions.[213]

A range of Middle English devotional works capitalised on the prevalence of documentary forms. The most prolific example is that of the prose 'Charter of Heaven' which circulated within the *Pore Caitif*, an anonymous fourteenth-century collection of devotional tracts.[214] Another example which survives in a large number of manuscripts and incunabula is *The Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost*, a poem which commonly accompanies the longer *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost*.[215] The *Charter* records that God grants Adam and Eve, and all who come after them, perpetual access to the land of Conscience, on which the Abbey of the Holy Ghost, the soul, is built. The Devil is described as having stolen this charter, but it is won back by Christ and therefore still functioning. Like the 'Charters of Christ', the *Charter's* extended metaphor is that of a land grant, and the *Charter* also includes the Latin legal phrases which would have punctuated their documentary counterparts. William Langland's *Piers Plowman* is heavily populated with a range of legal forms and terminology, including charters, pardons, testaments, quittances, and patents. This has been the subject of much critical attention: John A. Alford produced a glossary of the legal terms found in the text, Jill Averil Keen examined the efficacy of charters within the text, and Emily Steiner explored how legal documents are used in order to document salvation.[216] Shorter poems, too, make passing references to

[212] Green, *A Crisis of Truth*, p.263.
[213] *MED*, mistical (adj.), sense 1.
[214] See Karine Moreau-Guibert, ed., *Pore Caitif: A Middle English Manual of Religion and Devotion* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 11-54.
[215] See Julia Boffey, "The Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost' and its Role in Manuscript Anthologies', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 120-130. For editions of the poem, see Carl Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, An English Father of the Church and His Followers* (London: Sonnenschein, 1896).
[216] John A. Alford, *Piers Plowman: A Glossary of Legal Diction* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988); Jill Averil Keen, *The Charters of Christ and Piers Plowman: Documenting Salvation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002); Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 93-192. See also, M. Hughes, "The Feffement That Fals Hath Ymaked': A Study of the Image of the Document in "Piers Plowman" and Some Literary Analogues', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 93 (1992), 125-133.

the charter form. Two such poems, which are discussed more fully in my chapter on lyrics, are William Herbert's fourteenth-century poem, 'Thou Womman Boute Fere', which compares Christ's crucified body to a charter, 'Vor loue þe chartre wrot' (l. 23), and Chaucer's 'ABC to the Virgin' which likewise figures Christ's body as a legal document: 'And with his precious blood he wroot the bille/ Up-on the crois, as general acquitaunce,/ To every penitent in ful creaunce' (ll. 59-61).[217] The conceit, then, was common.

However, the use of documentary poetics also extended beyond works of devotional literature, and indeed beyond the material supports of parchment and paper. One unusual example of this is the four-line monumental poem which decorates the gatehouse of Cooling Castle:

> Knouwyth that beth and schul be
> That i am mad in help of the cuntre
> In knowyng of whyche thyng
> Thys is chartre and wytnessyng.[218]

John de Cobham attached the poem to the gatehouse of Cooling Castle in Kent at the time he added crenelations to the building in 1381, the addition of which was permitted by royal licence. The poem was inscribed on twelve copper plates which were enamelled white with black text, and a coloured rendering of the Cobham seal. In this case, the charter is part of the fabric of the building, and its efficacy and authority is evident by the castle to which it is fastened. Here it is strikingly evident that the charter is not real but merely a metaphor: this is not a charter, it is a gatehouse. But what it also shows is the material elasticity of the charter form as an *idea*, how diversely it was presented, and how universally its properties were understood. Such examples show the range of applications for metaphors of documentary forms in Middle English, and also expose how metaphors need not rely on the materiality of their writing supports in order for their meaning to be conveyed.

The diversity of ways in which the charter is invoked is evident, though, in the poems usually called the 'Short Charter of Christ' and the 'Long Charter of Christ'. These poems are more diverse than they might seem. Since Mary Caroline Spalding's doctoral dissertation of 1914, more witnesses of the two poems have come to light: the Digital Index of Middle English Verse now records twenty-three witnesses of the 'Short Charter' (compared to Spalding's thirteen), and nineteen witnesses in total to the 'Long Charter', with the same number of witnesses identified for the A-Text (eight) and the C-Text (one), but ten witnesses of the B-Text compared to Spalding's two.

Although these finds have impacted scholarly understandings of the text's dissemination and use, critics and cataloguers alike have retained many of Spalding's typologies which, to a certain degree, have masked differences between the individual texts and the perceptions of the charter they

[217] Carleton Brown, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 18-20.
[218] For a detailed discussion on the historical circumstances of this poem, as well as its implications in regard to documentary culture, see Maria Cristina Cervone, 'John de Cobham and Cooling Castle's Charter Poem', *Speculum*, 83 (2008), 884-916.

reveal. Firstly, although many of the texts are titled within their manuscripts as *testamentum*, Spalding's use of the term 'charter' to describe the text has been maintained. This is presumably in agreement with her claim that in doing so, these poems are distinguished from poetic works which play with conventions on the Last Will and Testament, which Spalding writes are a distinct text type.[219] Spalding's categorisation of five compositions within the Charter of Christ tradition has also been retained, as listed below:

1. *Carta Domini Nostri Iesu Christi:* A Latin prose charter of twenty-one lines which exists in only one witness (London, British Library, MS Additional 21253).
2. *Carta Libera d. n. Ihesu Christi, or, Carta Redempcionis humane:* A Latin poem of between thirty-six and thirty-eight lines witnessed in two manuscripts (Cambridge, St. John's College, MS E. 24; Cambridge, St. John's College, MS D. 8.)
3. *Carta Dei*: Which exists in one witness (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Kent Charter 233), written on the dorse of a fourteenth-century charter.
4. *The Short Charter of Christ:* The most commonly occurring text. The texts appear under a variety of titles and consist of thirty-four lines of couplets.
5. *The Long Charter of Christ*: A longer version which uses the same extended metaphor of the previous text. This poem appears in three variant forms:

    A-Text: Consists of two-hundred and forty-three lines, and is the shortest of the three variants. The narrative voice of the poem is that of Christ himself, who directly addresses the reader.

    B-Text: The poem is four-hundred and eighteen lines, and includes the majority of the A-Text amended with 'digressions, and some explanatory and transitional passages'.[220] The direct address of Christ is framed by another narrative voice.

    C-Text: This textual variant is witnessed in only one manuscript (London, British Library, MS Royal 17 C xvii) and consists of six-hundred and eighteen lines. It includes the majority of the B-Text, with an additional two-hundred and fifty-seven lines original to this version. Spalding notes that there are fifty-seven lines not included from the B-Text, and that twenty-nine lines appear to have been 'dropped by some scribe'.[221]

[219] Spalding, *The Middle English Charters*, p. viii. See Eber Carle Perrow, 'The Last Will and Testament as a Form of Literature', *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 17 (1913), 682-753; Helen Swift, 'Representing the Dead and 'Fictional Will", in *The Routledge Companion to Death and Literature,* ed. W. Michelle Wang, Daniel K. Jernigan, and Neil Murphy (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 256-264.
[220] Spalding, *The Middle English Charters*, p. viii.
[221] Ibid., p. xvi.

In what follows, I will consider how the 'Short Charter' and 'Long Charter' poems engage with the materiality of the charter form, and how they excite an affective response through doing so. Firstly, I examine the 'Short Charter'. My analysis is rooted in exploring the verbal metaphor of the poem, but then expands to examine individual copies and the particular visual techniques they employ: seal depictions, skeuomorphic representations, and the unusual example of London, British Library, MS Additional 37049 (f. 23^{v}). I then move to consider the 'Long Charter'. As the copies of this poem are not self-reflexive in their engagement with materiality, my focus is concentrated on the rhetorical descriptions found in the poem, the kind of readerly practice they precipitate, and the idea of the material text which the poem encourages. Ultimately, both poems excite a devotional response, but this affectivity is encouraged through disparate engagements with textual materiality.

The 'Short Charter of Christ' and Self-Reflexive Materiality: Seal Depictions, Skeuomorphs, and 'Short Circuits'

When comparing the 'Long Charter' and 'Short Charter' poems, Rosemary Woolf damningly writes of the latter that 'from the literary point of view this poem is scarcely more attractive than the dry legal document that it parodies', and describes it as the poor, redacted, relation of the 'Long Charter'.[222] The poem is indeed brief, running to only thirty-four lines in most instances, but Woolf's statement that it is void of interest for the literary scholar is, I argue, misguided. As Laura Ashe notes, the connection between the two texts is one of 'material coincidence rather than compositional inheritance', and the two poems have separate objectives achieved by different means.[223] Ashe provides a brief explanation of the value of the 'Short Charter', and concludes that it offers 'a near perfect circle of meaning' between the deed of Christ's sacrifice and the deed of the charter document, which is conveyed through both the textual content and, in many cases, the *mise-en-page* of the poem. It is these examples of the poem which visually imitate the charter form which I will analyse in closer detail in this chapter.

Of the twenty-three witnesses to the 'Short Charter', two are eighteenth-century copies (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet 26; London, British Library, Stowe 1055) so these shall be discounted from my consideration.[224] The majority of the remaining twenty-one manuscripts

[222] Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric*, pp. 213-214.
[223] Laura Ashe, 'The "Short Charter of Christ": An Unpublished Longer Version, From Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 6686', *Medium Aevum*, 72 (2003), 32-48 (32).
[224] *DIMEV*, 6769. As noted by Laura Ashe and Sarah Noonan, *DIMEV* incorrectly states that there are two Charters of Christ poems in Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 6686, when there is only one. Discounting this duplication, there are 23 known copies of the 'Short Charter' poem. See Laura Ashe, 'The

are dated to the fifteenth century, with a few examples dating from the sixteenth, and they are varied in content: they include devotional miscellanies, collections of verse and prose, recipe books, a collection of music, and a cartulary.[225] Of these examples of the 'Short Charter' poem, nine *visually* imitate charters. These nine examples replicate the charter form in different ways and to different extents, but can broadly be organised in to three groups: those which include renderings of seals, those which can be considered skeuomorphs (these often overlap with the previous category), and the particularly evocative example of London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, which can be described, to borrow Sarah Kay's term, as a 'short-circuit'.[226] Each of these three techniques, I argue, draw upon different parts of the charter's materiality in order to elicit an affective response.

Before moving to consider how the visual and material aspects of the 'Short Charter' interact with the verbal, it is important to outline the textual content of the poem. At the opening of the poem, Christ, who functions as the text's poetic voice, begins by addressing the readership: 'Wat yee now all that be here/ and after shall be leif and deere' (ll. 1-2). Here, the general, timeless address of charter blends seamlessly with that of Christ, and enables the text to signal to the reader that this is an affective poem without compromising the integrity of the conceit. Christ is then described as both the participant and the maker of the charter, when he announces 'I haue geuen and made a graunte' (l. 7), which grants 'all people repentant' (l. 8) access to heaven, where he is 'King' (l. 10). In return, Christ asks only for 'the true Loue of all thy hart/ and that thou be in Charety/ and Loue thy Neighbour as thyself' (ll. 12-14), which is described as their 'Rent' (l. 15). Christ's side-wound is described as the seal of the charter: 'Myne owne seale there-to I hing […] the wounde on my syde is' (ll. 30-32); and the witnesses are Mary and St John (l. 27). In two witnesses, extra lines prefacing the poem also explain that Christ wrote off the debt of original sin for mankind (London, British Library, MS Sloane 3292, ll. e-f; London, British Library, MS Stowe 620, ll. e-f). In the unique, longer version of the poem identified by Ashe (Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 6686), the metaphor of the charter is further expanded upon. John is described as Christ's 'atorne' (l. 41), his attorney, and the crucifixion is described as a 'Generall pardoun', which is issued to all people, 'Be þeir trespas neuer so greete,/ Ne þair houre neuer so late' (ll. 77-78).[227] The additional lines also offer another metaphorised legal relationship between earthly beings, Christ, and the Devil, whereby people formally 'mad […] thrall' (l. 62) to the Devil are instead 'soberly sewe to [Christ's] seruice' (l. 75).

"Short Charter of Christ": An Unpublished Longer Version' (32), and Sarah Noonan, 'A Translation of Body and Form: Setting the Short Charter of Christ to Music in BL Additional MS 5465', *Viator*, 45 (2014), 335-355 (335).

[225] For a detailed discussion of the musical setting of the poem in London, British Library, Additional MS 5465, see Sarah Noonan, 'A Translation of Body and Form: Setting the Short Charter of Christ to Music in BL Additional MS 5465', *Viator*, 45 (2014), 335-355.

[226] Sarah Kay, 'Original Skin: Flaying, Reading and Thinking in the Legend of St Bartholomew and Other Works,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 36 (2006), 35-75 (36).

[227] All quotations of the 'Short Charter', unless otherwise stated, are taken from the copy found in London, British Library, MS Sloane 3292 as transcribed by Spalding, as this example contains the average line-count of 34 lines. See Spalding, *The Middle English Charters*, p. 4.

The 'Short Charter' poem's insistence on masquerading as a charter is evident in those examples which include a title: one example is entitled *Testamentum domini*, another *Magna Carta de libertatibus Mundi*, and a further as *Carta humane redempcionis*.[228] The textual content of the poem itself is also frequently punctuated by Latin headings - the same Latin headings which would have been used in contemporary charters. These headings are employed differently between witnesses, some dropping many or all of them, and others moving lines and their corresponding headings within the poem. Their relationship to the poem, however, can largely be organized as follows:

Latin Heading	**Content in Charter**	**Corresponding poetic content in 'Short Charter of Christ'**
Nouerint presents & future	General declaration that the charter is observed in the present and lasts into the future	General declaration from Christ to the readership (ll. 1-6)
Dedi et concessi	What is the property being exchanged, and with whom is it being exchanged	The property is heaven, and the grant is made to all repentant people (ll. 7-9)
Habendum	The conditions of tenure	As long as Christ reigns as the King of Heaven (l. 10)
Redendo	The compensation being given in return for property	The love of all people's hearts, their charity, and the love of their neighbour (ll. 11-16)
Warrantizatio	The warranty provided by a guarantor who supports the right of transfer	The crucifixion (ll.17-20)
Hijs testibus	The witnesses	The day turning to night, the setting of the sun, the quaking of the earth, the breaking of the stones, the ripping of the veil, Christ's rising from the dead, the Virgin Mary and St. John. (ll. 21-28)
In cuius rei testimonium	Indication that a seal is	Christ's side-wound is named

[228] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, f.106^{r}; London, British Library, MS Sloane 3292, f. 2^{r}; London, British Library, MS Harley 237, f. 100^{r}.

	attached as a mark of authenticity	as his seal (ll. 29-32)
Datum apud Hierusalem	The date and location	The first day of the Great Mercy, at Calvary (ll. 33-34)

As this table shows, the content of the 'Short Charter' is concise, precise, and maps cleanly on to the constituent parts of a charter. The connection between the legal document and the poem would, however, be less immediate to discern without the aid of some visual cues. These visual cues are varied, some of the 'Short Charter' examples surrounded by detailed illustrations, whilst others provide only scant gestures towards the documentary form. Which elements of the design of the charter are picked out for illustration, I argue, alter the way in which the reader conceives and responds to the textual content of the poem.

Seal Depictions

Five witnesses to the 'Short Charter' (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61; Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 6686; London, British Library, MS Additional 37049; London, British Library, MS Sloane 3292; London, British Library, MS Stowe 620) include illustrations of seals. The inclusion of seal illustrations is precipitated by the content of the poem, which reads:

> In wittnes of which thinge
> Myne owne seale there-to I hing
> and for the more sikernes
> the wounde on my syde is. (ll. 29-32)

The seal is thus figured as the side-wound of Christ. For the majority of witnesses, these lines are the last of the text, much like the seal is the final act in the creation of a charter document. These illustrations of seals which accompany the 'Short Charter' are variously represented, as I will discuss in detail, but their overarching aim, I argue, is consistent: they encourage the reader to conceive of the 'Short Charter' as an opportunity for devotional meditation, and as a material text which also functions as a devotional talisman.

Seals were important material agents in the spread of pragmatic literacy in the late medieval period, as beyond ensuring the privacy of sealed communications they enabled people to sign their

name and represent their identity without being able to read or write.[229] Seals are not common in material records until the thirteenth century, and those which were attached to legal documents are far more likely to survive compared to those used on personal correspondence (which often had to be broken for the letter to be read).[230] Medieval seals were usually made of dyed beeswax and attached directly to the charter document, or hung by a seal tag or cord. Seals were made using a seal matrix, which enabled the same design to be replicated countless times. These seal matrixes could be stamps with handles, stamp presses which created double-sided designs, or, for personal correspondence, signet rings.[231] The resulting wax seal was a three-dimensional object which was largely weatherproof (especially when varnished), and which bore the identifying features of its owner.[232] The design and colour of a seal communicated both the identity of the owner and the content of the document: natural colour was used for routine business, red for diplomatic, green for grants of perpetuities, and black for the enactment of the wishes of the dead.[233] Historically, the medieval seal has been regarded simply an authorising gesture, but seals were used for more than just authentication alone. Brigitte Bedos Rezak explains that the relationship between seal and seal-owner was symbiotic, with seal uses developing 'an awareness of themselves in relation to an object whose operational principles as a sign were categorization, replication, and verification', much like the merchants marks discussed in the previous chapter.[234]

All five copies of the 'Short Charter' which feature illustrations of seals include Christ's side wound, or his wounded heart, as part of the seal's design. Conceptually, the side-wound conforms to Rezak's operational principles of the seal: it is always categorized as a devotional symbol, it is consistently replicated through depictions of Christ on the cross, and is used as a form of verification when Thomas probes it upon meeting the resurrected Christ, as seen in other visual depictions of Christ. The visual appearance of the wound on the seal also compels comparison. The shape of late medieval seals, especially those which are marquise-shaped, are reminiscent of other visual depictions of Christ's side wound. For example, the fourteenth-century Book of Hours, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. Liturg. f. 2, includes a large illustration on f. 4^{v} of Christ's disembodied, marquise-shaped side-wound, within which sits Christ's heart with a further five bleeding wounds. This example is strikingly reminiscent of the seal drawings which accompany the 'Short Charter' of London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, which is marquise-shaped, red, and includes the wounded heart; of London, British Library, MS Sloane 3292, which includes the wounded heart

[229] M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 309.
[230] Ibid., p. 310.
[231] Clemens and Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, p. 225.
[232] Ibid., p. 226.
[233] James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England, Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter Writing, 1512-1635* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillain, 2012), p. 106.
[234] Brigitte Bedos Rezak, *When Ego was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 112.

surrounded by the circular crown of thorns; and of London, British Library, MS Stowe 620, which shows a marquise shaped seal containing a wounded heart.

Vibeke Olsen writes that whilst Christ's side wound had traditionally been incorporated in part of wider contemplations on the Passion, artistic renderings of the wound in the later medieval period were often abstracted from the narrative of the crucifixion, and indeed from Christ's body.[235] These abstracted and disembodied wounds, argues Olsen, encourage a sense of immediacy: the wound could be engaged with affectively as 'Christ was neither far away in time and place, nor fixed within a particular moment of an historical event, but present before the beholder in his or her own time and his or her own place'.[236] This understanding of the abstracted side wound as at once immediate and timeless corresponds to the 'Short Charter's conception of the charter's effectiveness in the present and in the future. The material text of the charter is evidence of a transaction which is perpetual: it is as effective at its writing as it is years later, much like Christ's sacrifice is eternally redemptive. The seal drawings which accompany the 'Short Charter' poem, them, compound the sense of immediacy related through the charter form, as the marquise or circular shaped seals appear as wounds on the page. The abstracted side wound is blended with the lasting, authenticating documentary material to create a meditative image which maintains the charter metaphor.

The seal depiction in Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 6686, pushes the mutual material efficacy of the charter document and Christ's side wound even further. Circular in shape, the periphery of this seal is drawn in green and spiked in imitation of Christ's crown of thorns. Red lines extend from the top and bottom of the seal in imitation of the seal tag. Within the seal is a dark oblong representing Christ's side-wound, from which red rivulets of blood run. Around the side-wound are specks of blood, presumably in imitation of Christ's many other wounds. Around the inside rim of the seal is an inscription in red ink, reading *Wlneris hoc signum pellit procul omne malignum. Et misserum dignum meritis facit atque benignum,* 'This sign of the wound drives away evil/ And makes the wretched kind and worthy of its merit'.

Indeed, MS Additional 6686 is not the only example of the 'Short Charter' which purports to offer the reader spiritual protection. The copy found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 198 has been doctored to become an indulgence. At the end of the poem, where seal depictions are found in other examples, are added lines which promise 26030 years and 11 days respite from purgatory to the reader. This copy is understood by Spalding to be a sung version of the poem, with its first line, 'Wette ye All that ben*e* her*e*' (l. 1) functioning as a burden, much like the first line in the Fairfax copy of the text.[237] This burden also suggests that this copy of the text might have been performed to an audience, as the poem addresses 'all' of those present 'her*e*'. If so, the self-reflexive materiality of the

[235] Vibeke Olsen, 'Penetrating the Side: The Wound in Christ's Side as Performative Space', in *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 313-339.
[236] Ibid., p. 320.
[237] Spalding, *The Middle English Charters*, p. xxviii.

poem may be lost through oral performance. Yet, legal documents were often read aloud, so perhaps the structure and familiar legal phrases were enough for the listener to comprehend the mimicry of the charter through its aural quality alone.[238] It may be speculated that the salvific properties of the material text were released upon singing it, but what is evident is that the text itself was understood as a redemptive article in its own right.

The one seal which is notably different from the other examples, in sense of shape and representation, is that of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, where the seal illustration is perhaps replaced, or represented by, a coat of arms. The text of the poem, which is entitled *Testamentum domini,* lacks the Latin headings present in the majority of copies and, significantly, also lacks the final four lines present in the full versions of the poem which explain that Christ's side wound is his seal, instead ending with the line 'Myn awne sele thereto I hynge'. In this copy of the 'Short Charter', the seal is drawn with the same black ink that the poem is written in and shaped like a crest. The crest is quartered by a cross, a common enough heraldic layout, but one which carries further symbolism in this context, with a sun drawn in each of the quadrants and one in the centre, around which is drawn a heart. The decoration of the shield is representative of the crucifixion, with the cross-design gesturing towards the cross itself, the five suns representing his wounds, and the heart (within which is another sun-wound) Christ's wounded heart. This seal is the only illustration in the manuscript which is not a flower-adorned fish, the distinctive mark of the scribe 'Rate' for which the manuscript is known. For Myra Seaman, the shield illustration and of Rate's fish-and-flower colophons operate with the same logic, as they both represent 'embodied presence', the fish-flower the presence of Rate, and the shield-seal the presence of Christ.[239] The illustrated heraldic shield, which in this case is representative of Christ's seal, can be understood as a marker of Christ's presence.

The illustration is also strikingly similar to late medieval woodcuts. The sparse, black-ink line drawing, with evidence of some colouration of the sun-wounds, is similar to the visual appearance of some woodcuts, especially those which take the shape of shields decorated with *arma Christi*. Caroline Walker-Bynum notes that these shields often take advantage of the multivalence of the term *arma,* which can at once mean instruments of torture and heraldic design.[240] For example, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. G. f. 13, a late fifteenth-century English woodcut, displays a shield with the disembodied wounded feet and hands of Christ arranged around his wounded heart, from which blood

[238] See Carol Symes, 'Out in the Open, in Arras: Sightlines, Soundscapes and the Shaping of a Medieval Public Sphere', in *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks, 400-1500: Experiences and Perceptions in Medieval Urban Space*, ed. by Caroline Goodson, Anne Elizabeth Lester, and Carol Symes (Surry: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 279-303.
[239] Myra Seaman, *Objects of Affection: The Book and the Household in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), p. 152.
[240] Caroline Walker-Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), p.101. See also Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: With a Critical Edition of 'O vernicle'* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

drains into a chalice.[241] Above the heart, the holy monogram is inscribed in a shining sun. The shield is located on the cross in place of Christ's body, and the crown of thorns is perched on the chief of the shield. The lance which pierces Christ's side, and the length of wood with the Holy Sponge at the crucifixion, cross behind the superimposed shield. The woodcut has been hand-coloured, and a personal note written underneath, which has led Mary C. Erler to understand it as 'a kind of social stationery'.[242] An uncoloured version of the woodcut is also preserved as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. G. f. 14, which additionally shows two angels holding up the shield, and printed text over the picture in which reads 'Ex domo Ihesu de Betheleem', and below, which reads, 'Of your charyte in the worchyp of þe .v. woundes of our lord *and* þe .v. ioyes of our lady say. P*ate*r N*oste*r *and*. Ave.' within a rendering of a scroll. Campbell Dodgeson writes that these two woodcuts were detached from a Sarum Horae, printed in 1495 for Sheen Priory.[243] Dodgeson speculates that the woodcuts 'might have been issued as a souvenir to pilgrims or visitors to the priory', and also draws attention to a similarly designed indulgence, which was sewn into the so-called Pavement Hours now held at York Minster Library.[244] Perhaps, then, the design of the seal of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61 is intended, through its visual design, to hint that the 'Short Charter' offers the same kind of salvific material efficacy as pilgrimage souvenirs, indulgences, or other spiritually efficacious material texts.

Skeuomorphs

In some copies of the 'Short Charter' poem, the mimicking of the charter extends beyond seal illustrations. These copies become 'skeuomorphs', objects which mimic the materiality of other forms. Skeuomorphs can be categorised into two groups: objects which mimic another material or technique of construction, for example clay pots which are decorated with rivet designs in imitation of metalwork, or objects which imitate a related, often prototypical, object, for example electric lights which are shaped to look like candles.[245] Skeuomorphs are also common in digital technology, with mobile phone cameras still employing the shutter sound of earlier cameras, and computer icons mimicking the form, dimensionality, or texture of physical objects (for example, for many years the icon for YouTube on an iPhone was an image of an old television set complete with a reflection on

[241] See Arthur M. Hind, *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut: With a Detailed Survey of Work in the Fifteenth Century, Volume III* (London: Constable and Company, 1935), p. 238.
[242] Mary C. Erler, 'Devotional Literature', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Helinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 495-525 (p. 512). The note reads: 'I haue sent vnto your Lordship a litill englysh bokenot to passe ye tyme with whill ye be here & haue leyser but for to kepe tyme with. which we shulde desire in our wyll & intente. Impute it not to presumption but rather to wantyng of wytte. Amor non timet. Your pore bedeman for euer. d.E.G'.
[243] Campbell Dodgeson, 'English Devotional Woodcuts of the Late Fifteenth Century, with Special Reference To those in the Bodleian Library', *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, 17 (1928-1929), 95-108 (102).
[244] Ibid., p. 103.
[245] *OED*, skeuomorph (n.), senses 1 and 2.

the glass).[246] The prevalence of skeuomorphs in the late medieval period is relatively understudied, with scholarship focussing on prehistoric and early medieval crafts, or developments in printing.[247] Kathryn Rudy, however, has posited some examples of the skeuomorphs present in late medieval manuscripts.[248] These include the use of gold leaf for depiction of halos, the employment of which is not intended to represent real gold but the emission of light; paper or parchment volvelles with moving parts which imitate the design of astrolabes, and woodblocks which are made to resemble illustrations through the addition of painted edges.[249]

The effect of skeuomorphic design can be varied: it might be used to excite nostalgia, to make new advances in technology more comfortable to a user, to encourage a recognition of shared physical or operational qualities, to elevate the value of low-cost or low-status items, or for humorous purposes.[250] Yet all share, as James Misson states, their function as 'material metaphors', which 'cue the user, telling them what to expect from an object, and guiding their use of it'.[251] In the case of the 'Short Charter' poems, the material metaphor of the skeuomorphic form creates a *double* metaphor: Christ's body is metaphorised as a charter within the poem, and the text of that poem is then metaphorised to look like a charter. The brief verbal allusions to charters in the poem's wording are enhanced by their skeuomorphic arrangement and embellishment, enabling the reader to understand the connections made between the charter and Christ's crucifixion more readily.

Furthermore, the skeuomorphic 'Short Charters' aim to imbue the material text of the poem with a similar power to that of the charter. Carl Knappett, drawing on the work of Alfred Gell, explains that some skeuomorphs can be considered to work by the principles of 'sympathetic magic', whereby an object has power over another by virtue of their shared material properties.[252] The 'Short Charters' conform to this proposition: whilst the poems are not *legally binding* charters, they do convey the *spiritually binding* nature of Christ's sacrifice by mimicking the charter form. All of the examples examined here act to stress the spiritually binding nature of Christ's sacrifice, but the

---

[246] Klaus Göttling, 'Skeuomorphism is Dead, Long Live, Skeuomorphism', The Interaction Design Federation (2020) <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/skeuomorphism-is-dead-long-live-skeuomorphism> [Date Accessed 04.10.2021].

[247] See, for example, Meg Boulton, 'Embroidered Stones: Considering the Symbolism of Anglo-Saxon Skeuomorphs and the Kirkdale Grave Slab', in *The Art, Literature and Material Culture of the Medieval World: Transition, Transformation and Taxonomy*, ed. by Meg Boulton, Jane Hawkes, and Melissa Herman (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), pp. 198-216.

[248] Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Skeuomorphs in Late Medieval Europe: Playful and Utilitarian Approaches to New Materials' (2019) <https://memo.imareal.sbg.ac.at/wsarticle/memo/2019-rudy-skeuomorphs/> [Date accessed: 20.09.2021].

[249] Ibid.

[250] On the history of the conception of skeuomorphs as deceptive, see Chantal Conneller, 'Deception and (Mis)representation: Skeuomorphs, Materials, and Form', in *Archaeology After Interpretation: Returning Materials to Archaeological Theory*, ed. by Benjamin Alberti, Andrew Meirion Jones, and Joshua Pollard (California: West Coast Press, 2013), pp. 119-133.

[251] James Misson, "See and read this book': Reading the Typography of English, 1509-1592 (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2020), p. 191.

[252] Carl Knappett, 'Photographs, Skeuomorphs, and Marionettes: Some Thoughts on Mind, Agency and Object', *Journal of Material Culture*, 7 (2002), 97-117 (110-113); Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 99-102.

variation in their skeuomorphic design emphasise different material, and therefore conceptual, qualities of the material charter text.[253]

The 'Short Charter' example in London, British Library, Additional Charter 5960 is made to imitate the charter visually and materially to the greatest degree. The poem is written on one side of a rectangular sheet of parchment, with a seal tag hanging from the bottom edge. The Latin headings are rendered larger than the lines of the poem, which are written in prose, and the names of witnesses and notaries are given in list form at the end of the text. Where the tag threads through the charter document, 'CHS' has been written, and next to it (presumably as a correction) 'IHS'. Where the seal would have been placed is a quotation from Psalms, *factum est cor meum sicut cera liquefacta in medio ventris mei*, 'my heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels', which the scribe wrongly attributes to Psalm 22.13, but which, as Spalding notes, actually belongs to Psalms 21.15 of the Vulgate or 21.14 of the vernacular edition.[254] But what is the benefit of representing the poem in this way? I contend that its materiality both enhances the reader's comprehension of the text, and ensures that its message is eminently memorable.

Indeed, this 'Short Charter's' mimicking of the charter form is so convincing that it is not clear it is a poem until it is consulted at close quarters (the representation of the charter form is so successful it is even catalogued as a charter, as indicated by its name). Part of the value of this copy lies in its shock-value, that is, the moment where the reader realises that they are not perusing a charter, but a devotional text. In this way, Additional Charter 5960 functions similarly to art which applies *trompe l'oeil* techniques, whereby two-dimensional renderings mimic the materiality of three-dimensional objects in order to elicit surprise, followed by a reconsideration of the material properties of the art and, of course, an appreciation of the artist's skill. For a moment, the reader of this example of the 'Short Charter' would have perceived it as an authentic legal document. Only when they begin reading the poem does the reader realise it is detailing Christ's sacrifice. Yet even when the distinction between the two is re-established – when the reader realises that this document is a poem – the value of the mimicry remains, as they are provided with visual cues which guide their understanding of the text.

Perhaps, too, the material mimicry of this 'Short Charter' example enabled it to function as a textual talisman. Charters, especially charters of pardon excusing a criminal offence, were often carried on the person whom the document concerned. Green notes how this was particularly important in regard to pardons for homicide, where proof of innocence would need to be provided quickly to

[253] One of the least skeuomorphic examples is the 'Short Charter' of London, British Library, MS Stowe 620. The poem is appended with a drawing of the curled base of a parchment sheet, seal tags which are shaded to create a rudimentary *trompe l'oeil* effect, and a marquise-shaped seal in which sits a wounded heart which Emily Steiner states were added by an 'antiquarian hand', *Documentary Culture*, p. 79.
[254] Spalding, *The Middle English Charters*, p. xxiii. This quotation is remarkably pertinent to the description of Christ's heart as the location of the melted wax used to make the seals in the 'Long Charter'.

escape punishment.[255] These texts functioned as talismans of legal protection, but there were also portable texts which offered spiritual safeguard. These include prayer rolls, charms, indulgences, and inscribed objects, such as those explored elsewhere in this thesis.[256] This 'Short Charter' example consequently sits at the intersection between two types of portable, protective, material texts, and offers the possibility that the poem was perceived as a devotional object, as well as a devotional text.

The example found in London, British Library, MS Sloane 3292 is particularly unusual, with the title of the poem, *Magna Carta de libertatibus Mundi*, centred at the top of the page with the initial lines directly below, and the verses of the poem divided in to two columns with line-drawn boxes surrounding them. The seal drawn is in black ink and is circular, with the periphery of the circle drawn as the crown of thorns. In the centre of the seal is the wounded heart with five blood drops. Above the seal is a *trompe l'oeil* drawing of the seal tag, which is made, by cross-hatched shading, to look as if it were attached to the page. Significantly, the 'Short Charter' of MS Sloane 3292 claims to be a replica of the poem and decoration found on a gravestone. At the end of the poem to the left of the drawing of the seal tag is some explanatory detail regarding the poem:

> Mr Lambert a Justice of Peace in
> Kent found this on a grauestone in
> an Abby in Kent bearing the date A*nno*
> D*omi*ni 1400 a Copie whereof was geuen
> to Mr Humfry Windham of Winse-
> conbe in the county of Somerset.

On the right of the seal tag is another note:

> Uppon the other si[de o]f the seale
> there was should be [sic.] a P[e]l[ican pick
> i]ng her bloo[d] for *[illegible]*

These lines do explain the unusual *mise-en-page* of the poem: it is not representative of a late medieval charter, but rather gestures towards the arrangement of the poem on a gravestone.

There are two reasons why the gravestone might have had the 'Short Charter' poem represented on it as a skeuomorph. Roberta Gilchrist writes that archaeological exhumations of medieval burials have revealed that papal bulls, the lead seals attached to papal charters which granted the remission of sins in the presence of true contrition, were sometimes placed with the corpse upon burial.[257] It is possible that the presence of a charter document alongside the body precipitated the

[255] Green, *A Crisis of Truth*, pp. 274-275.
[256] See Kathryn Rudy, 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2015) <https://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/pdf/ebljarticle52011.pdf> [Date Accessed: 03.06.2021].
[257] Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), p. 211. It is unknown whether these seals were buried with the documents they were attached to. Cristopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 116, argues that but this

desire to represent the poem on the gravestone. However, it is more likely that the design was influenced by other graves which mimicked documentary forms, as some gravestones of dignitaries were carved with indulgences that granted passers-by a reduced term in purgatory in exchange for prayers.[258] Indeed, the practice of representing documents on memorials was likely to have been popular, with the extant examples surviving today representing only a fraction of those present before the iconoclasm of the Reformation and brass theft.[259] Significantly for this analysis, grave markers such as tombs, effigies, and gravestones were perceived to belong to the occupant of the grave.[260] The charter which supposedly decorated the Kentish gravestone, then, can be understood as belonging to the inhabitant of the grave, with the departed having fulfilled the rent payments specified in the poem. The skeuomorphic stone charter is representative of the transaction being fulfilled by the deceased, whilst simultaneously alerting the passer-by that they, too, are bound by the same agreement.

Although this connection between the grave-charter and the 'Short Charter' of MS Sloane 3292 is not immediately apparent, the provenance note, once read, changes the reader's perception of the poem. Spalding notes that 'Mr Lambert' refers to William Lambarde, the author of *Perambulations of Kent*, which was printed in 1576 and was the first English county history.[261] Lambarde was a Justice of the Peace with a keen interest in early medieval law and governance, but unfortunately, as Spalding notes, there is no mention of this unusual gravestone in *Perambulations*. This copy of the 'Short Charter' becomes something of a double-skeuomorph, replicating the materiality of a grave, which itself mimicked a charter. The 'Short Charter' of MS Sloane 3292 consequently carries the material cues for two different memorial objects, firstly the gravestone, which memorialises an individual's death through durable stone, and secondly a charter, which memorialises a legal transaction through paper or parchment. This copy of the 'Short Charter' emphasises the charter's ability to transcend the boundaries of life and death, its content applying to both the deceased occupant of the Kentish grave who has fulfilled their devotional undertaking, and the living reader of MS Sloane 3292, who must yet aspire to do so.

Short-Circuits

---

would be unlikely, as the fingerbones of the grave occupants are usually clasped around the bull itself and they would probably still be of use to the remaining family. However, David Lepine and Nicholas Orme, *Death and Memory in Medieval Exeter*, Devon and Cornwall Records Society, N.S. 47 (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2003), p. 22, draw attention to the practice of laying a text on the corpse during the burial ceremony.

[258] Nicholas Orme, 'Indulgences in the Diocese of Exeter, 1100-1536', *Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art*, 120 (1988), 15-32 (21).

[259] R. N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 107.

[260] David Lepine and Nicholas Orme, *Death and Memory*, p. 22.

[261] Spalding, p. xx.

The final and most often-cited copy of the 'Short Charter' which partially imitates the charter form is that found in London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, and which I described at the opening of this chapter. The entirety of the folio on which the 'Short Charter' is written is illustrated, with Christ bearing the charter between his hands and feet, his body floating free of the cross, the foot of which also forms the seal strap of the charter. Christ is covered in small, red wounds, as well as his more significant side wound on the left of his chest, which drips more blood. His eyes are cast down, as if looking at the charter text. The seal of the charter includes a drawing of a heart bleeding from a wound, and the holy monogram. Around Christ's upper body hover various *arma Christi*, and at his feet are two skulls and several bones. One of these skulls is likely to be that of Adam: visual art of the late medieval period often used to gesture to the narrative arc of the Redemption by alluding to the apocryphal theories that Adam was buried at Calvary.[262]

Most significantly, the body of Christ and the charter represented between his hands both remain uncoloured – the hue and texture of the writing support is left to represent the material quality of both. For Caroline Walker Bynum, 'there is an echo here of the fact that manuscripts, like charters, often *are* skin'.[263] This shared materiality offers the uncomfortable possibility that the document is made of Christ's skin entire, with his skin flayed to create the textual support for the charter. Indeed, this possibility is realised fully in the 'Long Charter', which describes this phenomenon exactly, but it is in this example of the 'Short Charter' where this is represented *visually*. Sarah Kay writes that this kind of allusion to flaying, which utilises the materiality of the page in order to elicit a recognition of shared material qualities, 'gives rise to a short-circuit between textual content and the material state of the page'.[264] This kind of reciprocal relation between textual content and textual materiality is particularly apt for a poem formed of a legal metaphor. As Michael de Certeau elucidates, legal documents are representative of corporal transactions. For de Certeau, the skin of the body functions as something of a precursor to the skin of the parchment, as the marking of the body is transfigured into the marking of the page:

> The law constantly writes itself on bodies. It engraves itself on parchment made from the skin of its subjects. It articulates them in a juridical corpus. It makes its book out of them […] One might thus assume that parchments and papers are put in place of our skins […] in times of crisis, paper is no longer enough for the law, and it writes itself again on the bodies themselves.[265]

Crucially, de Certeau recognises that the inscription of the law does not follow a linear civilising progression from violence to language. Instead, judicial rule oscillates between marking itself on the

[262] See Marina Montesano, 'Adam's Skull', in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture,* ed., Barbra Baert, Anita Traninger, and Catrina Santing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 15-30.
[263] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), p. 93.
[264] Sarah Kay, 'Original Skin: Flaying, Reading and Thinking in the Legend of St Bartholomew and Other Works,' *JMEMS*, 36 (2006), 35-75 (36).
[265] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. by Steven F. Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 139-141 (p. 140).

page and the skin of its subjects. This continual alternation between the two renders the skin and the page evocative of one another, and consequently documentation representing the law will always function as a reminder of the corporal punishment it may have replaced, and which it may easily resort back to.

What complicates this theory, however, is that this manuscript only contains two parchment leaves, and the folio on which this copy of the 'Short Charter' text sits is paper. Paper, of course, requires an entirely different production process to parchment, and involves none of the scraping or stretching actions which are metaphorised as Christ's crucifixion so effectively in the 'Long Charter'. The 'Short Charter' of MS Additional 37029, then, requires the reader to apply their knowledge of the parchment production process to the logic of the poem, rather than triggering a recognition of the material through immediate sensory perception alone: they must bring their ideas of the material text to bear on their reading experience, imagining parchment rather than handing it. This copy of the poem, for all of its reflexive relationship with the manuscript, still requires the imaginative input of its reader.

The 'Long Charter of Christ' and Ideas of the Material Text

If the 'Short Charter' is partially concerned with embodying another kind of material text, then the 'Long Charter' can be considered fully committed to exploring conceptions of the material textuality, but less committed to embodying it. Nineteen witnesses to the 'Long Charter of Christ' are now documented: eight of the A-Text, ten of the B-Text, and one of the C-Text. The 'Long Charter' appears in a range of manuscripts, although their contents are somewhat less diverse than those of the 'Short Charter', often consisting of collections of verse, or religious and moral texts.[266] The one exception to this literary context is that of Oxford, Magdalen College Library, MS St Peter-in-the-East 18.e, which bears a fragment of the A-Text of the 'Long Charter' on the back of a secular charter.[267] Unlike the 'Short Charter', the witnesses of the 'Long Charter' make little effort to replicate the *mise-en-page* of the charter, the majority appearing simply as single or double column poems, but their textual content explains the metaphor of Christ's body-as-charter more expansively. The 'Long Charter' documents the entirety of salvation history through the Christ-as-Charter document, from his conception to his ascension, and then discusses the efficacy and necessity of the Eucharist. In a departure from the 'Short Charter', the B-Text of the 'Long Charter' includes a framing voice at the start of the poem which emphasises the text's importance, and offers direction for the reader. In the

[266] *DIMEV* 2859 (A-Text); 6650 (B-Text); 1913 (C-Text).
[267] The charter details the presentment made in the King's Court, Oxford, by the Master and other members of the Hospital of St John the Baptist on September 13th, 1412, to the Proctors of the university, who were stopped from causing nuisance by making a new window in Black Hall in the parish of St Peter-in-the-East.

last lines of the poem, Christ explains how he shall be recognised at the Second Coming by his coat of arms, which will be emblazoned with his wounds. Christ explains that God will then act as Justice for those who have not practised their devotion.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore how the 'Long Charter of Christ' engages with ideas of textual materiality. In this analysis, I will mostly consider the content of the B-Text, the longest version of the 'Long Charter', with occasional reference to the A-Text. Firstly, I will dissect how the extended documentary metaphor of the 'Long Charter' functions, and consider its intertextual references. These references, I argue, relate to a network of devotional texts which grapple with ideas of materiality and representing Christ. I then move to consider the reading practices that the text encourages, and which rely on immaterial ideas of the book rather than a response to the manuscript. The framing voice of the poem, which is unique to the B-Text, introduces the idea of two types of reading: the material reading of the text, and the immaterial spiritual understanding of it. I argue that correspondingly, Christ is rendered a perfect text which is, through its perfect materiality, immaterial.

Legal Logic in the Long Charter

Whilst the 'Long Charter' is less insistent than the 'Short Charter' on visually replicating the charter document, it is more invested in providing a means of explaining the logic and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice through extended metaphor. The scope of the 'Long Charter' is broader than the 'Short Charter', encompassing all of salvation history, as well as more thoroughly explaining roles of God, Christ, Mary, Satan, and mankind within the charter metaphor. The charter conceit often draws in other material metaphors in order to embellish the characterisation of Christ, and impress upon the reader the power of documentary forms. Rosemary Woolf writes that it would be 'possible, but tedious' to unravel the myriad connections made between the crafting of a charter document and the history of salvation. Yet it is, I argue, necessary to disentangle them to appreciate the richness of the text, and to assess the means by which it excites devotional reflection.

As in the 'Short Charter', the 'Long Charter' B-Text employs a first-person address, merging the voice of the documentary form and that of Christ. One notable difference between the A-Text and the B-Text is their tense: the A-Text offers the events in past tense, whilst the B-Text is in present, the latter casting the reader as a spectator in the events of the crucifixion as well as a devout reader of the charter. The relationship between the material text and Christ is more fluid than that of the 'Short Charter', with Christ sometimes figured as the Lord for whom the charter is written, and the document which bears the agreement. In the first lines spoken by Christ in the B-Text, Christ describes how in order to grant access to heaven to the people of earth, he performed the livery of seisin: the legal transfer of property from the transferor to the transferee, which is performed in the presence of

witnesses and on the land being exchanged.[268] In the 'Long Charter', this is achieved by Christ (the transferor) coming to earth and dwelling with mankind (the transferee). This enactment of seisin is described as the time which Christ spends in Mary's womb: 'Come this seyson furst in place/ Virgyn mary mayde mylde/ Wyth me he went grete with childe' (ll. 50-51), *seyson* here meaning seisin, rather than season.[269] These lines figure Mary as a kind of lawyer or legal clerk, her body able to conceive Christ who is at once the corporal transferer of land and a legal document.[270]

This representation of Mary is a distinct divergence from her role in the 'Short Charter', where she is listed among the witnesses to the charter signing, but not included in the detail regarding the charter's creation. The characterisation of Mary as an legal practitioner is an extension of her role as intercessor, a position which was keenly understood in late medieval England.[271] Adrienne Williams Boyarin has explored the portrayal of the Virgin Mary as a legal *mediatrix* who performs a distinctly documentary role, explaining that 'as Mary bore Christ, she becomes both the container for, and the bearer of, God's law': she is the '*Arca Testamenti*'.[272] Boyarin draws particular attention to the illustrations of London, British Library, MS Additional 37049 (which also bears a copy of the 'Short Charter', as previously discussed), that includes, among other allusions to Mary as a legal mediator, an illustration of Mary returning a charter to a young man who has made a pact with the devil, which accompanies the text 'The Devil and a Young Man Make a Charter' (f. 95^{r}).[273] This depiction of Mary as bearer of legal documents feels far removed from that of *mater dolorosa*, although this too is brought out in the later lines of the poem which emphasise her suffering at the sight of Christ's suffering, 'the peynys that y hadd were ful sore/ ffor my modir they were the more' (ll. 281-282). The role of the Virgin in the history of salvation is more fully explicated in the 'Long Charter', which affords her more autonomy by emphasising her role in crafting the Christ-charter.

As in the 'Short Charter', the document is described as being Christ's crucified body, with the Jews rendered as torturous scribes. His skin on the cross is likened to parchment being stretched on a frame: 'Sone aftyr y-straynyd vppon a tre/ As parchement owȝt to be' (ll. 157-158). The blood dripping from his crown of thorns is ink: 'Of my face fill downe the ynke/ Whan thornys on my hed gan synke' (ll. 161-162). The scourges which wound him are 'the pennys that the lettris were with wrytene/ were skorges that y was with betyne' (ll. 163-164). The wounds made to Christ's body are then enumerated, and described as also being black and dark, again like the letters of a text:

---

[268] Peter Beal, *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology, 1450-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 364-375.
[269] All textual quotations are taken from Spalding's transcription of the 'Long Charter' B-Text found in Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ii. 3. 26 unless otherwise stated. See Spalding, *The Middle English Charters* (pp. 46-80). *MED*, seisin(e (n.), senses 1, 2 and 3.
[270] See p. 107 of this thesis.
[271] Thomas J. Heffernan, 'The Virgin as an Aid to Salvation in some Fifteenth-Century English and Latin Verses', *Medium Aevum*, 52 (1983), 229-238.
[272] Adrienne Williams Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010), p. 114.
[273] Ibid., pp. 115-137.

Rede and thow myste wyte and seen*e*
Wit*h* .V.M.CCCC. fifty and ten
Wowndis i*n* my body blak and whan*e* (ll. 166-168)

In these lines, the boundary between the description of Christ's body and its metaphorical representation as a charter are continually blurred. This blurring is gestured towards in the use of the term 'rede' (l. 166), and the numeration of the wounds 'Wit*h* .V.M.CCCC. fifty and ten' (l. 167), which present Christ as a document to be read, and callously document the number of wounds in a manner that is reminiscent of real charters. A simile is then used to describe Christ's stretching 'As p*ar*chement' (l. 158), but a metaphor is applied for the description of his blood as ink: 'Of my face fill downe the ynke' (l. 161). This is directly followed by neither a metaphor nor a simile, but an explanation that Christ's ink-blood emanated from 'thornys on my hed' (l. 162). These three levels of language – the literal, the comparative, and the metaphorical – collapse the boundaries between direct description and figurative language, and rely on the reader's own imagination to navigate between their experience of material texts and more imaginative renderings of them.

However, whereas the 'Short Charter' describes Christ's side wound alone as the seal for the charter, the 'Long Charter' states that 'ffyue selis were sett ther*e* on' (l. 231), the seals being the wounds of the crown of thorns, the three nail wounds (his feet being crossed over), and the side-wound. These five seals, it is explained, are those of the 'faddir son god and man/ the fythe that y louyd meste/ that y come of holy goste' (ll. 232-234). Each seal represents one of the various consubstantial persons of God, which are rendered disparate, but related, through their possession of individual seals. The making of the seal is also described in greater detail than in the 'Short Charter'. The seal matrix is described as being made of the steel and iron of the *arma Christi*, instead of the gold or silver which the seal stamps of wealthy individuals would have used:

Was y-made at the smyth
Of golde and syluyr hit is nowȝt
But of stele and yren it is wrowȝt (ll. 217-220)

And his heart-root is made the location in which the wax for the seals is mixed with pigment:

This selyng*e* was dyre y-bowght
At my hert rote hit was y-wrowȝt
Y-temp*er*id with fyne vermelon
On my rede blod it ran downe (ll. 227-230)

In the Middle English recipes which offer direction for colouring wax, most advise heating the wax and the pigmented substance together over a fire in some sort of vessel.[274] Christ's heart, then, is

[274] For example, one recipe for making a 'red wex or grene' advises that the to make a red wax, the maker must 'breke thy wax yn small pecys of the bygnes of a gont of thy finger, and melt yt yn a clene pan […] and put

figured as a heated space, metaphorically capable of melting and tempering wax. Indeed, this corresponds to visual depictions of the Sacred Heart, either within Christ's body or isolated outside of it, which are often depicted as flaming. Patricia Simmons explains that such visual representations of Christ's heart as shining or burning became popular in the fifteenth century, especially in woodcuts, and that they represented the intensity of love shown by Christ for mankind at the crucifixion.[275] This conventional image was itself, then, a metaphor: the intensity of emotional feeling translated visually as the physical intensity of heat.

Christ then states that as Satan has repeatedly destroyed this seisin through sin, he will draw up a charter that grants man's access to heaven in perpetuity: 'y haue hi*m* g*ra*untid and y-yeve/ In my kyngdome wit*h* me to leue/ Euyr to be in heuen blisse' (ll. 189-191). This access is free, Christ explains, as it is mankind's inheritance from Christ, 'My herytage þat is so fre' (l. 199), but he does ask that they pay a nominal 'rent' (l. 198), which is that of a 'foure leuyd grase' (l. 202), also referred to as the 'trew loue' (l. 208). In the 'Charter Long', the four leaves of the True Love represent the four activities which man must perform to live a godly life. As Susanna Greer Fein writes, references to the True Love plant are found in other late medieval devotional texts.[276] The True Love, Fein explains, was used as a devotional symbol in various texts, and was employed diversely to represent a parallel to the shape of the cross, an emblem of the Trinity and the Virgin Mary, a herb of spiritual healing, and a plant of divine love. An extended metaphor of the True Love can be found in the poem *The Quatrefoil of Love*, which, significantly, also plays with self-referential textual materiality as the poem is written on four leaves of parchment.[277] The explanation in the 'Long Charter' that rent be paid with the True Love is therefore a metaphor within a metaphor, the payment specified by Christ another example of a material object, in this case a plant, which is rendered immaterial in the context of the poem.

Once Christ dies, he takes the charter formed during the crucifixion down to hell, 'To hell y went þis chartou*r* to shew/ By-fore sathanas þat grete schrew' (ll. 341-342), in order to claim his 'catell' (l.347), his property. The charter which Christ takes to Satan is, of course, himself. Here, the materiality of the charter explains the Harrowing of Hell: Christ could descend to hell because, as a metaphorised charter, he is eminently portable, discernible to all who look upon him, and proof of righteous power. Christ uses his charter-body to claim back his 'catell' (l. 347), those who rightfully

---

therto .iij. vnce of wel gryndyn vermylon, and euermore styr to the most hete be awey' (ll. 17-27), in Mark Clarke, ed., *The Craft of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyng, Middle English Recipes from Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators*, EETS O.S. 347 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 267.

[275] Patricia Simmons, 'The Flaming Heart: Pious and Amorous Passion in Early Modern European Medical and Visual Culture', in *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Meaning, Embodiment and Making*, ed. by Katie Barclay and Bronwyn Reddan (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), pp. 19-43 (pp. 24-29).

[276] Susanna Greer Fein, 'Why Did Absolon Put a "Trewelove" Under His Tongue? Herb Paris as Healing "Grace" in Middle English Literature', *The Chaucer Review*, 25 (1991), 302-317 (303-305).

[277] Susanna Greer Fein, *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), pp. 161-154.

belonged with him in Heaven, which he then removes himself to. In the concluding part of the extended charter-metaphor, Christ then explains an indenture to the charter he has made is left in the hands of priests in the form of the sacrament: 'Saue a denture y bere with me / […] In the preste-is honde flesch and blode' (ll. 353-355). The 'Short Charter' describes no such component to the charter, but the employment of the indenture in the 'Long Charter' acts to explain the efficacy of the sacrament. To create an indenture, the text of the charter would be duplicated on the same sheet of parchment for as many parties as needed. The sheet was then cut between each duplication, so that each copy was a portable document. Often this cut was jagged so that the documents, named 'chirographs', could be verified by bringing all parts of the charter together, their jagged edges fitting together like pieces of a puzzle.[278]In the 'Long Charter', the indenture left to mankind is that of the sacrament taken during mass, where bread and wine become flesh and blood at the moment of elevation. The sacramental bread and wine, given at every mass in every Catholic church, are endless duplications of Christ's body which bear testament to his power and grace, much like the indenture is a duplication which testifies towards the charter's authenticity. As Cristina Maria Cervone puts it:

> Christ's body, his skin, becomes the vehicle for the message of salvation, while his body, the Eucharist, is the infinitely replicable form available to Christians throughout time. The original grantor's copy, his crucified body, is preserved archivally in heaven until needed as a witness at the end of time.[279]

The metaphor of the indenture therefore explains the efficacy of the Eucharist by using the reader's knowledge of the materiality of the indenture. A comprehension of the material text is used to facilitate an understanding of sacramental logic: just as the indenture is both representative and materially part of the charter, so the eucharist is both representative and materially made of Christ's body. The significance of the earlier description of the sacramental bread and wine as 'Hit semyth meny and is but oone' (l. 117) and 'Hit is quykk and semyth ded' (l. 119) then becomes clear. Whilst indentures and the sacraments may seem inanimate and powerless copies, they are active or 'quykk' objects whose multitude does not dilute its efficacy, but rather expands its reach. The material text becomes a useful vehicle through which the power of the eucharist, and its material status as both a part and a whole, can be explained.

Finally, Christ states that when he comes to earth again, the charter shall be read and God, presiding as a Justice, will judge those souls: 'Whan this chartou*r* schall be radd/ Of the Iustyse be well ware/ Certesyse he nell no man spar*e*' (ll.386-388). Here, the extended metaphor of the charter form reaches its conclusion. God is cast as a 'Iustyse' (l. 386), a title which encompasses his role at Judgement Day and as a legal enactor.[280] The more thorough and detailed exploration of the charter metaphor in the 'Long Charter' provides clarity on the roles of Christ, God, Mary, and Satan, as well

[278] L.C. Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents*, 2nd edn. (London: Edward Arnold, 1996), p. 108.
[279] Cristina Maria Cervone, *Poetics of Incarnation: Middle English Writing and the Leap of Love* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 91.
[280] *MED*, justice (n.), sense 5a and d.

emphasising the impact of the crucifixion. But it also alters the way the reader engages with the poem. Whereas the previously analysed examples of the 'Short Charter' provided visual illustrations in order to guide the reader's understanding of the text, the 'Long Charter' offers more rhetorical detail so that the reader might freely generate their own visualisations. In this way, the 'Long Charter' relies less on the materiality of its witnesses and the design of the page, and more on immaterial *ideas* about material texts.

Immaterial Reading Practices and Immaterial Texts

I will now turn to consider how and why immaterial ideas about texts feature in the 'Long Charter', and how they elicit an affective response. One of the most significant differences between the 'Short Charter' and B-Text of the 'Long Charter' is the inclusion of a framing voice in the latter. In the B-Text of the 'Long Charter' poem, Christ's testimony is preceded by twenty-five lines spoken by an unnamed poetic voice. This voice directs how the text should be read, the opening lines of poem addressing the reader:

> Hho so euer will rede this bok
> And wit*h* gostly ey there-yn lok
> To othir thynge schall he not wende
> To saue his sowle fro the fende' (ll.1-4).

In first line of the B-Text the poem significantly departs from the 'Short Charter's' effort of visually and verbally masquerading as a legal document. Instead, the speaker acknowledges that the poem is likely to be written in a 'bok' (l. 1). Although the term 'bok' can refer to a legal document it is more commonly used to describe a codex, and as the poem employs various other precise terms to refer to the charter (including 'chartou*r*' (l. 71) 'feoffamen*t*' (l. 71), and 'dedis' (l. 194)), it is reasonable to assume that this term is referring to a codex.[281] Indeed, of all the witnesses to B-Text (and indeed all of the A- and C-Texts bar Oxford, Magdalen College, MS St. Peter-in-the-East 18.e) are written in books. The poem is consequently presented as acknowledging its status as a poem likely to be found in a book, rather than as a legal document written on a single parchment sheet. The framing voice, in these opening lines, marks the poem as a literary text which plays with the *ideas* of textual materiality, rather than self-reflexive imitations of the charter form.

The engagement with the material form of the codex, rather than the charter, continues in the second line, 'And wit*h* gostly ey there-yn lok' (l. 2). The insistence that the 'bok' is to be looked 'there-yn', again gestures towards the material qualities of the codex, which requires its covers to be opened for its texts to be read, rather than a charter, which occupied only one side of a sheet of

[281] *MED*, bok (n.), sense 1a and 5a.

parchment or paper. This direction towards looking into the book also corresponds to what Martha Dana Rust notes as the 'latent interiority attributed to texts'.[282] Rust writes that late medieval texts often included 'directions for and depictions of reading […which] equate ethical readerly engagement with the effort of getting "inside" those textual spaces'.[283] The prefaces which figure the text as an interior space encourage a practice that Rust calls 'involved reading', which she defines as a reading style marked by a feeling of narrative involvement, intense visualisation, empathetic feeling.[284] The B-Text of the 'Long Charter' uses ideas about the material text, which are in part reflective of the material qualities of the codex form, to encourage a particular kind of affective reading practice.

Yet these first two lines of the poem, 'Hho so euer will rede this bok/ And wit*h* gostly ey ther*e*-yn lok' (ll. 1-2) can be understood to establish a different kind of reading practice based on immateriality. In these opening lines, the reader of the text is asked to perform two parallel kinds of reading: they must read the material text with their corporal eyes, as well as look in the book with their spiritual sight. Beth Williamson explains that during the later medieval period, two kinds of sensory systems were believed to exist, that pertaining to the physical body (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch), and 'a set of interior or inner senses that operated on an imaginative level and were related to, but distinct from, the physical senses'.[285] The speaker's request that the reader should look in the book with their 'gostly eye' (l.2), as well as 'rede' (l.1) the text, consequently engages with both the immaterial and material practices of reading: the reader must discern the immaterial, spiritual value of the text with their immaterial, spiritual eye, as well as read the material text with their corporal eyes. This sense of a spiritual eye performing spiritual reading is reinforced a few lines later when the speaker asks the reader for their charity: 'Whar*e*-for y pr*a*y yow for charite/ In this booke ye reede and see/ With all youre hert and yowr*e* mynd' (ll.7-9). Again, the acts of reading and seeing are performed by the 'hert' and the 'mynd' (l.9) rather than the eyes, and are accordingly removed from the realm of the ocular and into that of spiritual discernment.

This distinction between the seeing eye and the interior spiritual eye is also important for the poem's image-making scheme. If, as previously discussed, the 'Short Charter' is made skeuomorphic by using visual mimicry of a documentary form to solidify the charter metaphor, then the 'Long Charter' can be understood as ekphrastic, encouraging the reader to produce their own imaginative images of the charter document. Mary Carruthers explains that directions to 'see' or 'look' through the process of reading are often an invitation for readers to imagine or envision textual description. Carruthers writes that:

---

[282] Martha Dana Rust, *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books: Exploring the Manuscript Matrix* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 11.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Ibid., p. 10.
[285] Beth Williamson, 'Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence', *Speculum*, 88 (2014), 1-43 (3).

> through ekphrasis and related figures, one could paint with words alone, making imaginary pictures that never seem to have been realised in what we would consider to be a pictorial way. Such verbal *picturae* are addressed directly to the memory of the reader, for it is in one's own *vis imaginativa* and *memoria* that they are given picture form.[286]

The idea that these images are addressed to the memory of the reader is evidenced in the 'Long Charter', which repeatedly asks for particular images to be borne 'in mynde'. Indeed, this phrase or related iterations appears seven times in the course of the poem: 'that ye schall kepe wit*h* all yo*u*r þought' (l. 16); 'and haue this chartou*r* eu*er* in mynde' (l. 76); 'therefore take hit to yowre mynde' (l. 113); 'haue my wondirfull dedis i*n* mynde' (l. 194); 'Yf thou loue me haue this i*n* mynde' (l. 257); 'þoure man haue this i*n* mynde' (l. 301); 'By-holde man with hert and eye/ ffor thy loue how y schall deye' (ll. 321-322). The poem's continual urging of the reader to generate their own imaginative images to accompany the text enables more numerous and complicated scenes to be described. The plethora of melding visions – of documents, people, plants, clothing – would be impossible to represent through visual art.

This value of reader-generated images is keenly felt in the (aforementioned) lines which describe the enumerated wounds made to Christ's body:

> Rede and thow myste wyte and seen*e*
> Wit*h* .V.M.CCCC. fifty and ten
> Wowndis i*n* my body blak and whan*e* (ll. 166-168).

This description of Christ having 5,460 wounds, which are also letters testifying to Christ's sacrifice, again exposes a concern with ideas of material and textual representation.[287] The record of the precise number of wounds is a mirror to the exactitude which a written document provides, but it is also something of a material impossibility, as a body with so many wounds could hardly be expected to remain intact. Late medieval artists also seem to have struggled with conveying Christ's absurdly large number of wounds, often covering woodcuts in hand-painted red blood splatters, speckling illustrations Christ's body with pox-like dots (as seen in the seal illustration of Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 6686), or, in the case of London, British Library, MS Egerton 1821, covering pages of a book in red ink with slightly darker blood drops. Through the reading of the text, the poem states, the immense suffering of Christ might be 'wyte and seen*e*' (l. 116). 'Wyte', in this sense, refers to the act of understanding something comprehensively, to know something, or believe it.[288] As copies of the 'Long Charter' are not accompanied by illustrations, the reference to seeing, 'seen*e*', can be presumed to refer to the imaginative generation of images performed by the reader. Whilst the myriad wounds of Christ cannot be fully realised through an artistic rendering, they can be produced

[286] Ibid., p. 291.
[287] For a discussion of the enumeration of Christ's wounds in late medieval literature, see Andrew Breeze, 'The Number of Christ's Wounds', *The Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies,* 32 (1985), 84-91.
[288] *MED*, witen (v.), all senses.

in the mind of the reader; as Carruthers explains, 'a textual picture is as good as a painted one in addressing memory work, for it can be painted by imagination without the constraints of paint and parchment'.[289] Whereas the 'Short Charter' *is* to some degree constrained by the limits of its skeuomorphic use of paint and parchment, the 'Long Charter' is more heavily reliant on the images painted in the mind of the reader, allowing for more idiosyncratic responses to the text.

Indeed, the importance of the readerly imagination and its ability to exceed the bounds of material reality is exemplified by the description of Christ's skin, which become in the 'Long Charter' a perfect material text. In the poem, Christ relates that he was unable to secure suitable parchment on which to document the grant, 'Parchemente to fynde wyste y none/ To make a charto*u*r a-yenste thy fone/ That schall leste wit*h*-outyn munde' (ll. 89-91). That is, he cannot find a parchment which would last without his attention, his 'munde'. Instead, he uses his own skin as the writing support for his charter: 'Myne owne skynne y toke there-to' (ll. 93-94). The sense that Christ's skin is prepared as parchment is even more evident in the A-Text, where he is described as being 'Tuged & tawed all a nyght' (A-Text, l. 76), *tauen* a verb that is exclusively used to describe the preparation of animal skin with alum and salt to provide a supple white leather, or parchment skin, and can be seen in multiple Middle English recipes which describe how to make leather and parchment.[290] The qualities which Christ seeks for his parchment vary slightly between A-Text copies: that of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet 175, has 'Ne might I fynd na p*ar*chemyne/ for to last wit*h*-outen fyne' (ll. 51-2), whilst in London, British Library, MS Add. 11307 these lines are 'Ne myȝte I fynde no parchemyn/ for to laston wel and fyn' (ll. 51-2). For the A-Text of MS Rawl. poet 175, regular parchment will not endure sufficiently, it will not last 'wit*h*-outen fyne', without end. For the A-Text of MS Add. 11307, Christ laments that he cannot find a parchment that both 'laston wel and fyn', that lasts for a long time and that is of superior quality (be that purity of colour, quality of craftmanship, or ideal thickness).[291] But what is clear from the A-text and the B-Text is that Christ considers animal parchment materially insufficient for his eternal charter. For the reader, the lacking quality of terrestrial parchment might have been emphasised through the very witness they held, which would either be paper, or pore-ridden, stained parchment. In declaring the materiality of animal parchment unsuitable, and using his own body as the writing support instead, the 'Long Charter' moves away from the self-reflexivity of the 'Short Charter', and towards intangible, conceptual ideas about material texts.

So, whilst the 'Short' and 'Long' Charters may be considered 'ingenious', they are not 'coldly' so, to return to Rosemary Woolf's terms again.[292] Both poems engage with the materiality of charters to explain Christ's sacrifice, humankind's relationship to Christ, and sacramental logic. But they also, as I have shown, elicit an affective response which is achieved differently between the two

[289] Ibid., p. 292.
[290] *MED*, tauen (v.), sense 1. Mark Clarke records six examples of recipes which use the term, all of them relating to parchment or leather making, see Clarke, *CLMS*, p. 440.
[291] *MED*, fin (adj.), senses 1, 3, 10, 11.
[292] Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric*, p. 212

poems: the ‘Short Charter’s affectivity lies more in its self-reflexive relationship with its manuscript witnesses, whilst the ‘Long Charter’s is found in its ability to excite mental images through rhetorical description. At the start of this chapter, I considered examples of the ‘Short Charter’ where the visual and verbal aspects of the text appeared to reinforce one another seamlessly. However, as this chapter progressed, I have shown that copies of both the ‘Short’ and ‘Long’ Charter require more than self-reflexivity between text and manuscript: they also rely on the reader’s own knowledge and understanding of material texts, and their imaginative capabilities. This tension between the immediate experience of a material text and intellectual conceptions about them was pointed towards in the book-craft recipes of the previous chapter, and will continue to appear in the next chapter, in which I explore late medieval lyrics.

Chapter Three: Defamiliarizing the Material Text in Devotional Lyrics

> Mercyful I*esu*! of grace do adverte
> wit*h* thilke lycour which þou dydest bleede,
> By rememberau*n*ce to write hem in myn herte
> Ech day onys that I may hem reede,
> Close þe capytallys vnder þ*i* purpil weede
> Wit*h* offte thynkyng on thy bloody fface,
> Thorugh my*n* entraylles let þi passiou*n* sprede,
> Marked tho karectys when I shall hens passe. (ll. 281-288)[293]

This stanza is from the lyric 'O blyssed lord my lord, O Cryst Iesu', commonly known as 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ', by John Lydgate (c. 1370-1451).[294] Here, the speaker of the poem beseeches Christ to 'write' (l. 283) in his body so that he might better understand and remember Christ's sacrifice, but the metaphor is complicated and continually shifting. The speaker initially asks that Christ use his own blood, the 'lycour which þou dydest bleede' (l. 282) as his ink, and to write 'Ech day onys' so that the speaker might 'reede' (l. 284) Christ's suffering back to themselves, the same verb used in the previously-analysed Charter of Christ poems. He then asks that Christ write 'capytallys' (l. 285), decorative initials, on his 'entraylles' (l. 287). These capitals, the poem implies, are Christ's wounds, which are 'vnder þ*i* purpil weede' (l. 258) and 'on thy bloody fface' (l. 286). Significantly, the 'entraylles' (l. 287), the internal organs of the speaker, were understood in the late medieval period as

[293] John Lydgate, 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* Vol. I, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Trübner, 1911), pp. 238-239. *DIMEV* 3843.
[294] This chapter will refer to lyrics by their first line as is critical convention, but will acknowledge other titles if they are widely used.

the seat of human emotion, and it is here where the speaker asks Christ's passion to 'sprede' (l. 287). In the final lines, the speaker explains that he will be marked with Christ's 'karectys' (l. 288), *carecte* here meaning a scar or wound, but also a symbol, a written letter, and the sign of the cross, which will remain 'when I shall hens pass' (l. 288), when he dies.[295] In this short stanza, the familiarity of the material text is made unfamiliar: the writing support is not paper or parchment but the human heart and entrails, the ink is Christ's blood, and capital letters are wounds. Like the Charter of Christ poems, this lyric compares Christ's tortured body to the material text, but unlike those poems there is no specific kind of documentary material which Christ is compared to − the metaphor of the material text is nebulous.

'Defamiliarization' refers to the technique of depicting everyday objects in a way that differs from their usual presentation in order to provoke a more nuanced understanding of the familiar.[296] The term was coined in 1917 by the formalist Viktor Shklovsky in his essay 'Art as Device', who used it to describe the difference between common speech and poetic language, but he later extended it to describe any work of visual or literary art. The use of defamiliarization in literature, he argues, prevents the reader from over-automizing, and asks them to reconsider their perception of an object through unusual or difficult language. This process relies on the viewer or reader being accustomed to the everyday object in question – knowing how it was made, its material qualities and its uses. This is well illustrated in Grayson Perry's medieval-influenced etching, 'Map of Nowhere' (2008).[297] The circular map, influenced by the early fourteenth-century Hereford Mappa Mundi and the destroyed Ebstorf Map, does not depict a topographical rendering of a landscape, but a satirical mapping of contemporary concerns, including his own body: the expanses of water on the map, for example, are labelled 'Meaningless' and 'Here and Now', and a portrait of Perry's head appears at the top of the etching. Perry's 'Map of Nowhere' disrupts the viewers' understanding of cartography, a familiar form, and consequently heightens the viewer's appreciation that maps ultimately reveal the preoccupations of both the cartographer and the society in which they live.

The material text, I argue, is often defamiliarized in late medieval Middle English lyrics. The images of the material text used in religious lyrics render its constituent parts alien to the reader or listener: ink becomes blood, pens become spears, letters become his wounds, and parchment or paper sheets become anything from tree leaves to body parts. The material text, once familiar, becomes strange. Conversely, the holy figures these books represent or interact with become, if not less strange, at least more comprehensible through their apparent similarities with the material text. This reciprocal relationship between books and holy figures, and defamiliarization and familiarisation,

[295] *MED*, carect(e (n.), senses 1 and 2.
[296] Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 11–16. See also R. H. Stacey, *Defamiliarization in Language and Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1977).
[297] Jackie Klein, *Grayson Perry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009), p. 162.

means that the book images in these lyrics function as what Bill Brown terms *metaobjects*, which he defines as '[the object] that isn't satisfied with just being an object and seems to insist instead on taking other objects or object culture as its object of address'.[298] This is often complicated further in medieval religious lyrics which themselves gesture towards their own objecthood, whilst using the material culture of religious practice as its object of address. These lyrics consequently require the reader to pause and consider both the materiality of the metaphors of material texts used in the lyric, but also the materiality of the lyric which they are reading, both as a material reality and an idea.

In this chapter, I examine a selection of lyrics which defamiliarize the material text. Firstly, I consider a selection of John Lydgate's lyrics. Lydgate's lyrics, as exhibited in the opening to this chapter, often defamiliarize the material text by metaphorically representing it as Christ's body, or the body of the speaker. Furthermore, Lydgate often presents these material texts as what I shall later call 'imagetexts' (following W.J.T Mitchell and Jessica Brantley) by stressing both their imagistic and textual qualities. This, I argue, defamiliarizes the reader's perception of the material text, as it encourages them to not only consider the context of a text, but also its visual qualities, as they would a piece of visual art. Next, I consider three different *abece* lyrics, which use the alphabet and allusions to late medieval early-learning practices in order to elucidate on the Passion and the virtue of the Virgin Mary. These lyrics defamiliarize two particular kinds of material text – primers which contain alphabets, and hornbooks – by presenting them as objects capable of educating an adult readership, as opposed to only children. *Abece* poems, I argue, defamiliarize the process of learning to read, and letter forms themselves. Finally, I examine lyrics which depict miraculous material texts. These texts are rendered miraculous as their creation is either explicitly, or implicitly, credited to God, and this defamiliarizes the process of textual creation. In this final analysis, I focus on one particular lyric, 'Revertere', in which a young man happens upon briar leaves inscribed with the titular Latin term. Ultimately, I conclude that while many of these lyrics can still be considered affective in their subject matter, and often promote a meditative reading practice, they are more striking for their cognitive explanations on how God's word is best memorised and meditated upon, how reading constitutes devotional practice, and how reading God's word is miraculous in itself.

Middle English Religious Lyrics

Middle English religious lyrics are, as Christiania Whitehead writes, 'a singularly heterogeneous brood', varying in content, style, voice, performance, and manuscript context, and their variation

[298] Bill Brown, 'Objects, Others and Us (The Refabrication of Things)', *Critical Inquiry*, 36 (2010), 183-217 (191-192).

makes them hard texts to define.[299] Religious lyrics, in both medieval books and modern editions, are often described using a variety of titles, including 'treatises', 'orisons', 'meditations', and 'prayers'. Conversely, it is easy to see how, when removed from their textual surroundings, some parts of the liturgy, such as Introits, Offertories and Graduals, themselves resemble small lyrics.[300] However, some recurring themes and formal features are discernible in the religious poems considered in this chapter: they are often shorter in length, they often focus on the intense emotional and physical experiences of the lyric 'I', and they can often be understood as attempting to promote a meditative response in their reader.

As Rosemary Woolf states, 'a history of the religious lyric that seeks to be comprehensive must become in part a history of medieval meditation and devotion'.[301] Lyrics in English first appear in any number in the preaching notebooks of friars from the middle of the thirteenth century. These earliest lyrics also sometimes feature in miscellanies produced by religious orders who wished to record the more elaborate and artful of this kind of poem, and often these miscellanies 'have provided the final resting place for lyrics'.[302] In the fifteenth century, the focus here, lyrics are found in a far broader range of manuscript contexts, including in sermons, longer texts into which lyrics are embedded, notebooks, and scribbled on flyleaves. Purely poetic collections also emerged, with the unifying principle of the collection sometimes being the author, rather than the subject matter, as well as thematic or more idiosyncratic anthologies.[303] These varying manuscript contexts also suggest the variety of ways in which these poems may have been read: for devotional purposes, for consolation, for entertainment or for educative and mnemonic motives. Lyrics, then, are defamiliarized in the very manuscript settings they appear in, often present in textual circumstances which complicate how the lyric is intended to be understood. These surprising manuscript contexts of the lyric, however, do not erase the impact of meditative reading practices encouraged by the religious orders who initially recorded them. Monastic *lectio* encouraged a style of reading that was punctuated with prayer and opportunities for *meditatio* in order to reflect on the content of the text.[304] Defamiliarization, I argue, works in reciprocity with *meditatio*: the unfamiliar material descriptions of books encourage the reader to pause and consider the changing material descriptions of the material text, and likewise *meditatio* supplies the reader with the space to consider these disconcerting images.

Although there are examples of lyrics which defamiliarize the material text in the early fourteenth century, such as the lyrics by William Herebert, the technique more commonly occurs in

[299] Christiania Whitehead, 'Middle English Religious Lyric', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. by Thomas G. Duncan (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), pp. 96-119 (p. 96).
[300] Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 4.
[301] Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 13.
[302] Ibid, p. 374.
[303] Ibid., pp. 375-376.
[304] M.B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon, 1991), p. 35.

lyrics of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[305] The changing landscape of literacy and book production has already been outlined in the introduction to this thesis, but its relation to the development of the religious lyric warrants pausing over. As Sarah McNamer explains, religious lyrics of these later centuries developed to 'reflect the needs, desires, and anxieties of lay men of the middling and upper ranks—a newly prominent textual community that can also be identified as an "emotional community"'.[306] McNamer's findings map well on to those of Christiana Whitehead, who writes that late medieval lyrics which stress Christ's unequivocal love of mankind also produce a 'poetics of anxiety', and she notes that this anxiety is 'arguably more evident in these lyrics for mediators of a mixed ability and dedication than in monastic devotional literature.[307] To bring these two critical perspectives together, it can be concluded that late medieval religious lyrics developed to fulfil the needs of at least somewhat educated or wealthy laymen, and these lyrics often reveal a poetics of anxiety. Perhaps, then, the images and metaphors of the material text found religious lyrics are both part of, and a response to, this anxiety of late medieval laypeople. As this chapter will show, the defamiliarizing descriptions of material texts often explain to the reader how they might improve their devotional commitment to God by metaphorically inscribing his words in their bodies, by perceiving any literate practice as a devotional act, and by reflecting on their own sins as if they were turning the pages of a book.

To uncover this defamiliarization, I will apply the close reading practices outlined in the introduction. That said, Ardis Butterfield warns of the dangers of attempting a close reading of individual late medieval English lyrics, and cautions that because of their variability, close reading 'may do little to illuminate the larger practice of that poet, let alone of that poet's generation of writers and their sense of language'.[308] She does, however, identify that close reading can be usefully employed to understand the 'unstoppable lateral connections [which] turn each verse unit into a dazzling and expanding maze of links, and sets if off on a long performance of collective memory'.[309] This is the method of analysis in this chapter: I do not seek to provide evidence of a comprehensive, unified perception of the material text from these lyrics, but acknowledge the multiplicity of their representation, and explore how this variety is exposed through defamiliarization.

[305] See, for example, William Herebert, 'Hymn to the Virgin Mary', in *The Works of William Herebert, OFM*, ed. by Stephen R. Reimer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988), pp. 118-120, *DIMEV* 5865, which invokes the charter image analysed in the previous chapter, and which describes Christ's side wound as an ink horn: 'Vor loue þe chartre wrot,/ Þe enke orn of hys wounde' (ll. 23-24).
[306] Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 177.
[307] Whitehead, 'Middle English Religious Lyric', p. 106.
[308] Ardis Butterfield, 'Why Medieval Lyric?', *ELH*, 82 (2015), 319-343 (335).
[309] Ibid., 336.

Lydgate's Material Imagetexts

Although John Lydgate's works were once derided by literary critics for their seemingly pedestrian emphasis on the materials of everyday living, they are now the focus of investigations into commonplace objects, the immaterial and material, and craft practices.[310] For example, Shannon Gayk has argued that Lydgate's references to the materiality of image and text ultimately act to reinforce orthodox religious thought by 'instruct[ing] the viewer in how to read images'.[311] Mary Flannery has also explored the use of mixed media in his poems, and explains that Lydgate often employs descriptions of images, symbols, and texts, in a manner which unites his identity as both an author of performance spectacles (such as pageants and mummings), and of literature which could be used for private devotion.[312] Most relevant to my analysis is Christine Cornell's argument that the use of images and texts in Lydgate's lyrics encourage a meditative reading practice more effectively than could be achieved by their occurrence in isolation.[313] Whilst others have stressed how Lydgate brings images and texts into conversation with one another, I will consider how he represents material texts, objects which are, by their very nature, textual *and* imagistic. I argue that Lydgate's depictions of material texts are often defamiliarizing, and that this defamiliarizing effect often promotes a meditative response that renders the reader's engagement with devotional material more complex, rather than simply eliciting an affective response.

Lydgate's playful approach towards textual materiality is present throughout his religious lyrics. The opening lines of his poems often employ humility topoi and appeals to various holy figures or classical muses to draw attention to the authorial and scribal labour of producing the work. For example, in 'A Thousand Stories I Could Me Rehearse' (also known as 'Ballade at the Reverence of our Lady, Qwene of Mercy') the speaker asks for inspiration to flow through his pen: 'O auriat licour off Clyo, for to wryte/ Mi penne enspire, of that I wold endite!' (ll. 13-14).[314] In some of Lydgate's lyrics, however, references to the material text are central to the poem's narrative and meaning. For example, the prologue stanzas of 'Atween Mydnyght and the Freesh Morewe Gray' (also known as 'The Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary') describe a meaningful encounter with the book which

---

[310] See Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[311] Shannon Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 84-122.
[312] Mary C. Flannery, 'Multimedia Lydgate and Stories "Shewyd in Fygur"' (2014) <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-004?rskey=Y8aF7w&result=3> [Date Accessed: 22.09.2021].
[313] Christine Cornell, '"Purtreture" and "Holsom Stories": John Lydgate's Accommodation of Image and Text in Three Religious Lyrics', *Florilegium,* 10 (1988), 167-178.
[314] John Lydgate, 'Ballade at the Reverence of our Lady, Qwene of Mercy', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Vol. I, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Trübner, 1911), pp. 254-260. *DIMEV* 178.

contains an illustration of the Virgin.[315] In this lyric, the speaker describes flicking through a book in the early hours of the morning, and finding a moving illustration of the Virgin, which is accompanied by a meditation on her joys and sorrows that he is compelled to copy down. The prologue to the poem opens with a haptic description of handling a book:

> Atween mydnyght and the freesh morewe gray,
> Nat yore ago, in hert ful pensiff,
> Of thoughtful sihes my peyne to put away,
> Caused by the trouble of this vnstabil liff,
> Vnclosed a book, that was contemplatiff;
> Of fortune turnyng the book, I fond,
> A meditaciou*n* which first cam to myn hond,
> Tofor which was sett out in picture
> Of Marie an ymage ful notable. (ll. 1-9)

The beginning of this stanza reads like the start of a dream vision, such as Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*, where the speaker falls asleep whilst reading the *Somnium Scipionis*.[316] This lyric, however, provides a lucid account of handling a book: the speaker 'Vnclosed a book' (l. 5) before 'turnyng' (l. 6) its pages. By 'fortune' (l. 6) he encounters a 'meditaciou*n*' (l. 7), a text which through its vague titling could itself be a lyric.[317] The speaker stops at an illustration of the Virgin Mary in the book, which is 'Lyke a pyte depeynt' (l. 10), i.e. a *pietà*, and is depicted 'With weepyng eyen, and cheer most lamentable' (l. 11).[318] This illustration is accompanied with an account of Mary's fifteen joys and sorrows, but rather than precising the content of the text, Lydgate provides an ekphrastic description of its visual appearance:

> By diligent and cleer inspeccion*n*
> I sauh Rubrisshis, departyd blak and Reed,
> Of ech Chapitle a paraf in the heed,
> Remembryd first Fifteen of her gladynessys,
> And next in ordre were set hyr hevynessys. (ll. 17-21)

Here, Lydgate has privileged the visual appearance of the text, which is subject to the speaker's 'diligent and cleer inspeccion*n*' (l. 17). The speaker describes what he 'sauh' (l. 18), and notes the use of 'Rubrisshis' (l. 18), of 'blak and Reed' (l. 18) inks, and of 'Chapitle[s]' (l. 19) and 'paraf[s]' (l. 19). This ekphrastic description is, I argue, defamiliarizing. Here, the text is described as if it were a piece of visual art, with the speaker noting the inclusion of specific ink colours, and the use of particular types of letters and symbols. This can be considered what W. J. T. Mitchell refers to as an

[315] Ibid., 'The Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary', pp. 268-279. *DIMEV* 843.
[316] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parliament of Fowls,* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 386. The speaker falls asleep at l. 95.
[317] *DIMEV* records four poems which include some form of the term 'meditation' in their title. See 'Meditacio' (*DIMEV* no. 1693), 'Meditacio de passione' (*DIMEV* no. 3617), 'Meditations of the Passion' (*DIMEV* no. 1524), and 'Meditations on the Soper' (*DIMEV* no. 1059).
[318] *MED*, pite (n.), sense 5.

'imagetext', which he defines as 'composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text'.[319] Jessica Brantley has considered the imagetexts of late medieval visionary literature in detail, and writes that 'visionary imagetexts insist upon an intimate relationship between seeing and reading, linking words with pictures in closely interdependent systems of signification'.[320] Yet this intimate relationship is, as Brantley acknowledges, also an uncomfortable one: the two methods of signification cannot fully represent each other, and often they remain incommensurable.[321] The ekphrastic description of the text within Lydgate's lyric, which privileges the visual appearance of the letter forms and symbols included within it, is defamiliarizing because it asks the reader to consider the poem as they would a picture, rather than a text. The book is perceived as a primarily visual object, rather than a solely textual one.

Indeed, this discomforting relationship is exacerbated when looking at the manuscripts which bear copies of 'Atween Mydnyght and the Freesh Morewe Gray'. In one copy found in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.21, the *mise-en-page* of the poem is a mirror to the description of a book it provides. This fifteenth-century manuscript contains two copies of this poem. The first of its copies is accompanied by little decoration, although a space has been left at the beginning of the poem's prologue and the poem proper for larger initials.[322] In this copy, holy names are written in red ink, and each of the stanzas in the main body of the poem are bracketed in red, as well as being accompanied by a *Pater* and *Ave*. The second of this manuscript's copies includes an illustration.[323] This illustration takes up all of the space designated for the initial drawing and spills into the left-hand margin. It depicts a man kneeling in prayer, looking upon the Virgin Mary who wipes her weeping eyes as she cradles her dead son in her lap. Above the figures are two swirling scrolls, one of which bears *mater dei memento mei* in red, whilst the other has *Sit semper sine ve qui dicit michi ave* [sic.] in black, and a different Italianate capitalised script. This illustration is a precise visual rendering of the illustration described by the speaker of the poem: it contains Mary with 'Hir look doun cast with teerys al bereyned' (l. 13), and a man who 'kneele[s] deuoutly on his knees' (l. 25), although it is unclear in the poem whether the speaker 'sauh' (l. 25) this figure in his imagination, or as part of the illustration. This mirroring extends to presentation of the text, too, as like the poem described by the speaker, Lydgate's poem is here accompanied by 'Rubrisshis' (l. 18), 'Chapitle[s]' (l. 19) and 'paraf[s]' (l. 19). In this example, the reader's experience of Lydgate's poem reflects the speaker's experience depicted in the poem. The reader looks upon an illustration which replicates that described in the text and, like the speaker of the poem, reads the meditation which follows, which also corresponds to the

[319] W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 89.
[320] Jessica Brantley, 'Vision, Image, Text', in *Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 315-334.
[321] Ibid., p. 333. See also Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 83-95.
[322] Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.14, ff. 157^{r}-161^{v}.
[323] Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.14, ff. 238^{r}-242^{r}.

description given in the lyric. Here, the reader becomes defamiliarized not only from the book, but from their own reading experience: they encounter a written description of their own encounter with a book, its illustrations, and its text, whilst they experience it themselves. If the reader then chose to follow the actions of the speaker and copy out the poem again, they would create something of a disconcerting *mise-en-abyme,* the poem precipitating an endless sequence of reading, reflection, and copying, as new readers encounter the text. The defamiliarizing references to the material text in this lyric, then, are used to shape the reader's response to the text, and encourage the reader to consider both the lyric's visual *and* textual content when meditating upon it.

This preoccupation with both the textual and visual qualities of the material text, and the defamiliarizing effect this can result in, is found in other examples of Lydgate's lyrics. Indeed, one of the most common material text metaphors used by Lydgate is that of imprinting, an activity which pertains to the creation of both images and text. The verb *emprenten* is polysemous: it can mean the action of imprinting a symbol, mark, image, or text on a (usually malleable) surface, such as the imprint of a stamp in wax, or, figuratively, the fixing an idea in one's memory.[324] The earliest definitive recording of the verb being used to refer to printing through the use of press and moveable type is recorded in the *MED* as 1474, around twenty-five years after Lydgate's death, but even if this definition is discounted, the wider understanding of imprinting still includes both textual and imagistic impressions.[325] Indeed, use of this verb in Lydgate's work often blurs the distinction between the visual and the cognitive, and it is not always clear whether it is an image or a text which is being imprinted. This is well-illustrated in 'O Blyssed Lord My Lord, O Cryst Iesu' (also known as 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ') which this chapter opened with, and which refers to imprinting twice. The first instance appears in stanza nine, which is followed three lines later by a reference to engraving:

> Oh lord I*e*su! enprente in my memorye
> All these tokenys of thy peynfull passioun;
> Thy cros, thy deth, on Caluary thy vyctorye,
> Graven in myn herte wit*h* hooll affeccyoun,
> Full repentaunce wit*h* pleyne confessioun. (ll. 65-69)

In this stanza, the speaker asks Christ to print 'tokenys of thy peynful passioun' in their memory (l. 66). Here, the 'tokenys' (l. 66) which the lyric refers to appear to combine the visual and the narrative, as they include the 'cros' (l. 67), which could simply be a symbol, but also 'thy deth' (l. 67) and 'thy victory' (l. 67), which would be more complicated to visually represent because of their complicated dynamism. As Brantley explains, visual depictions often conjure textual narratives, and may 'summon up familiar histories, and depend for their interpretation upon the viewer's knowledge of associated

[324] *MED*, emprenten (v.), senses 1 and 4.
[325] Ibid., sense 3, associated quotations.

texts'.[326] This appears to be the case here, as the 'tokenys' (l. 66) are intended to trigger a remembrance of the entirety of Christ's 'peynfull pasioun' (l. 66). This example, then, is another instance of an imagetext, which defamiliarizes the reader by asking them to apply their understanding of texts to images, and images to texts.

But what is further defamiliarizing about this lyric is that the speaker does not ask for these tokens to be made on to any common material text, but 'enprente[d]' (l. 65) on his 'memorye' (l. 65), and then 'graven' (l. 68), engraved, on the speaker's 'herte' (l. 68). Two kinds of creating texts of images are at work here, imprinting and engraving, and these two different methods imply that the two writing supports, the memory and the heart, have different material qualities. Firstly, the memory is figured as a malleable material which can be imprinted upon, much like wax. Mary Carruthers traces the understanding of the memory as an impressionable wax surface back to classical literature.[327] The conceit was used in a range of late medieval literature, and can be found in Chaucer's the 'Clerk's Tale', where the *L'envoy de Chaucer* asks the reader to 'Emprenteth wel this lessoun in youre mynde' (l. 1193).[328] As explored in the previous chapter on the poems of the Charters of Christ, wax seals were also often synonymous with Christ's wounds at the crucifixion, as both are a means of expressing authenticity. Here, however, the material qualities of the wax are meant to describe the functioning of the memory: just as wax can be impressed with an seal matrix to create a word or image, so the impression of the memory will do the same, enabling the speaker to remember 'thy peynfull passioun' (l. 66).

The heart, on the other hand, is described as capable of being 'graven' (l. 68), implying that it is a harder writing support similar to wood, metal, or stone. Eric Jager notes the use of heart-engraving metaphors in medieval French troubadour poems, and writes that they often 'suggest the violence of the lover's feelings', with the aggression of the devotee's emotion transposed into the physical vehemence required to engrave. [329] Indeed, the act of engraving in Lydgate's lyric is associated with the superlative emotions of 'hooll affeccyoun' (l. 68) and 'Full repentaunce' (l. 69), yet here the engraving is of Christ's suffering, rather than of a lover. Consequently, the heart can be compared to the many engraved devotional materials which the late medieval individual would have encountered, such as statues, pyxes, brasses, misericords, and tombstones. In this metaphor, the engraved heart becomes an internalised space of worship for the speaker so that he can contemplate Christ's suffering at any moment, whether he is equipped with a material rendering of Christ or not. This example, then, defamiliarizes the material text in three ways. Firstly, the lyric describes parts of the body – whether that is the immaterial memory or the corporeal heart – as writing supports.

---

[326] Brantley, 'Vision, Image, Text', p. 316.
[327] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory, A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 24.
[328] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Clerk's Prologue and Tale*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 137-152.
[329] Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 69.

Secondly, the lyric presents the material texts as imagetexts, which are neither wholly images nor texts, but incorporate elements of both, and offer a range of hermeneutic possibilities. Lastly, the lyric includes two different kinds of textual or image rendering techniques, imprinting, and engraving, confusing the reader's sense of what kind of material text the speaker's body is supposed to represent, whilst at the same time offering them a range of interpretive opportunities.

Another of Lydgate's lyrics, 'O wretched sinner whatsoever you be' (commonly known as 'On the Image of Pity') also uses a metaphor of imprinting, and specifically states that the act of imprinting pertains to words. The speaker of this lyric asks that the reader imprint 'myndly' (l. 25), mentally, the words of the lyric on their heart, and at the same time 'Thynk' (l. 26) on the image of Christ on the cross and his mourning mother:

> Enprynt thes wordes myndly thy hert with*in*
> Thynk on how thow sest Cryst bledyng on þe tre,
> And yf thow steryd or temptyd be to syne
> It shall sone sese and pase a-way from the. (ll. 25-28) [330]

In this example, the concurrence of text and image is described as an effective kind of meditative experience: the reader must 'myndly' (l. 25) read the imprinted words, as well as 'sest Cryst bledyng on þe tre' (l. 26). The heart is therefore likened to a codex which can both contain image and text, the conjunction of which enables the best opportunity for devotion. But the material properties of the writing support, in this case the heart, produce a text that is ephemeral if not properly attended to. The reader is warned that if they 'steryd or temptyd be to syne' (l. 27), then the words and image will 'sese and pase a-way' (l. 28). In this description, the thought-image's materiality is rendered fragile: it must be continually revived through thinking upon, or it will dissipate. In this sense, the imagined imagetext is more materially similar to a medieval wall painting or any other memorial material text or devotional image, which would need refreshing through further applications of pigment if it were to remain vivid. The imaginary imagetext, like the devotional artwork, both require maintenance for their survival. Here, the metaphor of the material text explains the role of memory in devotional practice, as it specifies that the words and image of Christ need to be continually revisited if they are to remain imprinted within the reader.

In the following stanza, Lydgate once again complicates the division between the image and the text:

> Lerne well this lesson, it is bothe short and light,
> For with this same the wekest creature,
> That ys on lyffe may putte þe fend to flyght,
> And saffe hym-selffe in sole and body sure;
> To suche entente was ordeynt purtreture

[330] John Lydgate, 'On the Image of Pity', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Vol. I, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Trübner, 1911), pp. 297-299. *DIMEV* 4102.

> And ymages of dyverse resemblaunce,
> That holsom storyes thus shewyd in fygur
> May rest with ws wuth dewe remembraunce. (ll. 33-40)

In this stanza, the speaker explains that the visual art, 'purtreture' (l. 37) and 'ymages' (l. 38), are narratives transposed into another form: they are 'holsom storyes thus shewyd in fygur' (l. 39). The speaker explains that images are often used to depict narratives so that the story can 'rest with ws wuth dewe remembraunce' (l. 40), that is, that they can be retained in the memory appropriately. Yet, to complicate this further, Lydgate has here chosen to express this sentiment through the written form of the lyric. Here, Lydgate defamiliarizes the text as an image once again, and fluctuates between the two representative forms in order to illustrate the qualities of both.

Yet another reference to engraving is found in Lydgate's 'Upon The Cross Nailed Was I For Thee' (also known as 'A Prayer Upon the Cross'). [331] The speaker of this lyric is Christ himself who, after detailing his Passion, asks the reader to 'Rolle vp this mater, grave it in þi resoun' (l. 21), the verb 'Rolle' here meaning to record, rather than referring to the material text of a scroll (which, indeed, cannot be engraved).[332] A few lines later, he then states that the reader should 'Afforn thy herte hang this lytel table' (l. 30). It is likely that this 'lytel table' (l. 30) refers decorative *tabluae*: painted wooden boards, or wooden diptychs and triptychs, which would be hung upon walls or placed on flat surfaces to be looked upon by the congregation.[333] Indeed, Lydgate's own lyrics were particularly suited to this kind of multimedia application, as exemplified by the thirty-two stanzas of three of his poems which run around the ceiling of the Clopton Chapel of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Long Melford in Suffolk.[334] This painted copy of Lydgate's poem itself complicates the division between text and image as the stanzas are painted on scrolls, held at their ends by hands peeping from sleeves. Like the previous example, the descriptions of various writing supports meld in to one another, continually defamiliarizing the reader from their understanding of the material properties of a book, a roll, or a wooden or stone inscription.

In Lydgate's lyrics, material texts are objects which, by their very nature, blur the distinction between text and image. But Lydgate also does something more nuanced with these material texts: he represents them as tangible objects as well as intangible ideas. Lydgate often describes material texts or textual production techniques as operating in the liminal space between the real and the imagined: the material text might be created in expected ways, like engraving or inscribing, but on

---

[331] John Lydgate, 'A Prayer Upon the Cross', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* Vol. I, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Trübner, 1911), pp. 252-253. *DIMEV* 6132.
[332] *MED*, rollen (v.), all senses.
[333] See Sonsoles Garcia Gonzalez, 'The Tabulae: Ephemeral Epigraphy in the Surroundings of Medieval Tombs', *Church Monuments*, 31 (2016), 66-84.
[334] See Gray, *Themes and Images* (pp. 47-51). For a discussion on the relationship between lyrics and *tituli*, and J. B. Trapp, 'Verses by Lydgate at Long Melford', *The Review of English Studies*, 6, (1955), 1-11; and David Griffith, 'A Newly Identified Verse Item by John Lydgate at Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, Suffolk', *Notes and Queries*, 58 (2011), 364-367, for discussions of Lydgate's verses at Long Melford.

defamiliarizing materials, such as the mind or the heart. Beyond this, these depictions are often complicated, and different types of material text – books, scrolls, inscribed wooden tablets, engravings – often collapse into one another. In moving between the real and the imagined, Lydgate encourages the reader to reflect on their own experiences of reading and image viewing, and offers avenues through which the reader can improve their devotional practice by bringing together the reading and viewing techniques which were often developed independently of one another. This, I argue, does not necessarily precipitate an immediate affective response to the lyric, but explains how the reader might elicit such a response in their future encounters with material texts.

Lyrics and Abecedaria

Lydgate's references to material texts, as the previously analysed lyrics have shown, are wide-ranging and varied. However, one distinctive sub-category of late medieval lyric, the *abece* lyric, defamiliarizes a particular kind of material text: the late medieval primer, or hornbook. As defined in the Middle English dictionary, the term *abece* can refer to the material text which contains the alphabet, the alphabet itself, poems which use the alphabet as their structural principle (for example, at the beginning of each stanza) or its material form, and the process of learning to read.[335] For the sake of clarity, *abece* will only be used here to refer to lyrics which creatively engage with the alphabet. In this next section of the chapter, I explore how three different *abece* lyrics engage with the material texts which taught many children their alphabet. These lyrics, I argue, defamiliarize not only these material early-learning aids, but also the alphabet itself and the process of learning it.

Poems that used the alphabet as a structural principle endured throughout the medieval period, but their history predates even this. For example, Psalm 119 of the Old Testament uses the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet to begin its twenty-two stanzas.[336] The Roman alphabet, too, has long been associated with Christian devotional practice. English pontificals from the tenth century onwards contain directions for the performance of an 'alphabet ceremony' during the consecration service, which required the drawing in ash of two alphabets on the pavement of the church.[337] As Laura Varnam succinctly writes, this practice 'built textual potential into the very foundations of the church building', which was then reiterated through the numerous inscriptions which decorated the church interior.[338]

The early-learning experiences of late medieval children solidified the relationship between letter-learning and faith-learning, too. Children learning to read could have encountered the alphabet through two different material texts in particular: the primer, and the hornbook. Late medieval primers are difficult texts to define, but they can loosely be described as books used for private prayer (as

[335] *MED*, abece (n.), all senses.
[336] Nyr Indictor, 'Alphabet Poems: A Brief History', *Word Ways: The Journal of Recreational Linguistics*, 28 (1979), 131-135 (132).
[337] Laura Varnam, *The Church as Sacred Space in Middle English Literature and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), p. 46.
[338] Ibid., p. 62.

opposed to liturgical use), which contain a variety of devotional material.[339] That they were used for early-learning is evidenced by surviving manuscripts which contain alphabets on their first folios, such Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 472, and other late medieval literature which reference them. In Chaucer's 'Prioress's Tale', for example, the 'litel clergeon' whom the narrative follows is described as sitting at school with his primer:

> This litel child his litel book lernynge
> As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
> He Alma redemptoris herde synge,
> As children learned hire antiphoner. [340]

As Nicholas Orme explains, alphabets in primers were presented in a standardised format: the symbol of the cross preceded the alphabet in Latin characters, which was followed by some common abbreviations such as 'et' and 'con', three dots (often referred to as 'tittles'), and finally *est Amen*. The alphabet was then followed by some basic prayers and other catechetical material.[341] This standardised format was echoed by medieval hornbooks: ivory, lead, or wood boards on which was pasted a sheet of paper or parchment bearing the alphabet, sometimes followed by numbers and prayers.[342]

The alphabet was also often used as an organising principle for texts. London, British Library, MS Additional 25719 contains a fifteenth-century Middle English translation of the Latin *Alphabetum narrationum,* a text that provides an alphabetised list of divine miracles. Similarly, the popular children's poem 'ABC of Aristotle' provides examples of behaviour that children should avoid (in accordance to Aristotle's credence that all things should be performed in moderation) in alphabetical order.[343] Indeed, these last two examples gesture towards the wider use of the alphabet as a mnemonic device, and an important component in late medieval memory training. Mary Carruthers explains that the letters of the alphabet were often used by writers as *notae*: graphic signs which marked significant passages in a text that warranted memorisation, or further reflection, by the reader. As Carruthers explains, 'learning an alphabet is part of grammar. This is also the point at which one lays down one's fundamental learning apparatus'.[344] The alphabet is not only a cornerstone of learning to read and write, but also of learning to think and remember, a preoccupation which was also evident in the references to the material text made by Lydgate in the previous analysis.

Martha Dana Rust has paid significant critical attention to late medieval *abece* lyrics, and considers them through her notion of the 'manuscript matrix', which I have described in the

---

[339] Annie Sutherland, *English Psalms in the Middle Ages, 1300-1540* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 17.
[340] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Prioresses Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 209-212 (ll. 503, 516-519).
[341] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 246-251.
[342] See Andrew W. Tuer, *A History of the Horn Book* (New York: Arno Press, repr. 1979).
[343] Martha Dana Rust, 'The "ABC of Aristotle"', in *Medieval Literature for Children*, ed. by Daniel T. Kline (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 63-78.
[344] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 138.

introduction to this thesis. In her analysis of *abece* poems, Rust explores how the letters of the alphabet can be understood as *litterae mediocres*, or 'middle letters', which she describes as letters which generate 'ideas and feelings that are not properly conveyed through their status as either visual or verbal characters alone'.[345] This is partially the preoccupation of this analysis too, but whereas Rust focusses on how these *abece* lyrics encourage the reader to retreat to 'an imagined, virtual dimension in which physical form and linguistic content function in dialectic reciprocity', I am more interested in how defamiliarization, in particular, is employed in these lyrics, and how they often rely on ideas of the material text which extend beyond those represented by the book the reader is consulting.[346]

The defamiliarizing effect of the *abece* poem is well represented by 'In Place As Man May Se' (also known as 'An ABC Poem on the Passion of Christ'), which recounts Christ's crucifixion through the alphabet and simultaneously gestures towards the materiality of a kind of primer.[347] The first stanza of the lyric is equivocal about what type of writing support the reader is supposed to be envisioning: the terms 'bok' (l. 3) and 'abece' (l. 5) are applied to both primers and to hornbooks, but the specification of the text as 'Nayled on a brede of tre' (l. 4), *brede* here meaning a small board of wood, renders it more akin to the hornbook:[348]

> In place as man may se,
> Quan a child to scole xal set be,
> A bok hym is browt,
> Nayled on a brede of tre,
> Þat men callyt an abece,
> Pratylych I-wrout. (ll. 1-6)

Following this, the first line of each stanza (from stanza eight to twenty-seven) begins with a letter of the alphabet, which is alliterated in the first line to varying degrees: the stanza for 'f', for example, begins 'For feyntyce fel þat þayre fode' (l. 75). The alliteration then acts as a mnemonic in two senses: it both reinforces the order of the alphabet, and the sequence of events leading to the crucifixion.

This opening stanza, however, indicates that this poem was not intended for a child learning to read. Instead, the narrative voice of the lyric asks the reader to envision *observing* a child at school:

> In place as man may se,
> Quan a child to scole xal set be,
> A bok him is browt (ll. 1-3)

[345] Martha Dana Rust, *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books: Exploring the Manuscript Matrix* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 37.
[346] Ibid., p. 9.
[347] Frederick James Furnivall, ed. *Political, Religious and Love Poems, from Lambeth MS. 306 and Other Sources*, EETS O.S. 15 (London: Trübner, 1866), pp. 271-278. *DIMEV* 2566.
[348] *MED*, bred (n. 2), sense 1.

Significantly, the use of the modal verb *may* and the equivocal *se*, which means both to visually observe or imagine, signifies that the reader is distanced from the experience of reading the schoolbook. This is a key distinction between *abece* poems and actual primer texts: rather than relating the experience of a learning child through the narrative voice, or implying that the reader should themselves occupy the imaginative space of the child, the reader retains their adult sensibilities whilst nostalgically remembering or imagining the experience of learning to read. Indeed, the employment of the adjective 'pratylych' (l. 6), meaning charmingly or prettily, emphasises this sense of sentimental envisioning, rather than critical observation.[349]

The manuscripts in which the lyric is found also support the conclusion that the poem was intended for an adult readership. The earliest manuscript which bears the lyric, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 18.7.21, is the preaching notebook of John of Grimestone, a Franciscan friar from Norfolk.[350] The second oldest manuscript British Library, Harley MS 3954, is a miscellany dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, and is primarily known for containing the A-text of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* and an illustrated version of *Mandeville's Travels*, both of which are too advanced to be read by a child still learning their alphabet.[351] Finally, the mid fifteenth-century Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 789, which renders the lyric in prose, is too general in its contents to determine whether any texts were intended for children. The manuscript is a miscellany of devotional treatises, and includes an English translation of the pseudo-Bonaventure *Meditationes de passione Christi*, the lay-folks' catechism in English, as well as the Latin pseudo-

[349] *MED*, pratili (adv.), sense 1b.

[350] Pertinent to the discussion of alphabetising, Grimstone's notebook orders its mostly Latin sermons and Middle English poems (of which there are 239) alphabetically by topic. These alphabetised topics are laid out in an index on f. 7-9, and repeated at the top of each page. 'An ABC Poem on the Passion of Christ' is the forty-fourth poem of sixty-three to appear under the topic heading *De Passione Christi*. It is difficult to imagine how a longer poem such as 'An ABC' would function within a sermon, but Siegfried Wenzel does find a point of comparison with the sermon *Ve michi, mater mea* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. theol. d.1., in which 'the ABC poem forms its second principle and allows the preacher to retell the Passion chronologically', in *Preachers, Poets and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 152. See also Edward Wilson, *A Descriptive Index of the English Lyrics in John of Grimstone's Preaching Book* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1973).

[351] Interestingly, both of these texts also display an interest in alphabets and the materiality of books. *Piers Plowman* is broadly concerned with books as material objects. There are various bulls, pardons, charters and patents throughout the poem, and more extended engagements with books, such as Piers' argument with the Priest in Passus Seven, and the conversations with Dame Study and Scripture, each of which defamiliarize texts, see Wendy Scase, 'Writing and the Plowman: Language and Literacy', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 9 (1995) 121-139 (123). In Mandeville's Travels, the description of Jerusalem and Judaism is accompanied by the Hebrew alphabet. In Harley MS 3945, f.21^{r} the Latin alphabet letters are rubricated, whilst their Hebrew letter names are written below in black ink. Sir John describes the letters which do not directly map on to the Latin alphabet as 'fygures', their alien forms described not as letters, but visual characters. This is repeated when the laws and religious customs of the Saracens are described on f.27^{v}. Kara L. McShane explains that these alphabets function as 'both points of connection and tension between the English and the cultures Sir John encounters: these symbols suggest shared civilization and to some extent a shared view of the world, even as their variance and strangeness marks each culture as distinct' in 'Deciphering Identity in The Book of John Mandeville's Alphabets', *Philological Quarterly*, 97 (2018), 27-53 (28).

Senecan *Speculum peccatoris* and *Formula honestae uitae* − unlikely choices for the early-learner.[352] In the case of this lyric, then, part of the defamiliarizing effect arises from the reader's engagement with a form usually reserved for an early-learning readership. The poem relies on an adult reader re-encountering the *abece* as an adult with a different learning objective to that of a young reader at the beginning of the literacy education.

The hornbook is then defamiliarized further as the poem embarks on an extended metaphor which compares Christ to it. The first of these stanzas explains that the appearance of the hornbook is representative of Christ's passion:

> Wrout is on þe bok with-oute,
> .V. paraffys grete & stoute
> Bolyd in rose red
> Þat is set with-outyn doute,
> In tokenyng of cristis ded. (ll. 7-12)

This stanza explains that five large paraphs adorn the hornbook, which are rendered in 'rose red' (l. 8). The lyric then explains how the various visual features which adorn the hornbook reflect 'cristis ded' (l. 12) as the stanzas develop:

> On tre he was don ful blythe
> With grete paraffys, þat be wondis .v.
> As ȝe mou vnder-stonde.
> Loke in hys body, mayde & wyfe,
> Qwon hee gun naylys dryue
> In fot & in honde.
>
> Hond & fout þer was ful woo,
> And þer were lettrys many moo
> With-in & with-oute,
> With rede wondis & strokis blo (ll. 19-28)

The 'grete paraffys' are described as the 'woundis .v.' (l. 20), the nails which would have secured the decorative hornbook back to its wooden panel are the 'naylys dryue[n]' (l. 23) in Christ's 'fot & in honde' (l. 24), and the 'lettrys' (l. 26) are the 'rede wondis & strokis blo' (l. 28) which mark his tortured skin. This collapsing of the features of the hornbook and of Christ's body is further emphasised by the concatenation of the first six stanzas, the first line of a stanza often repeating a word from the last line of the previous, or providing an internal near rhyme: for example, the 'wrout' of the last line of stanza one, 'Pratylych I-wrout; (l. 6), is echoed in the first line of stanza two 'Wrout is on þe bok with-oute' (l. 7). This technique is not used in the portion of the poem in which the stanzas are alphabetical: the concatenation is seemingly used only in the opening stanzas to emphasise the parallels between Christ's injuries and the hornbook, with the same words, or near-rhymes, linking descriptions of the body to those

[352] See John C. Hirsh, 'Prayer and Meditation in Late Medieval England', *Medium Aevum*, 48 (1979), 55-66 (56).

of the book in order to solidify their connection. The hornbook becomes defamiliarized as Christ's tortured body.

Like the lyrics of Lydgate, this poem also stresses the value of looking, seeing, and envisioning. The imperative 'As ȝe mou vnder-stond' (l. 21) asks the reader to both comprehend Christ's suffering and envision it: the reader must imagine that they are standing under, *under-standing*, Christ's elevated body on the cross, in order to comprehend, *understand*, his suffering. Indeed, the entire poem is occupied with ideas of looking *in* and *through* objects and Christ's body as a means of understanding his suffering. Different verbs are used within the opening stanzas to describe this practice: there is reference to seeing ('In place as man may se', l. 2), as well as looking ('Lettrys to loke & se', l. 15; 'Loke in hys body, mayde & wyfe', l. 21), but the lyric also employs more ambiguous or intellectual terms such as 'tokenyng', as seen in 'In tokenyng of cristis ded' (l. 12), and 'dyuyne' in 'Be þis book men may dyuyne' (l. 16). For Rust, the somewhat enigmatic reference to looking, seeing, and comprehending:

> […] invites the speaker's fictional audience to see in the visual details on the *surfaces* of their hornbooks the *space* in which the Crucifixion is even now beginning and, beyond that, to transfer their mental visualisations of that event into that imagined external space, a space explicitly associated with the book.[353]

The process that Rust describes here is extremely similar to that of defamiliarization: the reader, through the merging of Christ's body with the codex or hornbook in the extended metaphor of the lyric, associates the material properties of the book with Christ's body, and *vice versa*. But this neat circle of logic perhaps forgets that the readers are not looking upon a hornbook, they are looking upon a poem which asks them to *remember* a hornbook. The reader is being asked to bring their understandings and ideas of other material texts to their engagement with this poem which, although mimicking a hornbook to a certain degree, is not one.

In this abece lyric, then, three separate but cooperative kinds of defamiliarization are at work. Firstly, the use of the hornbook is defamiliarized. Rather than being presented as a learning tool for children, the lyric asks the reader to *remember* their experience of a hornbook and apply a new understanding to it. Secondly, the image of hornbook is defamiliarized as Christ's body: its paraphs become wounds, its red and blue ink the lashings of the whip, and the nails securing the page to the wooden board become the nail's pinning Christ to the cross. Lastly, the lyric defamiliarizes the process of reading a text, and to perceive it as a devotional act. Much like Lydgate's lyrics, this lyric encourages the reader to think about multiple kinds of material text (the book which they are encountering the lyric on, the hornbook they are remembering) at once.

Another *abece* lyric example, 'Cross of Ihesu Criste Be Euer Oure Spede', draws on the materiality of the primer rather than the hornbook, and in this case the focus on the lyric is on the

[353] Martha Dana Rust, *Imaginary Worlds*, p. 51. Rust's italics.

cross, rather than Christ's crucified body.[354] The lyric appears in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.408, the cartulary of Godstow Nunnery. The lyric is preceded by a list of excommunicable offences, and then followed by a series of versified prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary and the Creed.[355] The beginning of each line of 'Cross of Ihesu Criste Be Euer Oure Spede' starts with a letter of the alphabet, beginning with the symbol of the cross before following the alphabet through to W, but missing the last three letters. The first four lines, for example, read:

> X of ihesu criste be euer oure spede,
> And keep vs from perel of synnes and payne.
> Blessid be þat lorde þat on þe crosse dide blede,
> Crist, God and man, þat for vs was slayne. (ll. 1-4)

Rather than attempting to mimic the *mise-en-page* of a primer alphabet and its accompanying texts, the lyric playfully refers to elements of the primer form. The last two lines of the lyric, for example, pun on two component parts of the primer alphabet: 'Titulle of þi passion Poynt us saue/ As to thy X reuerence we may haue' (ll. 27-28). Here, 'tittule' describes both Christ's superscript at the crucifixion, the *titulus,* and the three dots which sometimes appear on primers at the end of the alphabet, whilst 'poynt' describes both a gesture and a punctuation mark.[356] These two terms are rubricated in the manuscript, seemingly to alert the reader to their status as puns. Here, features of the primer form are defamiliarized as material components of, or actions performed at, the crucifixion.

Relatedly, the first and last lines of the lyric, 'X of ihesu criste be euer oure spede' (l. 1), and 'As to thy X reuerence we may haue' (l. 28), each contain the symbol of the cross rather than the word, which is rendered in blue ink. The symbol of the cross used in primers was a directive: the reader must make the sign of the cross on their bodies and recite the words 'Christ's cross me speed' before proceeding to read the alphabet aloud.[357] As the alphabet included in primers was also usually followed by a collection of prayers, the sequence of letters is included as part of devotional practice, rather than simply a means of understanding written words. As Martha Dana Rust states, the lyric 'bears witness to the alphabet's status as a prayer in its own right; that is, in addition to its convenience as a tool for remembering one'.[358] However, this also works in reverse: the symbol of the cross becomes a kind of letterform, in that it is placed alongside the graphemes which make up the alphabet.[359] Like the previous example, 'Cross of Ihesu Criste Be Euer Oure Spede' shows several different kinds of defamiliarization working at once. In this lyric, the alphabet is employed as a

---

[354] Andrew Clarke, ed., *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, Near Oxford: Written About 1450,* EETS O.S. 129 (London: K. Paul, 1911), p. 4. *DIMEV* 1087.
[355] The poem is located on f. 3^{r} of the manuscript.
[356] *MED*, title (n.), senses 1a and 1b; point (n.). senses 1 and 3.
[357] Orme, *Medieval Children,* p. 251.
[358] Rust, 'Imaginary Worlds', p. 47.
[359] Indeed, from the early sixteenth century the alphabet came to be known as a 'Christ-cross row', or 'cross row', in reference to the cross symbol which began the alphabet. See Orme, *Medieval Children,* p. 251.

structure through which the crucifixion is narrativized and, possibly, memorised too. The features of the primer are then defamiliarized, not as parts of Christ's crucified body, but different elements of the crucifixion. Furthermore, the symbol of the cross itself is defamiliarized, as it is representative of both the word 'cross', the entire narrative of the crucifixion, and as a kind of letter. Conversely, the alphabet itself is defamiliarized as a prayer in its own right.

A different kind of defamiliarization occurs in Geoffrey Chaucer's, 'Almighty and Merciable Queen' (more commonly known as 'An ABC to the Virgin').[360] The text is derived from a section of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, where it sits within the broader allegory of a pilgrim's journey to salvation: as the pilgrim is attacked by Avarice, the guiding Grace Dieu rescues him by rolling him up in a sheet of parchment, on which is written this alphabetical prayer to the Virgin Mary. Chaucer divorces the lyric from its narrative surroundings to create what Georgia Crampton identifies as 'the only independent Chaucerian lyric seriously shaped as a prayer', and one which reads as a speaker asking for intercession from the Virgin Mary.[361] The text is itself, then, defamiliarized from its original setting where it formed part of a larger narrative, into a discrete, prayerful lyric.

In this lyric, each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in order. Georgina Donavin and George Pace have both recognised the visual emphasis which is placed on the letters which begin each stanza in the witnesses to the poem, but the text's relationship with late medieval perceptions of letter learning and devotion is often presented more subtly.[362] The poem is a direct address to the Virgin Mary. Georgina Donavin describes this narrator as 'masculinized', with the imagined listener, the Virgin Mary, figured as his beloved.[363] But the Virgin's characterization in this lyric is more varied than Donavin's statement implies: in the course of the poem, she is described as a 'quene' (l. 1), a 'virgine' (l. 4), a 'flour' (l. 4), a 'lady' (l. 16), a 'mooder' (l. 28), a 'mayde' (l. 49), a 'princesse' (l. 97), an 'advocat' (l. 102), a 'mistresse' (l. 140), and a 'governeresse' (l. 141). Although it is not unusual for devotional literature on the Virgin to cast the speaker as child-like, this lyric continually conjures images of domestic interactions between a mother and an infant. The speaker describes how 'Fleeing, I flee for socour to thi tente/ Me for to hide from tempeste ful of dreede' (ll. 40-41) like a child hiding in the skirts of their mother. Mary is also implored to quell the anger of the Father ('Help that my Fader be not wroth with me', l. 52), and is figured as the deliverer of healing and medicine, ('Now, queen of comfort, sith thou art that same/ To whom I seeche for my medicyne', ll. 77-78). As Donavin identifies, the speaker is disconcertingly adult in their expression and understanding of the

[360] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'An ABC', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 637-640. *DIMEV* 414.
[361] Georgia Crampton, 'Chaucer's Singular Prayer, an ABC', *Medium Aevum*, 59 (1990), 191-213 (191).
[362] Georgina Donavin, 'Alphabets and Rosary Beads in Chaucer's *An ABC*' in *Medieval Rhetoric: A Casebook*, ed. by Scott D. Troyan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), pp. 25-40; George Pace, 'The Adorned Initials of Chaucer's ABC', *Manuscripta*, 23 (1979), 88-98.
[363] Donavin, 'Alphabets and Rosary Beads in Chaucer's *An ABC*', p.26.

virgin, yet they remain child-like in their actions. In this lyric, the speaker is something of a defamiliarizing mirror of the child learning their alphabet.

These descriptions of Mary, which emphasise her role as a spiritual mother through images of domestic motherhood, are echoed in the form of the poem itself. The *abece* formula solidifies the connection between the Virgin Mary and early learning, particularly writing and reading. Indeed, images of the writing Christ Child perched on Mary's lap and holding a book were common in late medieval visual culture. Mary Mcdevitt writes that these images also underwent a distinctive development in the later centuries of the period: while in the late fourteenth century these images commonly depicted the infant Christ nursing at Mary's breast whilst writing on a sheet of parchment, in the fifteenth century Mary was more commonly depicted as holding his inkpot.[364] These images of the writing Christ Child therefore characterise the infant Christ as developmentally advanced, emphasise the connection between God's acts of creation and writing, and depict the practice of writing as devotional, but they also capture Mary's role as an educator directly involved with Christ's literate practice. They can also be considered a reflection of contemporary late medieval early learning, as it is likely that a child's first encounter with the alphabet, and with rudimentary devotional practices, was imparted by their mother.[365]

Mary's relationship to literacy is implicitly gestured towards in the stanza that begins with the letter K. In this stanza, the speaker states that 'Kalenderes enlumined ben they/ That in this world ben lighted with thy name' (ll. 73-74). Calendars, the speaker flatters, are more illuminated for having Mary's name attached to them. Here, the polysemy of the Middle English term *enluminen* is taken full advantage of, as the verb can refer to the shining of light, the illustration or gilding of a manuscript, cognitive or spiritual enlightenment, or the act of making something illustrious.[366] A metaphor of the material text – in this case an illuminated calendar – is employed to at once convey her spiritual impact, and her association with literacy and reading.

Indeed, Mary is also pictured with books before, or at the very moment, she becomes a mother. The young Mary, for instance, is pictured as being taught to read by her mother St Anne, or at school in a class of girls.[367] Images of the adult Mary also often depict her reading or being in close proximity to books. Scenes of the Annunciation often figure Mary with a book, a motif that Laura Saetveit Miles identified as developing from the ninth century onwards.[368] This image was influential for various reasons: Miles explains that it offered a 'mimetic moment where the meditant is formed in

[364] Mary Mcdevitt, "The Ink of Our Mortality': The Late Medieval Image of the Writing Christ Child' in *The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha Es Et O!* ed. by Mary Dzon and Theresa Kenney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 224-253 (p. 225).
[365] Orme, *Medieval Children*, pp. 243-244.
[366] *MED*, enluminen (v.), all senses.
[367] See, for example, Pamela Sheingorn, '"The Wise Mother": The Image of St Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary', *Gesta*, 32 (1993), 69-80.
[368] Laura Saetveit Miles, *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation: Reading, Interpretation, and Devotion in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2020); 'The Origins and Development of the Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation', *Speculum*, 89 (2014), 632-669.

the mould of the praying Mary', a useful image to justify female education and reading practices, and constituted 'the foremost material expression of the Virgin as the Mother of the Word made flesh, Mary's model of transformative reading and linguistic interpretation underpins her medieval role as "queen" over the three liberal arts of the trivium'.[369] Of course, Mary's very corporeality as mother to Christ also acts to cement the connection between writing and devotion. As Mary Mcdevitt adroitly surmises: 'just as non-corporeal words are captured on the page with the materials of ink, pen, and parchment, so the Word enters time through Mary's flesh and blood' as she bears, and gives birth to, Christ.[370] Mary is at once a figure associated with the material text because of her identity as a daughter learning to read and a mother who teaches reading, and because corporeally, as bearer of the Word, she is conceptually alike to one. This will be encountered once again in the following chapter on late medieval sermons, where she is figured similarly.

In these poems, then, the alphabet, as well as the material texts and learning practices which it was associated with, prove ripe for defamiliarization. Often, as these examples have shown, *abece* lyrics worked to defamiliarize the reader from their usual interaction with the primer or hornbook: rather than considering them material texts only suitable for children, these poems figure them as objects that can be revisited by adults who, as readers now capable of understanding greater nuance, can use memories if and memorial habits instilled by the hornbook or primer to enhance their devotional reading practice. They also defamiliarize the alphabet itself, as well as its constituent letterforms, by presenting them as not only a means of learning to read, but as devotional graphemes which could work similarly to the pictorial representation of the cross. The alphabet is re-presented as a form of prayer in its own right. Lastly, they defamiliarize the very act of learning and teaching the alphabet. Rather than being perceived as the work of the temporal mother to achieve literacy, the process of learning the alphabet is refigured as a devotional act which closely mirrors the behaviour of the Virgin Mary.

Mystical Writing

The examples of lyrics which defamiliarize the material text have so far dealt with how a reader might retain an understanding of God's teaching, and how they might figure all literate practice as devotional. In other words, they have engaged with how virtue is remembered and performed. But what about sin? In this next section of the chapter, I will focus on one particular late medieval lyric which is preoccupied with reading and the correction of sinful behaviour. This lyric is titled

[369] Ibid, 635.
[370] Mcdevitt, 'The Ink of Our Mortality', p. 239.

'Revertere', a Latin term which means to 'turn back' or 'turn again'.[371] The lyric appears in three manuscripts: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.9.38, the commonplace book of a Glastonbury monk which also contains devotional texts in Middle English and Latin from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 853, a fourteenth-century collection of Middle English poems; and Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354, the memorandum book of Richard Hill, a London citizen and grocer who was born shortly before 1490.

The lyric 'Revertere' is a *chanson d'aventure* with a penitential theme. The lyric narrates the story of a young man who goes hunting on a summer's day with his hawk and spaniel. As the hawk flies off in pursuit of a pheasant, the hunter's leg becomes snagged in a tangle of vegetation. Whilst freeing himself, he notices that on each of the leaves is written the word *revertere*:

> My faukon fliȝ faste to his pray,
> I ran þo w*ith* a ful glad chere,
> I spurned ful soone on my way,
> Mi leg was hent al w*ith* a brere.
> Þis brere, forsoþe dide me grijf,
> And soone it made me to t*ur*ne aȝe,
> For he bare written in eu*er*y leef,
> Þis word in latyn, revertere. (ll. 9-16)

Upon reading the leaves, the man's previous good humour is deflated: 'Myn herte fil dou*n* vnto my too, / þat was woont sitten ful likingly' (ll. 19-20). The next stanzas then become more contemplative as the speaker 'þa*n*ne took y me wiþ siȝynge sare/ þis new lessou*n*, reu*er*tere' (ll. 23-24). The writing on the leaves has prompted him to halt his folly and to turn again to more sober pursuits.

The use of *revertere* is likely influenced by the Song of Solomon, 6.13 'revertere, revertere, Sulamitis, revertere, revertere, ut intueamur te', that is, 'turn again, turn again, O Shulamite, that we may look upon you'. Only two other Middle English poems make extended use of the Latin *revertere*, and both are concerned with the Virgin Mary. The lyric 'Listeneth Both Great and Small' recounts the legend of Theophilus, who repents after making a charter with the Devil. After his appeals to God are ignored, Mary intercedes on Theophilus' behalf to gain a pardon from God and void the contract. As Theophilus vows to lead a sinless life, he hears a 'voys of Hevyn' (l. 404), and:

> A word ther was sayd: "Revertere!"
> Whan he it herde, he fel on kne,
> On swounyng in that stounde.
> "Revertere! Revertere!"
> That word, I wot, was seyd of me. (ll. 406-410)[372]

[371] Fredrick J. Furnivall, ed., *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, The Parliament of Devils and other Religious Poems, Chiefly from The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth MS. No. 853*, EETS O.S. 24 (London: Trübner, 1867), pp. 91-94. *DIMEV* 2453.
[372] Beverly Boyd, *The Middle English Lyrics of the Virgin* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1964), p. 80. *DIMEV* 3109.

The other text which employs the term is 'Behold What Life That We Rine In', a carol for the Feast of Purification, the burden of which reads 'Revertere, revertere,/ The quene of blysse and of beaute'.[373] The 'Revertere' lyric analysed here bears more resemblance to the former poem, where Theophilus is prompted to reconsider his sinful activity, rather than the plaintive wish to see the Virgin Mary again of the latter, but both show that this was a Latin term charged with preaching potential.

Martha Dana Rust has already provided a detailed analysis of the lyric's reflection of late medieval reading and contemplative practices, and explains how the briar bush functions as a kind of textual gloss.[374] But why is a briar bush is a particularly pertinent means of defamiliarizing the book in a religious lyric? In 'Revertere', the leaves of the plant which are marked with words are like the pages of a book. The use of the term 'leef' is a pun, the Middle English *leef* referring to both the foliage of vegetation and the page of a book.[375] These leaves belong to a particular type of plant: the 'brere', or briar, which does not merely catch the hunter's attention, but 'dide me grijf' (l. 13) by prickling and entangling; indeed, a 'brere' refers to any plant which possesses thorns or prickles.[376] Significantly, it is sometimes also used to describe the crown of thorns placed on Christ's head at the crucifixion.[377] The briar bush in its entirety is consequently imbued with a sense of the penitential: its thorny stems are a reminder of Christ's sacrifice, and its leaves prompt a return to abstemiousness.

Of course, the connection between leaves and writing supports is foregrounded in the creation of late medieval paper. As Joshua Calhoun explains, paper made from linen often contained traces of organic matter, or 'ecological remainders' as he terms them, as the fibres from the flax which was used to make rags, and plant stuff which escaped the papermakers' filtering process, were often evident in the final product.[378] Images of trees in late medieval culture also solidify this connection between the natural world and the material text, as they were often used to represent knowledge categorisation and acquisition.[379] The organic architecture of the tree enabled complicated connections to be explained visually, with branches usually representing connectives between different fruits or leaves, which represent distinct ideas or figures. There are many examples of such trees in late medieval visual art, and they are often religious in kind, including trees of consanguinity and Trees of Porphyry (of similarities and differences), the Tree of Jesse, trees of affinity, trees of virtues and

[373] Richard Greene, *A Selection of English Carols* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 95. *DIMEV* 817.
[374] Martha Dana Rust, 'Revertere! Penitence, Marginal Commentary, and the Recursive Path of Right Reading', in *Reading and Literacy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Ian Fredrick Moulton (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 1-24.
[375] *MED*, lef (n.), senses 1 and 2.
[376] *MED*, brer (n.), sense 1.
[377] Ibid., sense 2b.
[378] Joshua Calhoun, 'The World Made Flax: Cheap Bibles, Textual Corruption and the Poetics of Paper', *PLMA*, 126 (2011), 327-344 (332); reprinted in *The Nature of the Page: Poetry, Papermaking, and the Ecology of Texts in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), pp. 45-72. See also Tom White, 'Blackness and the Medieval Page' (2016) <http://www.materialtexts.bbk.ac.uk/?tag=medieval> [Date Accessed: 08.10.2021].
[379] Lima Manuel, *The Book of Trees: Visualising Branches of Knowledge* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2014), p. 49.

vices, and the Christian tree of knowledge. Some of these are well represented in London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, which contains a variety of different illustrative trees of different subjects and configurations.[380]

Human-made inscriptions on trees or leaves, however, are rarely represented in medieval literature. Michael R. Ott explains that inscriptions on living trees themselves, although featuring in literature of both antiquity and the early modern period, are not common in medieval material or literary culture.[381] Writing on trees, Ott argues, would be a solitary activity that was far removed from the conventional late medieval practice of textual production, which involved the contribution of farmers, parchment makers, scribes, binders, booksellers, and readers.[382] This does not mean, however, that no connection was made between material texts and the natural world. For example, John Lydgate's 'O Well of Sweetness Replete in Every Vein' (better known as 'The Legend of Dan Joos') describes another instance of a miraculously inscribed plant.[383] The titular monk devotes himself to the Virgin Mary, and prays to the five letters of her Latin name. After his death, five roses spring from his head: one from each eye, each ear, and the final rose from his mouth, which bears the gold inscription 'Maria':

> Thys rody Roose they haue so long beholde
> That sprang for his mowthe, tyll they haue espied
> Full fayre grauen, in lettres of boryd golde,
> Marie full curiously as hit ys specyfyed. (ll. 78-81)

The significance of writing on plant matter is also evidenced in more practical texts. Tom White has identified a rare Middle English example in a translation of the fourteenth-century treatise on horticulture *Godfridus super Palladium*. One passage claims that if a peach stone is marked or painted with a word or sign before planting, the fruits of the resulting peach tree with contain stones with the same inscription.[384] Another example is found on the flyleaf of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 685, where a recipe for toothache requires the reader to write in an apple, and then eat it.[385] These two examples stress two different material qualities of plants, which in turn impact their representation as writing supports.[386] Firstly, the example of the peach stone emphasises that plants reproduce, often without human intervention, and that they often increase in number. Secondly, the

[380] Tree diagrams are present on folios 38^{r}, 47^{r}, 48^{r}, 49^{r}, 50^{r}, 51^{r}, 52^{r}, 53^{r}, 54^{r}, 55^{r}, 56^{r}, 57^{r}, 58^{r}, 59^{r}, 60^{r}, 61^{r}, 62^{r}, 62^{v}, 63^{r}, 64^{r}, 65^{r}, 66^{r}.
[381] Michael R. Ott, 'Culture in Nature: Writing on Wood' in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, ed. by Ricarda Wagner, Christine Neufeld and Ludger Lieb De Gruyter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 167-178 (p. 167).
[382] Ibid., p. 168.
[383] John Lydgate, 'The Legend of Jan Hoos', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Vol. I, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Trubner, 1911), pp. 311-315. *DIMEV* 4089.
[384] Tom White, 'Written in Trees', *Postmedieval*, 9 (2018), 444-454.
[385] Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), p. 182.
[386] f. 92r.

recipe requiring an inscribed apple highlights that plants are often consumable, and that some qualities of the plant are absorbed by the consuming body.

Although the speaker of the 'Revertere' lyric neither re-plants nor consumes the word-bearing leaves of the briar, a sense of these botanical properties is conveyed in the lyric. Reading, as has previously been explored in this thesis, was often figured as a kind of consumption, and in this lyric the reading of leaves is repeatedly described as a bodily ingestion. The speaker states that to avoid further sin, the reader must comprehend and embrace the meaning of *revertere* in their mind: 'take to þi mind reu*er*tere' (l. 32), and the echo 'ȝit take to þi mynde reu*er*tere' (l. 48). The reader must 'take' the meaning of *revertere* into their bodies, in this case their mind, to consume its message.

Like its botanical relatives, the *revertere* plant also proves to be generative. The speaker himself is marked by the thorns in a manner which emphasises the plant's propagative capacity: the speaker describes how his 'leg was hent al w*ith* a brere./ þis brere forsoþe dide me grijf' (ll. 12-13), that is, how the speaker was marked by the thorny briar bush. The thorns can then be understood as writing upon the body of the hunter with the thorns-cum-stylus of the briar. Once the speaker has witnessed and considered the word himself, he then begins to compel others to repeat the word, with the final lines of the lyric then ask that all men speak *revertere*:

> Þerfore praye we to heuene king,
> Eu*er*y man in his degree,
> To gruante them þe blis euerlastinge,
> Þat þis word wel kan seie, reuertere. (ll. 116-120)

The speaker of the poem consequently performs the generative capacity of the plant, encouraging the repetition of the word in others, including the reader of the lyric themselves.

This metatextuality is emphasised in the structure of the poem itself. After the speaker of the poem spies the word on the leaves, *revertere* is then repeated another fifteen times through the course of the poem. Most of these repetitions appear at the end of each stanza, the stanzas themselves becoming a mirror of the plant described in the lyric, with each textual unit a reflection of the leaves which bear the same word. This is particularly apparent in the *mise-en-page* of Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354, where the four stanzas of this (much shorter) witness are clearly demarcated, and the lines of each stanza are graphically connected by rhyme brackets like leaves on a branch.[387] The stanzas of Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.9.38, are not so clearly marked, but the messy rhyme brackets in the left-hand margin of the poem, and the faint paraphs on the right-hand margin which appear at every fifth line of each stanza, contribute to a sense of organised, and somewhat spiny, textual units.[388]

Indeed, the very core of this poem is defamiliarizing. *Revertere* is the only Latin word used in the course of the otherwise entirely Middle English poem, and the poet is themselves compelled to

[387] Oxford, Bodleian College, MS 354, p. 332.
[388] Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.9.38, ff. 22-23.

provide a definition for the term in the main body of the lyric: 'Reuertere is as myche to say/ In englisch tunge as, t*ur*ne aʒen' (ll. 25-26). The familiar Middle English words which the reader expects to encounter are instead rendered in the possibly unfamiliar Latin. As the instances of the word mount in number, *revertere* also becomes nonsensical in the manner that all over-repeated words do, defamiliarizing it even to the fluent Latin reader. Ultimately, the very act of *revertere,* of turning again, is itself a description of the defamiliarization process: the reader is asked reconsider something familiar and their relation to it. In the lyric, this role is assumed by the speaker who encounters the inscribed leaves and considers his sinfulness, but this extends outside of the lyric to its reader too. The reader is asked to *revertere,* to consider their own sinful acts, but also to turn the pages of the book again, and consider the relationship between the materiality of the text and God's power.

In lyrics such as the examples explored here, references to and descriptions of the material text are often defamiliarizing: rubricated pages become gruesome mutilated bodies, hearts are hung with wooden tables, early-learning aids become adults' devotional tools, and the leaves of a briar become the pages of a book. These descriptions insist that the reader think more carefully about the material text, and what the use and physical qualities of such objects can teach them about how to understand their own memories, learning processes, and recursive practices. Defamiliarization appears variously in these lyrics: in some instances, only parts of a material text are defamiliarized, while in others it is their use or associations which are presented unfamiliarly. Sometimes, the application of defamiliarization works to make the reader reconsider the very material text they hold in their hands whilst reading the lyric: at other times it works to resist over-automizing particular conceptions of material texts by presenting them in surprising or disconcerting ways. However, each of these various kinds of defamiliarization works to excite the same response, that is, a meditative reconsideration of the material text which ultimately acts to improve, or reform, the reader's devotional habits. These depictions of the material text ask their reader to *revertere,* to turn again, and reconsider both the materiality of their texts, and the devotional reading practices which it encourages them to improve.

Chapter Four: Metaphors of Textual Materiality in Sermons

In her magisterial *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages,* Helen Spencer describes the culture of late medieval English vernacular preaching as fundamentally 'bookish'.[389] Spencer employs this adjective to argue that sermons were often dense and complicated: they are 'bookish and formulaic' and 'bookish and conservative' as a result of biblical study and scholarly exegesis.[390] This is, of course, true. At its broadest definition, a sermon is a discourse based on scripture and delivered for religious instruction or exhortation from a pulpit, and by their very nature sermons are concerned with the comprehension, translation, and contextualisation of the Bible, as well as other texts such as commentaries, hagiographies, and exempla. But the use of the term 'bookish' also accurately captures the sermons' metaphorical preoccupation with the codex: sermons are 'bookish' in that they are concerned with the content of books, but also with what books represent as metaphors and symbols, and how they operate as material objects.

Although recent scholarship has proven that sermons operated in symbiosis with other creative literary forms such as lyrics and mystical texts, it has been said, even by their defenders, that sermons are too 'barren and monotonous' or 'not inevitably of great verbal merit' to warrant close reading.[391] In this chapter, I will explore the use of metaphors of textual materiality in sermons both to illustrate the multifaceted representation of the material text, and to contribute to scholarship which elucidates the verbal and textual richness of sermons. This chapter shows that late medieval sermon texts do not compare Christ's body to a book as frequently as contemporary lyrics do. Instead, they frequently use material text metaphors in more diverse ways, acknowledging both the book's material fragility as well as its longevity, its individual as well as its public use, and its complicated relationship with orality.

Late Medieval English Sermons

Sermons are difficult texts to define due to their variety in subject, length, performance, and physical documentation. Some sermons were delivered as part of regular services by the local parish priest, others were performed by renowned sermon writers with glittering public careers, and there were yet

[389] H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 91.
[390] Ibid., pp. 89, 91.
[391] G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England, An Introduction to the Sermon Manuscripts of the Period, c.1350-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), p. 238; Douglas Gray, *Later Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 258.

more performed by monks, mendicants, university graduates in theology, vicars, chaplains, pardoners and recluses, among others.[392] The locations where sermons were delivered prove just as varied, from the smaller parish churches to chapter houses, large open-air preaching crosses and cathedrals.[393] Sermons could be preached by the same person who penned them, or a preacher could deliver sermons from particularly learned or influential figures whose work circulated in model collections.[394] The sermon's duality as both a performance piece and a written article also makes it hard to define, and makes its reach difficult to assess: all material that was preached cannot be labelled as a sermon, and other material which is now labelled under other headings may have been preached.[395] The difficulty defining a sermon is partly due to what Spencer terms their 'amphibious' status, as sermon texts are often suitably organised for private reading and public preaching.[396] But it is this which makes them an interesting vehicle for writers' reflections on the material text.

Yet however multifaceted and hard to classify sermons are, their impact on religious understanding and development during the later medieval period is hard to overstate. For lay people, preached vernacular sermons were often the only religious instruction offered by a member of the clergy, and so much of their understanding of theology, morality and spirituality was gleaned through them.[397] It can also be assumed that in a significant number of cases they reached their proposed addressees. Consequently, public preaching had the propensity to project ideas, as Andrea Ruddick argues, 'to a much wider audience than official documents or learned literary texts'.[398] Their representation of the material text, then, had the propensity to reach and influence large audiences.

Although frequently decrying the distracting influence of contemporary secular writing, sermons readily engaged with concepts and topoi found in other devotional literature, with sermon writers often recapitulating modes of expression and thought found in prose and poetry.[399] One instance of this close relationship between devotional literature and sermons is the proliferation of book metaphors which can be found in both. Sermon writers engaged with the book as a symbol and as a material object in a plethora of ways. They consider the fragility and mutability of the material codex, the relationship between literal and metaphorical texts, the representation of books as both a

---

[392] See more detail regarding the preaching habits of these groups in Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England,* pp.1-143, and Phyllis B. Roberts, 'Sermons and Preaching in/and the Medieval University', in *Medieval Education*, ed. by Ronald B. Begley and Joseph W. Koterski (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 83-98.
[393] Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England,* pp. 144-221.
[394] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages,* p. 21.
[395] Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons, Part 1* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), p. xxvii.
[396] H. Leith Spencer, 'Sermon Literature', in *A Companion to Middle English Prose,* ed. by A.S.G. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 151-170 (p.165). See also Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages,* p. 33.
[397] Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), pp. 8-9.
[398] Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 277.
[399] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages,* p. 88.

means of enclosure and exposure, notions of knowledge and consumption, and fears about the appropriation of words. This chapter considers only a few examples of book metaphors found in late medieval sermons, namely those which reflect on the materiality of the codex most fully. By using Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul's invaluable five-volume *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons,* which reviews nearly one and a half thousand sermons both orthodox and Wycliffite and which helpfully provides a detailed summary of the sermons' content, I identified twenty individual sermon texts which gave metaphors of the material text more than a passing reference .[400] In this chapter, I provide a close analysis of a selection of these sermons, examining how the book metaphor functions within the context of the sermon, and how it correlates to contemporary book production, learning, and reading processes.

Thomas Wimbledon's Redde rationem villicationis tue

One of the most widely disseminated sermons preached in the fourteenth century contains an extended book metaphor based on Revelation 20.12. *Redde rationem villicationis tue* was preached by Thomas Wimbledon in 1388, and is referred to by Millar MacClure as 'the most famous sermon ever delivered at St Paul's Cross'.[401] The sermon's familiarity is attested to by the number of copies of the text (nineteen in Middle English, and two in Latin) and its longevity, many copies of the work being appropriated by Lollards in later collections.[402] The location in which the sermon was preached is almost certain, with five manuscripts containing contemporary notes detailing that it was preached at St Paul's Cross in the churchyard of St Paul's Cathedral, London.[403] Sermons preached at St Paul's Cross reached a diverse audience formed of clergy and laity, and the number and geographical diversity of the manuscripts which contain the sermon show how widely disseminated the sermon was.[404]

---

[400] Veronica O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons,* 4 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).
[401] Millar MacClure, *The Saint Paul's Cross Sermons, 1534-1642* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 144.
[402] Nancy H. Owen, 'Thomas Wimbledon', *Mediaeval Studies*, 24 (1962), 377-381 (378). P.J. Horner records a further five in 'Preachers at Paul's Cross: Religion, Society and Politics in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University: Proceedings of International Symposia at Kalamazoo and New York,* ed. by Jacqueline Hamesse, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, Debra L. Stroudt, and Anne T. Thayer (Louvain-La-Neueve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1998), pp. 261-282. On the Lollard appropriation of Wimbledon's sermon, see Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*, pp. 360-362, and Nancy H. Owen, 'Thomas Wimbledon's Sermon: "Redde Racionem villicacionis tue"', *Mediaeval Studies*, 28 (1966), 176-197 (177).
[403] Owen, 'Thomas Wimbledon', 378.
[404] See P.J. Horner, 'Preachers at Paul's Cross', pp. 267-268. G. R. Owst refers to St Paul's Cross as the 'recognised national platform for public discussions of all political and social questions of the day' in *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters & of the English People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 549-550.

Little is known about the sermon's author, Thomas Wimbledon. Even his Christian name is disputed, with many of the later published printed editions, and some of the manuscripts, attributing the sermon to an 'R.' or 'Robert'.[405] Despite its Lollard appropriation, however, it is a sermon of 'distinctly medieval Catholic fare', and it is safe to assume that Wimbledon himself was an orthodox figure.[406] The theme of this lengthy sermon is taken from Luke 16.12: '*et vocavit illum et ait illi quid hoc audio de te redde rationem villicationis tuae iam enim non poteris vilicare'* ('And he called him and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? "Give an account of thy stewardship": for now thou canst be steward no longer'). Through the course of the sermon, Wimbledon explains the various punishments which await those deemed not to have fulfilled their social role, be they laymen or clerics. The sermon turns to focus on Revelation 20.12, in which John of Patmos is shown that at the apocalypse all men shall be judged by the works of their life, which are written in books:

> *And* so it semeþ by þe wordis of Seyn*t* Jon i*n* þe book of P*ri*ueytes, þer he seiþ þus: "I seye dede men, littul *and* grete, stondynge in þe syȝt of þe trone. *And* books weren opened. And anoþer book was opened þ*a*t was of lyf. *And* dede men weren iuged aft*ir* þe þyng*is* þat weren writ*en* in þe bookis aft*ir* here werchynges." Þese bokes beþ men*n*is co*n*ciensis, þ*a*t now beþ closed; but þan þey schulleþ be*n* opened to al þe world to r*e*de þ*er*inne, boþe dedis *and* þoutis. But þe book of lif is Cr*i*st*is* lyuynge *and* doctrine þ*a*t is now hid to me*n* þat shulleþ be da*m*pned þouȝ her*e* owne malice, þ*a*t deme þ me*n* to swe þe world raþer*e* þ*a*n God. In þe first bok schal be write al þ*a*t we haue do; in þe toþ*er* book schal be write þ*a*t we schulde haue do. *And* þ*a*n shulle dede me*n* de demed of þilke þyng*is* þ*a*t beþ writ*en* i*n* þe bookis. For ȝif þo dedis þ*a*t we haueþ do þe whiche beþ writ*en* in þe bokis of our*e con*science, be acordynge to þe book of C*ri*stis techynge *and* his lyuynge, þe whiche is þe bok of lyf, we schulleþ be saued; *and* ellis we schulleþ be da*m*pned. For þe dom schal be ȝoue aft*ir* oure werkis.
>
> Loke þ*er*fore now what þyng is writ*en* i*n* þe bok of þy *con*science whyle þou art here. *And* ȝif þou fyndest out *con*trarie to C*ri*stis life oþ*er* to his techynge, wiþ þe knyf of penau*n*ce *and* repentau*n*ce scrap it awey, *and* write it beterer, eu*er*more hertily þynkynge þ*a*t þou schalt ȝelde r*e*ke*n*ynge of þy baylie.[407]

The Book of Revelation is filled with symbols of the book: the book which John is asked to send to the seven churches of Asia (1.11), the Book of Life (3.5, 13.8, 22.19), the book of seven seals (5.1-14, 6.1-17), the description of heaven as a book folding up (6.14), the edible book (10.2, 8, 9, 10), instances where people's foreheads are written upon (17.5, 22.4), garments embroidered with words (19.13, 19.16), and seals (20.3). Likewise, Wimbledon's sermon itself is concerned with recording: *Redde rationem* means 'to give an account', or 'to give a reckoning'. The expectation, then, is that the sermon will present a direct metaphor between account books and an individual's accountability for sins, but Wimbledon's work presents a more complicated equation. At the opening of this section of the sermon, Wimbledon directly quotes the words of John, 'I seye dede men, littul *and* grete,

[405] Owen, 'Thomas Wimbledon', 377-381.
[406] Ibid., 378.
[407] *Wimbledon's Sermon, Redde Rationem Villicationis Tue: A Middle English Sermon of the Fourteenth Century*, ed. by Ione Kemp Knight (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1967), pp. 122-123 (ll. 1002-1026).

stondynge in þe syȝt of þe trone. *And* books weren opened. And anoþer book was opened þ*a*t was of lyf'.

What these 'þyng*is*' are is explained as the sermon progresses. Wimbledon claims that these books, rather than being documents of an individual's work, are books of 'men*n*is co*n*ciensis' which contain 'boþe dedis *and* þoutis'. As opposed to detailing only an individual's deeds and acts, Wimbledon's books also document their thoughts, combining material deeds with immaterial thought. This movement from depicting outward actions to a combination of inward thought and deeds is a crucial addition, and one which appears distinctly informed by late medieval perceptions of the book. Books appear so frequently in the Book of Revelation precisely because they are objects which reveal, as well as conceal. For Jeffrey Hamburger, the association between revelations and books is inextricably tied to 'the experience of opening and entering the space of the book' literally in the material form of the folded codex.[408] This dual nature of exposure and concealment is expressed in the first sentence of this extract, where the Book of Revelation is referred to as 'þe book of P*ri*ueytes'. The Book of Revelation is commonly referred to as such, *privete* in this sense referring specifically to sacred mysteries and divine secrets.[409] But the use of the term *privete* also conjures a more general sense of secrecy, private knowledge, and concealment, such as that found in the books of 'men*n*is co*n*ciensis'. Of course, some late medieval books compounded a sense of concealment or privacy in their physical form: some books were chained in libraries, some had their covers held together with metal clasps, and others were contained within small leather pouches as girdle books.[410] The Book of Revelation, therefore, is figured by Wimbledon as a revelation of the divine plan of the Apocalypse, but also as the revelation of concealed sinfulness which mortal men foster in their consciences.

As well as engaging with the symbol of the book as a whole, the action of scribal copying and correction is also scrutinised in the book-as-conscience metaphor of *Redde rationem*. The mortal owners of the individual books of conscience are warned that their books will be compared against the Book of Life. They are consequently figured as similar to the scribe who works to replicate a text, and who continually measures his attempt against his exemplar. In this sermon, however, it is the act of scribal correction which is of most importance. As Daniel Wakelin shows, the process of correction was a key facet of scribal craftsmanship, one that displayed a reflexivity towards one's errors.[411] In *Redde rationem,* scribal correction is translated into devotional rectification: the deviations found in the books of conscience are to be scraped away 'wiþ þe knyf of penau*n*ce *and* repentau*n*ce', a parallel to the scribe who scratches the uppermost layer of the parchment to remove a written error, and then

[408] Jeffrey Hamburger, 'Openings', in *Imagination, Books and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Gregory Kratzmann (Victoria: Macmillan Art Publishing, 2009), pp. 50-133 (p. 56).
[409] *MED,* privete (n.), sense 3.
[410] See, for example, Margit J. Smith, *The Medieval Girdle Book* (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2017); Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Chained Library, A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library* (London: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 3-76.
[411] See Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft, English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-18.

rewrites ‘it beterer’. The centrality of correction to scribal practice is testified in illustrations, where scribes are commonly represented holding a writing pen in one hand, and a knife for scraping away mistakes in the other.[412] The language of this clause, too, perhaps evokes the relation between scribal correction and devotion. The terms ‘penau*n*ce *and* repentau*n*ce’ are both aurally and visually similar, the ‘re-’ prefix of ‘repentaunce’ stressing the repetition of the action, and both terms echoing notions of writing with a ‘pen’. By describing devotional erring through scribal error, the sermon also conversely provides a technique by which the scribes of books of conscience may correct themselves.

Indeed, the book metaphor in this sermon provides the audience or reader with refreshing autonomy and control. This stands in contrast to late medieval lyrics previously analysed, which often entreat Christ to write on their hearts and minds.[413] In the extended book metaphor of Wimbledon’s sermon, however, the individual is the scribe: they copy the text of Christ but ultimately regulate the degree of replication, and the application of correction. Even the tools to produce the book (the codex made from conscience, the knife made from penance and repentance) are readily available to the scribe-audience without the intercession of Christ, because they are spiritual attitudes that come from within the individual. This metaphor consequently feels more dynamic than some of the lyrics which contain images of books of conscience or books of the heart, and where the heart-book owner passively receives Christ’s inscription. Instead, the listeners of this sermon are encouraged to view themselves as scribes who, although attempting to imitate the book of Christ’s life, are tasked to do so with their own hands.

Thomas Spofford’s Sermon for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene

In a sermon for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene included in a manuscript from York, the pious are once again advised to write internally, but in this example the writing is documented in the heart, rather than located in the conscience.[414] Written in the first half of the fifteenth century, the manuscript contains one hundred and nineteen items, all of which are in Latin bar four Middle English sermons: a group for the Annunciation and Passion Sunday, the Feast of St Mary Magdalene, a Procession, and a Dedication to the Altar of St Anne. The sermons were most likely composed by the Benedictine abbot of St Mary’s Abbey in York, Thomas Spofford, between 25 March 1414 and 5

[412] Ibid., p. 102-103. See also Kathleen Scott, ‘Representations of Scribal Activity in English Manuscripts c.1400-c.1490: A Mirror of the Craft?’ in *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools*, ed. by Michael Gullick (Walkern: The Red Gull Press, 2006), pp. 115-150.
[413] See pp. 85-92 of this thesis.
[414] London, British Library, MS Harley 2268, ff. 199^{r}-208^{r}.

December 1421, with the sermon for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene most likely preached on 22 July 1414.[415]

Unlike Thomas Wimbledon, a great deal is known about Thomas Spofford. His family hailed from the village of Spofforth in West Yorkshire, and although his birth date is unknown, there is evidence that he attended Oxford and was elected abbot of St Mary's, a position which came with significant property in York and London, on the 8 June 1405.[416] Records also indicate that he travelled to Europe for various church councils, and that he was directly involved in negotiations to end the schism.[417] According to A. T. Bannister, Spofford made a 'resolute and not unsuccessful reform' of his diocese, and 'rooted out […] the Lollardy' which had begun to settle in certain quarters.[418] But as well as being well-travelled, Spofford also appears to have been extremely well-read, not only in scripture, but also in popular literature. As Veronica O'Mara explains, Spofford proves himself to be a sermon-writer who 'can adopt a populist tone and make use of images and allegories often associated with solidly literary works'.[419] This is evident in his metaphor of the heart-as-book in the sermon for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene. Here, the codex is formed from the heart of the individual:

> But trewly I fynd þat allmyghti God, qwath tyme he had chosyn þe chyldyr of Israel and wald þai schuld be wythhaldyn with hym, he chargyd Moyses to wryte þe wordys and preceptys by þe qwylk þai ware bowne onto hym, vt patet Exodi – ȝe! – þat þai suld not be forgetyn þus, and we schall trewe be to owre God, most vs do. Bot qware schall þu wryte þese preceptys and wyth qwath thing schall þu wryte þat yt may be lasting? Trewly in þe booke and tabelys of þi harte wyth þe lasting ynk of parfyte drede. Loke qwath says þe haly prophete of þis boke, Psalmo cxviii, *In corde meo abscondi eloqua tua vt non peccem tibi*, 'In þe booke', says þe haly prophete, 'of my harte haue I wrytyn and hyd þi preceptys or þi comawndementys þat I trespase noght agayns þe'. And of þis parfyte ynk þat þu schall wryte wyth, als prayis þe haly prophete in þe same plase, *Confige timore tuo*, et cetera, 'Lorde', says he, 'festyn my flesch', þat is to say, my fleschly desyrys with þi drede, *et alio loco, Timor domini sanctus permanet*, et cetera, 'þis maner of ynk', says þe prophete, 'is aylastyng'. But trewly ryth as a good trewe wrytere mengys hys ynk wyth a certayn gom of loue na valyis nowght.[420]

After a few sentences that digress to discuss Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's sermonising, the sermon then returns to expand the metaphor by exploring how a book may be destroyed materially:

---

[415]Veronica O'Mara, *Four Middle English Sermons: Edited from British Library MS Harley 2268* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2002), p. 10. For a more in-depth study of the manuscript's language, provenance, and dating, see pp. 19-27.
[416] Ibid., p. 37.
[417] For more details regarding Spofford's career, see Alexander Russell, *Conciliarism and Hersey in Fifteenth-Century England, Collective Authority in the Age of the General Councils* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 44, 46, 53, 105, 114, 181, and 185.
[418] A. T. Bannister, *The Register of Thomas Spofford, Bishop of Hereford (1422-1448)* (Hereford: Wilson and Phillips: 1917), pp. iv-vi.
[419] O'Mara, *Four Middle English Sermons*, p. 10. O'Mara argues that Spofford is one of the earliest Middle English writers and possibly the first known English homilist to use St Birgitta's *Revelationes*, which he does in the Mary Magdalene sermon, see Veronica O'Mara, 'The <<hallowing of þe tabernakyll of owre sawle>> according to the Preacher of the Middle English Sermons in BL MS Harley 2268', in *Models of Holiness in Medieval Sermons, Proceedings from the International Symposium (Kalamazoo, 4-7 May 1995)*, ed. by Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Louvain-La-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1996), pp. 229-242 (p. 235).
[420]O'Mara, *Four Middle English Sermons*, pp. 117-118 (ll. 417-433).

> Bot twa thynggys þare are þat lythly wyll destroy a boke and þe wrytyng þerof: þat is to say, fyre and watyr. By þis fyre I vnderstande þe wykkyd fyre of couatyse, and by þe watyr þe cursyd fleschly desyrys. For ryth als fyre consumys and wastys all thyng abowthe hym, ryth swa couatyse yt consumys all vertu and all goodnesse.[421]

Spofford clearly found this metaphor fruitful, and one of the three addenda which appear after the main body of the sermon continues it:

> For ryth als watyr lythly defaydys letterys and waschys þame away þat þai may nowght be red, ryth so flescly desyrys and þa entyr manys hart, þay wasch away þe haly scripture of loue þat þai awe to þere God.[422]

In this sermon, the book-metaphor is figured differently from that of Thomas Wimbledon's work: here the book is formed from the heart, rather than the conscience, of the individual. For most of Western history, the head has been judged to possess dominion over the body due to its rational and intellectual capacity, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it was understood that the heart was the sovereign organ in which all life functions were concentrated.[423] The heart was perceived not only as physiologically important, but also as emotionally and intellectually vital as it housed the soul, consciousness, intellect, and memory.[424] Eric Jager has suggested that this perceived centrality of the heart coincided with the rise of silent reading, which, when combined with the conception of the material text as a locus of secrecy, meant that 'the book of the heart was increasingly identified with the hidden or private self'.[425]

Interestingly, the sermon considers the heart not only a book but also a container of 'tabelys'. The precise meaning of the term in this context is ambiguous.[426] First, these 'tabelys' could feasibly refer to the columnar arrangements that appear in a variety of texts, such as financial accounts and liturgical calendars. Texts such as these were usually written as a record that could be continually returned to for reference, whether that be financial or spiritual. It would make sense, then, that tables would appear in the heart as another form of information retention. Alternatively, 'tabelys' could refer to decorative wooden tablets. *Tabulae* were one of the most common forms of moveable church adornment in the medieval period, and were often used as altar frontals or reredos.[427] The panels were made of a variety of materials, including brass, stone, alabaster, precious metals and parchment nailed

---

[421] Ibid., p. 118 (ll. 443-447).
[422] Ibid., ll. 453-456. Although, as O'Mara acknowledges, it is impossible to know precisely where this addendum from f.207^{r} was to be inserted, O'Mara's choice to place this addendum between l.452 'þe loue and charite of hys God is not in hym' and l. 470 'And þerfore owre lady, in þe booke of haly *Reuelacionis* of Bryde...' in her edited text seems appropriate. For details regarding her editorial procedure, see pp. 76-78.
[423] Heather Webb, *The Medieval Heart* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 12-13
[424] Ibid., p. 30.
[425] Eric Jager, *The Book of the Hear*t (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 45.
[426] *MED*, table (n.), senses 1a, 1b and 5a.
[427] Vincent Gillespie, 'Medieval Hypertext: Image and Text from York Minster', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Readers, Essays presented to M.B. Parkes*, ed. by P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Ashgate: Scholar Press, 1997), pp. 206-229 (p. 207). See also Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II, c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 344, 495.

to boards, which were then hinged to form 'pages, as it were, of a 'book''.[428] These panels displayed either writing, images, or a combination of the two, and often recounted the history of the particular institutions they adorned, as well as commemorating any notable associated figures and benefactors. Some, however, were more religiously instructional, and included liturgical writings such as the Psalms and the litany.[429] These 'tabelys' possess many similar qualities to books. Most crucially, some of them physically operated in a book-like manner, opening up to reveal the written or drawn content inside. The two material texts, the 'booke' and the 'tabelys' of the heart, both stress the ability of the heart to conceal and reveal the words of Christ, enveloping those words in the lasting confines of the heart while making the writing immediately accessible to the reader at all times. Tables and books are also objects which foster complicated connections between texts, images, and the architectural space of the church. Vincent Gillespie terms these kinds of materials 'medieval hypertexts', which he defines as materials which provide the onlooker with a 'hybrid amalgam of text and imagery' by moving between different hierarchies of material.[430] But these connections also extend beyond the confines of the table to the fabric of the church: images, liturgical excerpts and phrases are mirrored in other portable objects such as paintings or carvings, and in the words uttered during services. The heart as a holder of tables, as well as books, ensures that the symbol of the heart-book is one that is, in this sermon, a distinctly religious material object.

In this sermon, however, it is likely that the term refers to wax tablets. Mary and Richard Rouse go so far as to claim that the Middle Ages represented a 'wax tablet culture', and that medieval readers of the Bible would routinely assume that the employment of the term *tabula* referred to a wax tablet.[431] Indeed, the use of wax tablets proliferated among different social groups: they were used by children as they first learned to write, and by adults for drafting texts, for private correspondence and for keeping accounts. They were valued precisely because of their 'necessarily ephemeral' physical qualities: writing could be easily erased, and the wax could be manipulated smooth again.[432] The wax tablet appears an unusual metaphor to use in a sermon which stresses the desire for a lasting text. But the tablet is specified as being found in the heart *alongside* the book, rather than in place of it: 'þe

[428] Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), p. 331.
[429] See Richard Marks, 'Picturing Word and Text in the Late Medieval Parish Church', in *Image, Text and Church, 1380-1600, Essays for Margaret Aston,* ed. by Linda Clark, Maureen Jurkowski and Colin Richmond (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2009), pp. 162-202.
[430] Gillespie, 'Medieval Hypertext', p. 209.
[431] Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Bound Fast with Letters: Medieval Writers, Readers and Texts* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), pp. 13-23 (p. 20). See also Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'Wax Tablets', *Language & Communication,* 9 (1989), 175-191; Elisabeth Lalou, 'Les comptes sur tablettes de cire de Cîteaux (1321-1325)', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 155 (2011), 175-188, and Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography, Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. by Dáibhí ó Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 14.
[432] Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 4.

booke *and* tabelys of þi harte'.[433] Indeed, wax tablets and more permanent writing supports did not exist in competition with one another; they each had their particular relation to record and memory. Wax tablets often functioned as memoranda, and, in turn, the memory was often figured as a wax tablet in medieval culture.[434] As Mary Carruthers explains, children were taught to write to extend their memorising faculties, 'inscribing their memories in the act of inscribing their tablets'.[435] The wax tablet, then, can be seen as a complementary recording material, one which stresses that the precepts of God have to be suitably memorised as well as recorded in lasting ink.

Yet whilst the ephemeral form of the wax tablet is necessary to its use, this sermon does express an anxiety about the fragility and mutability of the seemingly permanent material codex. The extended book-metaphor in the sermon is introduced with an interrogative – rather than a confident assertion – that questions not only where the word of God should be written, but where it should be written so that it might endure: 'Bot qware schall þu wryte þese preceptys and wyth qwath thing schall þu wryte þat yt may be lasting?' The term 'lasting' is then echoed in the answer: 'Trewly in þe booke and tabelys of þi harte wyth þe lasting ynk of parfyte drede'. This fixation with the endurance of the text resurfaces in the latter part of the metaphor, that discusses the elements which may compromise the materiality of the heart-book. The sermon details two elements of particular danger to the structural integrity of the codices: 'twa thynggys þare are þat lythly wyll destroy a boke and þe wrytyng þerof: þat is to say, fyre and watyr'. The effects of heat and moisture on books are transposed into metaphor in the aforementioned addendum to the sermon: fire represents 'þe wykkyd fyre of couatyse' that 'consumys and wastys all thyng abowthe hym, ryth swa couatyse yt consumys all vertu and all goodnesse', and water the 'flescly desyrys and þa entyr manys hart', which 'lythly defaydys letterys and waschys þame away þat þai may nowght be red' and 'wasch away þe haly scripture of loue þat þai awe to þere God'.*Defaydys* is a Middle English term with various resonances. As well as describing textual erasure or striking-out, it also means to hide, destroy, or cause to be forgotten.[436] In a wider sense, it can also mean to disfigure, disorder or, significantly, to spiritually spoil: the defacement of text and spirituality are twinned through a single term.[437] Significantly, the metaphorical fire and water are described as being able to destroy texts 'lythly', meaning easily, quickly, or without effort, stressing how readily covetousness and impure desire may result in the biblioclasm of the heart-book.[438] Here, the sermon displays a distinct ambivalence towards the recording quality of the material book. In this sermon, the material fragility of the codex acts as a mirror to the moral fragility of the heart.

---

[433] My italics.
[434] See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory, A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 24-25.
[435] Ibid., p. 195.
[436] *MED*, defacen (v.), sense 2.
[437] *MED*, defacen (v.), sense 1.
[438] *MED*, lightli (adv.), all senses.

A concern for the fragility of the text is also conveyed in the recipe-like details provided to describe the lasting ink. Although fear is the ink's primary ingredient, 'þe lasting ynk of parfyte drede', the sermon asks that it should then be mixed with the gum of love: 'a good trewe wrytere mengys hys ynk wyth a certayn gom of loue'. The description of the ink requiring a 'gom' is reminiscent of contemporary recipes for making inks, which require the addition of gum, usually derived from tree sap. For example, one recipe 'Forto make blaake inkke of Lumbardye' requires '.iiij. vnce of gume Arabike'.[439] Depending on the amount of gum added to the ink solution, it either acts as a thickener or as an adhesive.[440] In this metaphor, the gum of love strengthens the ability of the heart to hold the precepts and commandments of God. The metaphorical formula of the sermon, then, echoes how to practically produce an ink. This bridging between scribal practice and the sermon's metaphor is compounded by the proclamation that 'a good trewe wrytere' mixes his ink with gum; this term *wrytere* usually referred to a professional scribe.[441] As in Wimbledon's sermon, the Christian is here figured as a skilled scribe; whereas Wimbledon's text focusses on the task of writing and the role of erasure as something scribes could do to exert control over their work, Spofford's concentrates on the scribe's skilful mixing of ink. Here, however, a new element begins to pervade the book metaphor: now erasure is feared, through a sense that the book itself is materially fragile, and that what is recorded on the page is not immune to damage.

Sermon for the First Sunday in Lent

It is not only the fragility of the material text, however, which is considered a source of anxiety. Questions regarding the ownership and appropriation of speech and writing also pervade sermons. The Christian soul is not the only person trained as a scribe. In the sermon in London, British Library, MS Harley 26, the devil is threatening because of his ability to write down sins which are unaccounted for by the sinner.[442] This is the only sermon recorded in this manuscript, which is otherwise entirely occupied by the *Speculum humanae salvationis* in verse. The sermon, composed for the first Sunday in Lent, is generally concerned with the increasing number of sins being committed, and how they should be repented for before the Day of Judgement.[443] In the concluding section of the

[439] Mark Clarke, *The Craft of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyg: Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators*, EETS O.S. 347 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 282 (l. 3; l. 4).
[440] See Orietta Da Rold, 'Materials', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500,* ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 12-33 (p. 15).
[441] *MED,* writer(e (n.), sense 1.
[442] The sermon appears on ff. 60^{v}-61^{v}.
[443] See Veronica M. O'Mara, 'A Checklist of Unedited Late Middle English Sermons that Occur Singly or in Small Groups,' *Leeds Studies in English*, 19 (1988), 141-66 (145, 156-57).

sermon, it is stated that all sins which have not been accounted for and written in the heart will instead be noted down by the devil:

> wryt þan in ȝour hertes right als we wald a geste or a sange, þe whilk ware lykeng till vs to lere. For trewly yf we acorde þat trewly and wele and gyff a gude tokenyng, lettyng for no schame ne for no awe, elles lese we our awne sawle. And þerfor for godes lufe by wele avysed, or ȝe come þer to. For trewley þat at ȝe forgete, and ȝe will noght schew and kennes þat ȝe haue doune ill, and will noȝt schryf ȝow þerof, þe fend of hele, he wryttes it full redy.[444]

The figure of 'þe fend of hele' that writes down forgotten sins is reminiscent of another demonic medieval character: Titivillus or Tutivillus, the devil who collects sinful, idle, or forgotten words. In the late medieval period, popular imaginings of devils and demons became increasingly droll; they represented the hellish beings as grotesque and ludicrous, often more comedic than dangerous, while still maintaining a sense of threat.[445] Margaret Jennings argues that depictions of these bothersome devils were perpetuated by preachers, who often included narratives about devilish torments in their exempla as a means of policing behaviour, namely chattering, in the church space.[446] As Jennings explains, Titivillus was a compound creature born from two devilish figures, a more popular figure who collected the idle words of (usually female) church-goers, and another who collects the carelessly skipped, shortened or omitted words of the liturgy in a sack.[447] A similar representation of the text-recording devil can be found in John Mirk's *Festial*. The sermon for 'The Dedication of a Church', recounts a story of a bishop performing Mass who spies two women whispering with 'þe fend satte in here nekkys wrytyng on a long rolle als fast os he mythe'. [448] The women lie about their quiet chattering to the bishop, who then commands the devil to recount all that they have said, at which point they ask for mercy. The 'fend' of this sermon is not directly identified as Titivillus, nor does he correspond directly with either of the two archetypes, but he is associated with the gathering of words. The sermon describes how the devil will readily write down, ('wryttes it full redy') the sins that are not acknowledged by the sinner. In doing so, the sermon represents the same kind of anxiety that the stories of Titivillus convey: words that are carelessly uttered by the speaker may be accounted for by another. Kathy Cawsey explains that the threat of the recording devil, which was usually a reprimand against chattering women, would have represented a significant threat due to the restrictions placed on women's literacy. Their limited understanding of the malleability of the written word, Cawsey argues, would have resulted in the word representing a sense of permanence connected with the lasting

[444] London, British Library, MS Harley 26, f. 61[r].
[445] See A.C. Champneys, 'The Character of the Devil in the Middle Ages', *The National Review*, 11 (1888), 176-191.
[446] Margaret Jennings, 'Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon', *Studies in Philology*, 74 (1977), 1-97 (7-8).
[447] Ibid., p. 10.
[448] Susan Powell, ed., *John Mirk's Festial, Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II,* Vol II, EETS O.S. 335 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 250 (ll. 69-70).

institutions of the church and judiciary.[449] But unlike the examples Cawsey draws from, this sermon provides the audience with the same writing power as the recording devil, even if only metaphorically within the heart. Once again, the metaphor of the book is used as an empowering symbol by which the audience can take accountability for, and therefore control of, their sins, rather than them landing in the hands of the devil.

As well as recounting the consequences for forgetting words, the sermon also provides advice on how to remember them. Rather than asking the sinner to write Christ's teaching in their hearts, they are, in this sermon, requested to write their own sins. The sermon states that this should be done in the same manner 'als we wald a geste or a sange', a *geste* meaning a romance, tale, or history, either sung or spoken.[450] Here, the sermon emphasises that sins should be memorised in the heart, as songs and narratives are, until they can be remembered 'off by heart'. This could be considered an underhand reprimand directed at the audience, as sermons often complain of the audience's willingness to listen and read romance narratives with more glee and attentiveness than devotional texts. But, more interestingly, the sermon is here bridging the gap between the oral and the written, figuring the heart as a recording material that chronicles thoughts and sounds as if they were written on the sinner's body.

The School House Sermon: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 806

In the sermons examined so far, books have commonly figured as metaphors for recording thoughts, deeds, sins, and Christ's teaching within the body of the individual. There are, however, book metaphors in sermons which move beyond the corporal body of the human and forge connections between the materiality of the codex and the materiality of other objects. One sermon found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 806, an orthodox collection of fifty-seven sermons, places the book of Christ's life within an extended metaphor that figures the church as a schoolhouse.[451] The sermon to be delivered on the third Sunday after Easter, explains how before his death Christ told his disciples that he would soon leave their company, but that they would meet again. The sermon moves to consider how the disciples studied Christ's words and then launches into an extended metaphor comparing the church to a schoolhouse, and the schoolbook contained therein to the book of Christ's life:

> […] holy churche schulde be houre schole house where our lorde Crist techiþ, and we alle schulden be hise scolers, and oure lesson schulde be þe gospel, and oure book shulde be his lyvyng whereupon we alle shulden lerne. For so biddiþ hevenely techer, *Discite a me*

[449] Kathy Cawsey, 'Tutivillus and the "Kyrkchaterars": Strategies of Control in the Middle Ages', *Studies in Philology*, 4 (2005), 434-451 (440).
[450] *MED* geste (n.), senses 1a, b and c.
[451] For a more detailed account of the sermon collection, see Peter G. Beidler, ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050 −1500*, vol. XI (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1984), pp. 4091-4098.

> *quia mitis sume et humilis corde*, 'lerne ȝee of me for I am mylde and meke of herte'. And þese condiciuns of a sotel mayster schulde make hise clerkis to love hyme and drede hyme for his goodnesse. and þe vsscheris of þis schole schulde prelatis and prestis to teche þis lore undir hyme to þe puple in word and dede. But here fro welliþ alle þey fayle and techen and lernon myche more þe lessoun of symonye and of synne, and whene we undirstonden not Crist, we schulden axe echone of oþer and þis schulde scharpe oure wittis more to conserve Cristus entente, and whenne we mekely knowen oure defauȝt and purpose us to praye god anoon he knoweþ alle oure þowtis and ȝifeþ grace to þe meke.[452]

Since at least the twelfth century, church buildings had been used as schoolhouses.[453] Elementary schools were the most common institutions to occupy the buildings, with their syllabus consisting of reading and song.[454] There were also more senior schools with strong connections to church buildings, such as the song schools of cathedrals, and the almonry schools which taught within monasteries. The opening sentence of the metaphor of church and schoolhouse, 'holy churche schulde be houre schole house', indicates that the entire institution of the church, rather than just the fabric of the church building, should be understood as a teaching organisation. The primary instructor of this school is 'our lorde Crist' who 'techiþ', with the earthly 'prelatis and prestis to teche þis lore undir hyme' as 'þe vsscheris of þis schole', the assistant teachers.[455] The students of this school are all Christian people, ('we alle schulden be hise scolers') whose 'lesson schulde be þe gospel, and oure book shulde be his lyvyng whereupon we alle shulden lerne'.

Rather than the more direct comparison of the schoolbook to the Bible, this sermon states that 'oure book […] whereupon we alle shulden lerne' should be considered Christ's 'lyvyng'. The connection with Christ to a teaching tool specifically for reading and writing was widespread in the later medieval period and instigated at an early age. As we saw in Chapter 3, alphabets were commonly featured on the first pages of primers and on horn-books, the string of letters often beginning with the sign of the cross which indicated the recitation of a prayer, ending with 'Amen', and then followed by several common prayers.[456] The figuring of Christ, rather than a Bible or a book, consequently mirrors late medieval teaching practices that already acted to connect the codex with Christ himself.

But instead of being figured as infantile school-children, the individuals learning at the school-house of the church are described as 'scolers' and 'clerkis', terms which imply more intellectual maturity and, importantly, more writerly skill.[457] Although these learners are never described directly as scribes, these metaphorical titles imply a degree of similarity to scribes. This

[452] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 806, f. 62ᵛ.
[453] Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 136.
[454] Ibid.
[455] *MED, usher*, n., 3.
[456] *Ibid.*, pp. 248, 253.
[457] *MED*, scoler)e (n.), sense 1; and clerk (n.), senses 1,2 and 3. It should be noted here that they are also described as 'þe puple', which translates as 'people' but could be easily mistaken for 'pupil'.

equation is then compounded by the later use of the term 'defauȝt', which, along with other similar terms such as 'blot', 'failinge', 'faute', 'mismetren' and 'miswriten', implied both spiritual and writerly error.[458] Like the sermons of Wimbledon and Spofford, this sermon uses book metaphors as a means of empowering Christians, figuring them as scribes who might correct and expunge work that is contrary to Christ's teaching, and then accurately inscribe words that honour his life and commandments.

A Wycliffite Cycle Sermon to be performed on the Sixth Day of Christmas

The four sermons analysed so far have been associated with orthodox preachers, but book metaphors were also used in late medieval Wycliffite sermons. Indeed, these sermons appear more concerned with the material volatility of the book than do their orthodox counterparts, focussing on how the weakness of their physical materiality renders books unreliable resources, rather than opportunities for the devout to account for and correct their behaviour. Before analysing individual sermons, it is worth briefly considering the Lollard attitude toward scripture, devotional writings, and books more generally. There are around five hundred manuscripts that contain Lollard writings, with about fifty of them comprising mainly sermons. Fiona Somerset concludes that 'no religious movement persecuted as heresy anywhere else in the history of Christianity has left behind a textual record of anything like this order of magnitude'.[459] These surviving witnesses provide a useful means of analysing how Wycliffites presented themselves, rather than simply how their theological views were documented by those who condemned them as heretical. As Kantik Ghosh explains, Wycliffite attitudes were predicated on a belief that the Bible should be free from 'corrupt' academic and intellectual glossing and interpretation, that it should be 'self-consciously made accessible' to those deemed unlearned, and that there should a 'return to the lost truths of Christ, the apostles, and of the *ecclesia primitiva*'.[460] Tellingly, the significance of the Bible meant that Wycliffites still treated some books as sacred objects, a practice that could appear contradictory to their condemnations of idolatry. A Lollard priest, for example, would still kiss the gospel after reading it at Mass.[461] Lollardy was also persecuted in a particularly codex-centred manner. Suspected Wycliffites often had their houses searched in the hope of finding heretical texts, which would be confiscated or burned by the authorities.[462] And,

[458] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, pp. 19, 30 and 31.
[459] Fiona Somerset, *Feeling Like Saints: Lollard Writings After Wyclif* (London: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 2, 8.
[460] Kantik Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-2.
[461] Mary Aston, *Lollards and Reformers, Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), p. 110.
[462] Anne Hudson, *Lollards and their Books* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), p. 182.

interestingly, Anne Hudson points out that parchment-makers and scribes, such as William Perchemener and Michael Scryvener, featured among the early suspects of Lollardy.[463] This concern with the hermeneutics and dialectics of texts, as well as the bookish identity of Wycliffites that permeates their practice and their persecution, I argue, bleeds into the consideration of the material book itself, and can be evidenced in the book metaphors used in sermons.

As Lollardy is often associated with a literal interpretation of scripture, one might assume that their use of metaphor was limited. This, however, proves not to be the case: the use of metaphor is common in Wycliffite texts and, as Fiona Somerset argues, not at odds with their literal approach. In her analysis of the common Wycliffite phrases 'gostly vnderstondynge' and 'gostli speche', Somerset shows that the ambiguous term *gostli* allows for 'figural or allegorical language in the broadest possible sense'.[464] Peggy Ann Knapp, in her study of the prose style of Wyclif himself, identifies many commonly used metaphors in John Wyclif's work, including those of scientific knowledge, nature, family relations, political organisations, faculties of the human body and food, the use of which was inspired by other contemporary vernacular prose texts, such as those written by Julian of Norwich, Richard Rolle, and Walter Hilton.[465] Ultimately, Knapp concludes that 'Wyclif's scorn is not directed against allegory in the interpretation of scripture […] but against the avoidance of the implications of a literal understanding'.[466] The use of metaphor, therefore, is sanctioned, provided that it does not entirely override a literalist reading.[467]

The metaphors in Wycliffite works do, though, differ. Those in the previously discussed orthodox sermons have each engaged with the book as a physical object, and their book-metaphors have relied on comparing the materiality of the text with the materiality of the body. Some Wycliffite sermons, however, move beyond these book-centred tropes to consider the materiality of the codex in relation to its spiritual counterparts. One Wycliffite sermon, which was to be performed on the sixth day of Christmas, treats the material text with an especial degree of suspicion beyond that expressed in the previously analysed sermons. Structured around the Gospel of Luke 2.33-40, the sermon diverts from the narrative of its subject to state that the material text should not be trusted, and that instead the faithful should trust in the Book of Life:

> we shulde not trowe in þis enke, ne in þese skynnys þat is clepud booc, but in þe sentence þat þei seyen, whyche sentence is þe book of lyf; For al ȝif þer ben manye trewþus and diuerse resonys in þe gospelus, neþeles eche of þes trewþus is þe substaunce of God hymself.[468]

---

[463] Ibid.
[464] Somerset, *Feeling Like Saints,* p. 214.
[465] Peggy Ann Knapp, *The Style of John Wyclif's English Sermons* (Paris: Mouton, 1977). For detail regarding the types of metaphors used by John Wyclif, see pp. 67-77. For a discussion of the influence of metaphor use in other vernacular prose works, see p. 12.
[466] Ibid., p. 26.
[467] On Wycliffite attitudes to realism and literalism, see David Lavinsky, *The Material Text in Wycliffite Biblical Scholarship: Inscription and the Sacred Text* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), pp. 22-66;
[468] Sermon 94, 'Sexta Die a Natiuitate. Sermo 40', in *English Wycliffite Sermons,* vol. II, ed. by Pamela Gradon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.227 (ll. 20-24).

Here, the sermon advises that a reader should not 'trowe' in (trust or rely on) the material book.[469] This ambivalence is expressed through the itemisation of two of the materials key to making a text, its 'enke' and 'skynnys'. In doing so, the sermon implies that the book is no more than the sum of its parts, it is merely a collection of materials that together are 'clepud booc', only 'called' a book. Instead of trusting this distinctly material object, the sermon argues that readerly confidence should instead be placed in 'þe book of lyf'. A querying of this claim appears to be anticipated, and the sermon acknowledges that each Gospel provides a variant of Christ's life: 'þer ben manye trewþus and diverse vesonys in þe gospelus'. To counter this implied criticism, the text then elucidates that 'neþerles eche of þes trewþus is þe substaunce of God hymself', that each truthful account provides a correct explanation.

The use of the term 'substaunce' in this sentence is significant. In the context of theological writing, 'substaunce' tends to imply the immaterial, ghostly, or spiritual presence of Christ.[470] The Book of Life, then, is established as the antithesis of the material book: the earthly book made of the material 'enke' and 'skynnys', whilst the Book of Life is imbued with the intangible 'substaunce' of truth. Questions of substance and materiality were of vital importance to Wyclif's denial of transubstantiation, but they were also important for his consideration of scripture. For Wyclif, as William Farr explains, 'the Bible was divinely revealed, literally true and ever-present; and it possessed these attributes just because, as the Word of God, it was the revelation of the eternal word; it was the material, actualized form of the divine archetype'.[471] As God is the supreme author of scripture, the truth of the scripture is not subject to varying degrees of truthfulness, and is instead always authoritative. Any equivocations or contradictions found within these texts, such as competing accounts within the gospels, can be explained away by acknowledging 'the wisdom of scripture's unique manner of speaking that is rich in levels of meaning'.[472] This sermon, like the previous example, is therefore asking the reader or listener to look past the material book and its seemingly imperfect physicality and contradictory accounts, and instead consider the word of scripture as transcending the physical codex in a state of perpetual infallibility.

'In natiuitate sancte Marie virginis' in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.50

A similar sentiment is expressed in a sermon included in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.50, which details the differences between the material, the ghostly, and the spiritual book. This fifteenth-

[469] *MED*, trouen (v.), senses 1 and 2.
[470] *MED*, substaunce (n.), senses 1, 2, 3a, 3b and 6.
[471] William Farr, *John Wyclif as Legal Reformer* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 20.
[472] Ian Christopher Levy, 'The Place of Holy Scripture in John Wyclif's Theology', in *The Wycliffite Bible: Origin, History and Interpretation*, ed. by Elizabeth Solopova (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 27–48 (p. 36).

century manuscript contains a collection of Wycliffite tracts in Latin and English, with the first thirteen folios occupied with headings and notes for a number of sermons to be performed on Sundays and feast days. The seventh sermon of the manuscript, entitled *In natiuitate sancte Marie virginis* begins by stating that it will discuss 'þre maner bokis': the 'material book', the 'gostli book þat is of mannes soule lyvyng' and 'a hevenly book, and þat everlasting, for it Christ hym self þis book is figurid':

> Here may be touchid of þre maner bokis. Þe first of material book, þat is of holi wrytyng, in wiche book ben writen alle þat neden for mannus salvacion. Augustinus: Quicumque homo extra sacram scripturam didiscerit, si noxium est, ibi dampnatur; si utile est, ibi invenitur. Þis book schulden prestis tentily hear it, diligentli rede it and [un]{perf}iȝtli understond it, and preche it to þe peple. And so did Esdras, vt patet Neemia 8. Þe 2 is a gostli book þat is of mannes soule lyvyng. In þis book schuld be wryten þe comaundementis of God ut canit ecclesia: Accipe mandata mea et ea in corde tuo tanquam in libro scribe. But alas þe fende haþ rasid awey þis writyng. Among an hundrid, vnneþe is þer whoon þat can and wole kepe þis writyng, so þat þe book of þe generacion of Crist Jhesum is made þe book of þe generacion of þe devel. Peter 5: 'Diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit querens quem devoret.' Þe 3 is an hevenly book, and þat everelasting, for it Crist hymself þis book is figurid. Ezechiel 2: Manus eius missa est ad me, in qua involutus est liber etc.' Vnde versus: Mentis in excessu datus est liber Ezechieli. In libro luctum, carmen, ve scripta videbat. pagina sancta liber, que predicat hec tria nobis: in terra luctu compungimur, in paradiso carmen leticie, reprobis mala veque Ihehenne. Þis þe miȝti hond of God, eiþer grace of þe holi gost, in [h]{w}hom þis book þat is Crist was wrappid. It was opened whan Crist was born, sprad abrood whan he suffrid his passioun. Þere were written lamentacions of synners, joy of just lyvers, dampnacion of reprevable. Hec Gregorius super Ezechielem. Þere were drauȝtis grete and longe in lymynyng of þis book. With scourgis and a crowne of þornes and row ragged naylis and a scharp spere.[473]

These three types of books, the material, the ghostly, and the spiritual, mirror Wyclif's metaphysical system expressed in the treatise *De Universalibus,* which appears in his *Summa de Ente*. Wyclif's system, drawing from Neoplatonism, Augustine, and Robert Grosseteste, argues that there are 'varying levels or grades of being from the lowest, the material being of individuals in this world, up through potential being and finally supreme or intelligible being which inhered eternally in God'.[474] In this sermon, books are described by following the same pattern. The first book is not a metaphor at all, but a physical, tangible book that can be heard, read, and preached. The second book, 'a gostli book þat is of mannes soule lyvyng', is that of the 'potential being', a metaphorical book in which the commandments are written. The third book, as the system dictates, is 'Crist hymself'.

The sermon then builds on Ezekiel 2, the episode in which a vision of God asks Ezekiel to eat what is offered in his hand: a rolled-up book – so in antiquity in the form of a scroll – written on internally and externally (Ezek, 2.9). Instead of focussing on Ezekiel's consumption of the book, the

[473] Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.50, f.9^{r}-9^{v}.
[474] Farr, *John Wyclif as Legal Reformer*, p. 16. See also J.A. Robson, 'Wyclif and Ultrarealism', in *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 141-171; and Anthony Kenney, *Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 18-30. See also Lavinsky, *The Material Text in Wycliffite Biblical Scholarship*, pp. 113-161.

sermon moves to consider Christ's relation to the proffered codex. Christ is described as being 'wrappid', wrapped, in this book, although it does not state explicitly that it is a scroll.[475] The handling of the book is described in terms of Christ's life: at his birth it is opened, and it is 'sprad abrood' at Christ's passion. Here, the physicality of Christ's birth and his passion is transposed into metaphors of the codex, or roll.

Interestingly, the book-opening metaphor used to describe Christ's birth serves to compare Mary, rather than Christ, to the book. As Mary's body opens to give birth to Christ, it is her body that is mirrored in the opening of the text. As Adrienne Williams Boyarin explains, this association of Mary's body with a text was not unusual, as Mary was considered 'the container for, and the bearer of, God's law', consequently sharing in the tradition which compared Christ's body to a text.[476] In turn, Christ's body is then rendered akin to the folding codex as the sermon describes how the pages are 'sprad abrood'. The material spreading of the book reflects the spreading of Christ's body on the cross. This connection becomes more apparent as the book-body of Christ is described as being written on with 'lamentacions of synners, joy of just lyvers, dampnacion of reprevable'. This text-body of Christ is also illustrated: 'Þere were drauȝtis grete and longe in lymynyng of þis book'. The employment of the term 'drauȝtis' here can be considered a pun that relates physical pain with the act of writing or drawing, drauȝtis meaning both the physical drawing apart that Christ's body endured on the cross, and artistic drawing.[477] The tools by which these illustrations are created, the sermon states, are the arma Christi, the 'scourgis and a crowne of þornes and row ragged naylis and a scharp spere'. Consequently, this sermon appears very similar to the 'Long' and 'Short' Charter of Christ poems. Like this sermon, the 'Long Charter of Christ' also describes Christ's wounds as a type of artistic decoration, 'And tempyrd all with vermelyoune/ Of my blode þat ran adoune' (l.45), and the *arma Christi* as writing implements, 'Þe pennes þat þe letter was with wryten/ was of skourges pat I was with smyten' (ll.85-6).[478] In the sermon, however, the book of Christ is clearly a book rather than a charter, enabling the comparison between the material, spiritual, and the distinctly bifoliate Christ-book.

---

[475] *MED,* wrappen (v.), all senses.
[476] Adrienne Williams Boyarin, 'Inscribed Bodies: The Virgin Mary, Jewish Women, and Medieval Female Legal Authority', in *Law and Sovereignty in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Robert S. Sturges (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011) pp. 237-260 (p. 245). See also her *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 2010), notably 'The Virgin and the Law in Middle English Contexts' (pp. 104-137), and Appendix 3 'The Charter Group Miracles and Other Short Texts from British Library MS Additional 37049', and 'Sealed Flesh, Book-Skin: How to Read the Female Body in the Early Middle English *St Margaret',* in *Women and the Divine in Literature before 1700: Essays in Memory of Margot Louis,* ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Victoria: ELS Editions, 2009), pp. 87-106.
[477] *MED,* draught (n.), senses 1 and 9.
[478] Mary Caroline Spalding, *The Middle English Charters of Christ* (Pennsylvania: Bryn Mawr, 1914), pp. 18-44. These quotations of the text are from the 'A-Text' of the poem (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Poet. 175), which consists of two-hundred and forty-three lines, and is the shortest of the three variants. The narrative voice of the poem is that of Christ himself, who directly addresses the reader.

This example proves to be another sermon that expresses an anxiety towards the mutability of the text, much like the orthodox sermons previously examined. In this sermon, the 'fende', Satan, is the most substantial threat to the integrity of the 'gostli book þat is of mannes soule lyvyng', in which is 'wryten þe commandmments of god'. The sermon claims that Satan has 'rasid away þis wrytyng', scraping away the letters of the commandment as a scribe may erase an error in a text.[479] Considering that this sermon is Wycliffite, the concern about textual erasure seems particularly pertinent as Lollard works were continually threatened with expunction or crossing-out from orthodox book-owners. Unlike the erasures made by the Christian-as-scribe to improve his book in the orthodox sermons, the Wycliffite sermon offers no means of correcting this erasure, and warns that 'Among an hundrid, vnneþe is þer whoon þat can and wole kepe þis writyng': in a hundred people there are hardly any who can and will preserve, or guard, this writing. In allowing the devil to erase Christ's words, the sermon warns 'þat þe book of þe generacion of Crist Jhesum is made þe book of þe generacion of þe devel'. The noun 'generacion' itself implies a sense of bodily and textual conflation, the term meaning the act or process of sexual intercourse or an ancestral line or lineage, and the act of production.[480] The book formed of Christ, by contrast, remains incorrupt, the material book vulnerable where the immaterial remains inviolate.

A Wycliffite Summer Sermon in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 95

Like their orthodox counterparts, Wycliffite sermons also examine the inextricable connection between speech and written records. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 95, a fifteenth-century manuscript containing fifty sermons, presents one sermon in which the tongue of the speaker of good words is metaphorised as God's pen. The manuscript is a major revision of the Wycliffite sermon cycle found in Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 74 and elsewhere, which originally contained fifty-four sermons, but is now severely damaged.[481] Thomas Heffernan and Patrick Horner note that although the compiler of MS Bodley 95 has removed many of the most controversial doctrinal positions, he still advocates for an increased access to scripture and emphasises the importance of preaching.[482] This sermon, which was to be performed on the tenth Sunday after Trinity, is preoccupied with the implications of harmful and impious speech. The text begins by warning that wise words originate from God and foolish words from the devil. It then moves to make a parallel between speaking and writing, tongues being compared to pens:

[479] *MED,* rasen (v.), all senses.
[480] *MED,* generacioun (n.), senses 1, 4 and 2.
[481] Peter G. Beidler, ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500,* vol. XI, p. 4079.
[482] Ibid., p. 4103.

> And so when þat thu spekist good, thy tonge is goddess penne to write in cristen menis hertis the love of ihesu criste, and therfor saythe david in the sauter booke that besyed hym by his myȝt to kepe his tonge þerto. *lingua mea calamus scribe velociter scribentis*, þat is to sey my tonge is a penne of a wyseman that wrytythe swyftely, for a man may by his langage lyȝtly be yknowe of what contrey that he is when þat men hyryþe him speke. *Qui de terra est de terra loquitur*.[483]

At first glance, the metaphor linking the tongue to the pen appears unintuitive. Materially, the tongue is nothing like the pen: it is wet, rounded, animate, and unable to create lasting marks on any type of writing support. The metaphor also complicates the division between spoken and written word; how can a tongue be God's pen when it is primarily associated with speaking, not writing? There is, however, as Joseph Goering and Randall Rosenfeld write, a 'neat fitness to building a metaphor of spiritual direction around the pen, a tool essential to the work and identity of students and scholars'.[484]

The Psalm quotation embedded in the sermon helps elucidate the implications of the tongue-as-pen metaphor.[485] The first quotation is taken from Psalm 44.2: *eructavit cor meum verbum bonum dico ego opera mea regi lingua mea stilus scribae velocis*, ('My heart hath uttered a good word: I speak my works to the king: My tongue is the pen of a scrivener that writeth swiftly'). Psalm 44 was widely recognised, and was the subject of a great deal of medieval commentary which debated whether it is more relevant to oral discourse than to writing practices, and whether the scribe described in the passage is Christ.[486] A quotation of the Psalm is also mischievously used in Chaucer's 'Summoner's Tale', in which a speaking heart becomes a euphemism for a belch.[487] This sermon writer, however, does not interact with Psalm 44 verbatim, and instead glosses it to state that the tongue-pen writes in the heart of the Christian listener, a detail which is not present in the biblical source. Interestingly, the corporeality of both the speaker/writer and listener/recording material is vital for this metaphor to work. Unlike the previous examples, the two corporal figures in this sermon both write and are written upon: the organs of the two bodies represent at once the writer, the pen, and the writing material. The image that the metaphor creates (a tongue writing in a heart) is consequently disturbing, and conjures visions of a licking and probing tongue that, in turn, generates thoughts of cannibalism, torture, and eroticism.

---

[483] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 95, ff. 71^{v}-72^{r}.
[484] Joseph Goering and Randall Rosenfeld, 'The Tongue is a Pen: Robert Grosseteste's Dictum 54 and Scribal Technology', *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, 12 (2002), 114-140 (192).
[485] For information regarding the early English use of the tongue as pen metaphor, see Jennifer O'Reilly, *Early Medieval Text and Image, Volume 2, the Codex Amiatinus, the Book of Kells and Anglo-Saxon Art*, ed. Carol Ann Farr and Elizabeth Mullins (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 158-159.
[486] Jesse M. Gellrich, 'The Art of Illumination: Illuminating Speech and Writing Letters in Later Medieval Manucripts' in *Vice & Virtue: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*, ed by. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 93-119 (p. 94). Gellrich's chapter focusses particularly on illuminations of this Psalm 44:2, and other related biblical passages.
[487] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Summoners Prologue and Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 128-136 (p. 132, ll. 1933-1934).

This disturbing image perhaps reflects the contrasting power of speech, which could correct, corrupt, or physically influence the speaker or listener. As C. M. Woolgar notes, speech in the later medieval period was understood to have a 'transcendental power' that could 'effect direct changes in listener and speaker', and the Annunciation, prayers, oaths, charms, and curses are prime examples of this.[488] But perhaps the best explanation for this metaphor is that it is ultimately a conflation of two distinct equations: the pen with the tongue, and the heart with the book. The reading culture of the period goes some way to explain the close connection between the pen and the tongue. Books were frequently read aloud, publicly, and privately.[489] Some texts were written through verbal dictation, and, interestingly, even monks in the scriptorium would mumble along to the words that they were painstakingly copying, albeit at earlier periods than this. Writing and the spoken word were (to varying degrees) intertwined, from the production of the written manuscript to the reading of the completed text. The metaphor of the tongue as pen and book as heart thus acts to draw all the elements of the production and reception process together, conflating the materiality of the text with the corporeality of the body.

Two Wycliffite Cycle Sermons: 'In Vigilia Apostolorum Petri et Pauli. Sermo 52' and 'Feria ii Prime Septimane Quadragesime. Sermo 25'

A consideration of the production methods of manuscripts is also seen in two sermons in the Wycliffite cycle that refer to the sheep, an animal whose body was frequently sacrificed for the creation of parchment. Metaphorical representations of animals in late medieval texts are complicated. They can have little to do with the activities of the animals themselves, and appearances of the same animal can be representative of different qualities in different texts: for example, the sheep is often representative of stupidity, but also of good Christian devotion.[490] The lamb was also one of the first symbolic animal images to appear in early Christian iconography.[491] Indeed, ovine imagery abounds in the Bible and in medieval visual culture, lambs often representing Christ, figuring in depictions of John the Baptist, and appearing in Apocalypse iconography, while followers of Christ are represented as sheep and contrasted with unfaithful goats.[492] Sheep were also materially important animals in late medieval culture, providing meat and dairy products for consuming, wool for clothing, and skin for

[488] C.M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 85.
[489] See, for example, Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[490] Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within, Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 103-136.
[491] Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Animal Iconography', in *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography*, ed. by Colum Hourihane (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 504-517 (p. 505).
[492] Ibid.

the production of parchment.[493] The appearance of the sheep is consequently interesting in and of itself: it is an animal which melds symbolic significance and bookish material value.

One interesting image of the sheep appears in a Wycliffite sermon for the vigil of the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul ('In Vigilia Apostolorum Petri et Pauli. Sermo 52'), which is structured around the Gospel of John 21.15-19, in which Christ gives Peter charge over feeding his sheep and lambs, but which also gestures towards the famous pastures of Psalm 22.2. The biblical source for the sermon makes no mention of what this food, literal or metaphorical, should be. The sermon, however, states that Christ:

> tawȝte apostlus to feede his schep in pasturis of holy wryt, and not in rotone pasturis, as ben fablis and lesyngus and lawis of men. Þe pasture euermore grene wiþ trewþis þat neueremore faylon, is þe lawe of holy wryt, þat lastuþ in þe toþur world.[494]

Christ teaching Peter to 'feede his schep in pasturis of holy wryt' clearly metaphorizes holy scripture as food, encouraging the equivalence of food and eating with spiritual knowledge and consumption. Eating was often understood as a metaphor for the comprehension of scripture or difficult theological knowledge, which has to be broken down, masticated carefully, and then finally swallowed.[495] This sermon, however, expands upon the equation of spiritual and edible nourishment. A dichotomy is established between the spiritually nutritious 'pasturis of holy wryt', which remain 'evermore grene wiþ trewþis þat nevere more faylon' and the 'rotone pasturis' of 'fablis' and 'les', ('fables' and 'lies'). Compared to some of the other sermons discussed in this chapter, this equation of the reader or listener to a sheep seems restrictive. The sheep-readers do not get to choose which book-pastures they consume, but rather they are directed by their shepherd who, in this case, is Christ and then Saint Peter.

Sheep and books appear again in a sermon found in the third part of the sermon cycle, the ferial sermons, which were performed during weekday services. A sermon for the first week of Quadragesima ('Feria ii Prime Septimane Quadragesime. Sermo 25') is concerned with the gospel of Matthew, 25.31-46, and describes how at the Last Judgement, Christ will divide all men into sheep and goats, and that the goats will be damned whilst the sheep are saved. The sermon then provides a somewhat muddied extended metaphor which compares the spiritual value of saints to the material value of sheep, who each provide five profits for the earth: dung for fertilised soil, spiritual food gained from thankfulness, food from their innards when one learns of their virtues, skin which contains the book of life, and wool which clothes righteous bodies:

---

[493] On the value of sheep, see Salisbury, *The Beast Within*, pp. 23-27.
[494] 'In Vigilia Aspostolorum Petri et Pauli. Sermo 52', in *English Wycliffite Sermons*, vol. II, ed. by Pamela Gordon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 267-269 (p. 268), ll. 31-35.
[495] Katie L. Walker, *Middle English Mouths: Late Medieval Medical, Religious and Literary Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 79.

> Alle saued men shal be sheep, for þei shal euere do fyue godis; and alle dampnyd men shal be kydis, for þei shal wante þes fyue wiþouten ende – for kydis ben gode for to ete, and geetis flesh is vnsauery. But seyntis in heuene shal euer dunge men here, or ellis in heuene, for oure erþe shal euere be plenteuous and ech seynt profitith to oþer. And so we eten gostly þer bodies whanne we þanken God of þer blis; and we eten þer inwardis whan we knowen uertues of þer soulis, and hou þer synnes bi grace weren clenesid as weren ouris; þer skyn profitiþ whanne we seen in hem þe bok of lif and alle þingis; þer wlle profitiþ whanne þei cloþen oure soulis, for euere seyntis hilen oure soulis.[496]

This image in the sermon differs from Lydgate's 'A Debate between a Horse, Goose and Sheep', which has previously been invoked in relation to book-craft recipe texts. The poem is thought to have been popular during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, appearing in twelve manuscripts and five printed editions.[497] In Lydgate's poem we find a similar appraisal of the value of the dermis to that exhibited in the sermon:

> Ther is also made of Sheepis skyn,
> Pilchis & glovis to dryve awey the cold
> Ther-of also is made good parchemyn,
> To write on bookes in quaiers many fold. [498]

For Deanne Williams, each of the three animals of the poem relates both to a different social class and to a different literary culture, Williams determining that the sheep represents the agrarian class and biblical literature. [499] These two distinct identities, however, do not amalgamate, and remain itemised separately: in Lydgate's poem, the material value of producing parchment is separated from the spiritual value of the sheep. In contrast, the Wycliffite sermon melds the two: the skin of the sheep is valuable because texts are recorded on it, and these texts afford readers a better understanding of the Book of Life.

The sermons analysed in this chapter show that metaphors of the material text were extremely flexible, and that a close reading of sermon texts is a valuable means of establishing how the materiality of the text was understood. Late medieval sermon writers adapted metaphors of the book to explain Christians' relationship with their own sinfulness and devotion, the importance of accountability, and questions of truthfulness. In orthodox sermons, these metaphors offer a means for individuals to determine, or write, their own salvation. Many of these codex-centred metaphors express an understanding of spiritual empowerment, figuring individuals as scribes and scholars who record Christ's words and correct records of their own sins and the devil's work. These books found

[496] 'Feria ii Prime Septimane Quadragesime. Sermo 25', in *English Wycliffite Sermons*, vol. III, ed by Anne Hudson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 67-70 (p. 67-68), ll. 13-25.
[497] Curt F. Bühler, 'Lydgate's Horse, Sheep and Goose and Huntington MS. HM 144', *Modern Language Notes*, 55 (1940), 563-569 (563).
[498] John Lydgate, 'The Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, vol. II, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS E. S. 192 (London: Keagan Paul, 1934), pp. 539-540.
[499] Deanne Williams, *The French Fetish: From Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 94.

in sermons prove not to be limiting, but expansive: they act as symbols of secrecy and revelation, the acquisition of knowledge, and representative of the threat of inedible recording. Wycliffite sermons, however, operate differently. The sermon texts analysed here show a greater preoccupation with the fallibility of the material text and the importance of looking beyond a text's material confines to the unfailing truth which lies in scripture. Wycliffite and orthodox sermons alike, however, display an engagement with the production process of manuscripts, the act of scribal copying and correction, and the material permanence (and transience) of the written text.

Chapter Five: *The Book of Margery Kempe* and Images of Textual Materiality

A.C. Spearing writes of Margery Kempe that 'the book of her life was shaped by the books of others' lives'.[500] Spearing is here referring to the numerous allusions to devotional works in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, but this remark also gestures towards *The Book's* persistent awareness of inscribed forms. Indeed, *The Book* is populated with Margery's encounters with different kinds of material texts, including books read to her by priests, letters which she sends and receives, and a miraculous life-saving codex. *The Book* also contains an extended description of its own difficult construction process, and provides a surprisingly detailed account of the practical difficulties Kempe and her amanuenses face in penning the text.

These descriptions of material texts, I argue, are profoundly influenced by Kempe's identity as an unenclosed woman operating in fifteenth-century England who purports to possess limited readerly and writerly skills.[501] This chapter will follow Lynn Staley's example of distinguishing between 'Margery, the subject, and Kempe, the author', in an effort to differentiate between the historical woman and the literary construction, although these are, at times, blurred. As Cheryl Glenn writes, Kempe's gender and social status mean that *The Book* provides readers with evidence of an 'alternative literary practice that complicates and enriches any picture we might have of medieval literary practices'.[502] By extension, *The Book* also provides fruitful ground for considering the *perception* of the material text and, more specifically, the perception of the material text by a fifteenth-century lay woman. Whilst this thesis has so far been occupied with texts either identifiably, or likely written by men, this chapter considers how Kempe's gender and social status 'complicate and enrich', to borrow Glenn's terms, her representation of material texts.

To do so, I consider three aspects of *The Book*. Firstly, I analyse how Kempe describes the creation of her book and Margery's intimate involvement with its construction, as well as how another female-authored text, the *Liber celestis*, might have influenced Kempe's preoccupation with materiality and authorial control. Secondly, I examine the representation of Margery's reading sessions, and the descriptions Kempe provides of different material texts which Margery interacts with, including her talismanic Book of Hours, letters which she sends and receives, and her observations on Bible oath-swearing. Finally, I will examine the extent to which Margery herself can be considered a kind of material text, and how this presentation of her was influenced by contemporary understandings of Mary as an ideal reader and bearer of the Word, and Christ as the ultimate material text.

---

[500] A. C. Spearing, 'The Book of Margery Kempe; or, The Diary of a Nobody', *The Southern Review*, 38 (2002), 625-635 (239).
[501] See Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p. 3.
[502] Cheryl Glenn, 'Popular Literacy in the Middle Ages: The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Popular Poetics: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics*, ed. by John Trimbur (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), pp. 56-73 (p. 59).

The Book of Margery Kempe and Literacy

Margery Kempe was born in c.1373, the daughter of John Brunham, an influential burgess of the prosperous trade town of Bishop's Lynn, Norfolk. She married John Kempe, who became a town official in 1394, when she was around twenty years old, and was pregnant fourteen times within the next twenty years. *The Book of Margery Kempe* was created, so the text tells us, when Margery was around sixty, and details the visions which Margery receives from God, her interactions with various religious figures, and her distinctive devotional practices. These events are split between the eighty-nine chapters of Book I, and the ten chapters of Book II. The only surviving manuscript copy of *The Book* (London, British Library, MS Additional 61823) dates to c.1450, and is presumed to be a 'very early copy but not the original' (p. xvi).[503] The copyist names himself as 'Salthows' in the conclusion of the text, a name which is documented in records of fifteenth-century Lynn, and his language implies a Norfolk training.[504] A binding leaf also contains something of an ex libris: 'Liber Montis Gracie: This boke is of Mountegrace', a Carthusian Priory in Yorkshire, and where some of the annotations to the manuscript are thought to have been written.

Historically, literary scholars have understood Kempe as illiterate and have considered her employment of various scribes to write *The Book* as evidence fortifying this claim. As a result, critics such as John C. Hirsh have argued that for his role in compiling, editing, and providing myriad intertextual references, 'the second scribe, no less than Margery, should be regarded as the author of *The Book of Margery Kempe*'.[505] More recent criticism, however, has argued that Margery's lack of readerly and writerly capability is a deliberate conceit that is not representative of Kempe's own aptitude, and that efforts to diminish Kempe's role as an author are indicative of a misogynist inability to move beyond considering *The Book* as an autobiography.[506] Within *The Book* itself, Margery is never described as illiterate, but she does complain of her 'defawte of redyng' (Ch. 58, l. 4823) and states that she is 'not lettryd' (Ch. 52, l. 4290). These two statements are, however, equivocal. As Josephine K. Tarvers writes, Middle English adjectives such as *lewd* and *unletteryd* often refer to the inability to write or read Latin or French texts, rather than Middle English.[507] She also notes that it was common for literate women of Kempe's class to employ scribes in order for their works to exhibit

[503] Barry Windeatt, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004). All Subsequent references are to this edition
[504] See Anthony Bale, 'Richard Salthouse of Norwich and the Scribe of The Book of Margery Kempe', *The Chaucer Review*, 2017 (52), 173-187.
[505] John C. Hirsh, 'Author and Scribe in "The Book of Margery Kempe"', *Medium Aevum*, 44 (1975), 145-150 (150).
[506] Lynn Staley Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 820-838.
[507] Josephine K. Tarvers, 'The Alleged Illiteracy of Margery Kempe: A Reconsideration of the Evidence', *Medieval Perspectives*, XI (1996), 113-124 (114).

the rhetorical language and conceits appropriate for religious writing.[508] Kempe herself, then, cannot wholly be described as definitively illiterate. Yet whether Kempe herself was literate or not, Margery is nonetheless represented as somewhat deficient in her ability to read and write. Indeed, Wendy Harding argues that it is Margery's identity as an illiterate laywoman that makes *The Book* both compelling and useful, and 'makes the manuscript a kind of border zone where evidences generally excluded from Western history can be found'.[509] The descriptions of Margery's engagements with material texts in *The Book* are unique, and provide an insight in to how a vast swathe of the population of late medieval England − unenclosed, illiterate laywomen − might have understood material texts as devotional objects. Whilst Kempe's representation of Margery as illiterate has resulted in a critical corpus that privileges orality over textuality (some going so far as to insist that *The Book* itself must have been intended for oral performance) this chapter instead considers the moments in the text where writing and its material supports prove significant. [510]

Documenting the Writing of The Book

The narrative of Margery's life contained within *The Book* is framed by the material process of writing it, which is described in the two proems which precede the main body of the text. The second proem, which is described as being added to the front of the original manuscript, is a fuller version of the earlier preface, and both were written by the second scribe engaged by Kempe to write *The Book*. The majority of this second proem, after providing a precis of Margery's life, is occupied with documenting Margery's struggle to find a willing and able amanuensis, and the difficulties they face together in producing *The Book*. Julie Orlemanski determines that in *The Book*, 'the proem does not so much discount [Kempe's] authorship as give an account of its heteronomous etiology, where she is nonetheless at the centre', with this 'heteronomous etiology' consisting of Kempe, the two scribes, and God.[511] Indeed, whilst the detail of the later proem concerns scribal activity, Margery remains omnipresent throughout. This sense of Margery's authority is achieved, I argue, by Kempe's effort to associate Margery with the material making, as well as the authorial composing, of *The Book*.

---

[508] Ibid., 116-117. See also M.T. Clanchy's exploration of the Latin term *illiteratus* in *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 3rd edn. (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), pp. 228-236.
[509] Wendy Harding, 'Body into Text: The Book of Margery Kempe' in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 158-187 (p. 170).
[510] See, for example, Diane R. Uhlman, 'The Comfort of Voice, the Solace of Script: Orality and Literacy in "The Book of Margery Kempe"', *Studies in Philology*, 91 (1994), 50-69; Liz Herbert McAvoy, '"Aftyr hyr owyn tunge": Body, Voice and Authority in the Book of Margery Kempe', *Women's Writing*, 9 (2002), 159-176. For the argument that the text was intended for oral performance, see Glenn, 'Popular Literacy in the Middle Ages: The Book of Margery Kempe', p. 69.
[511] Julie Orlemanski, *Symptomatic Subjects: Bodies, Medicine, and Causation in the Literature of Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), p. 274.

Diane R. Uhlman writes that the extended documentation of the genesis of *The Book* is 'clearly part of a bid for credence, an attempt to establish grounds for the authenticity (and hence, the authority) of the *Book*'.[512] The risks of flouting orthodox directives are well illustrated by the cautionary tale of Marguerite Porete, a French mystic who authored *Le Mirouer des simples âmes anienties et qui seulement demeurent en vouloir et désir d'amour* (known in English as the anonymised *The Mirror of Simple Souls*), and who was burned at the stake in 1310 alongside her book after refusing to remove the text from circulation, or recant any of the views expressed within it. She likely would have been known of by Kempe's associates, if not Kempe herself.[513] Male scribes, then, were often employed both literally and as rhetorically 'as a means of maintaining control over texts [that female authors] profess neither to control nor to aspire to control'.[514] A male secretary, scribe, or translator functioned as both a testament to the veracity of a woman's account, and a means of imbuing it with authority, and consequently literate and illiterate women alike employed them to execute their texts.[515]

To a certain degree, Kempe's effort to include depictions of scribal labour within *The Book* is indicative of the influence of other female authors of mystical texts, who often had to walk an authorial tightrope to maintain writerly authority without challenging orthodox belief that women should not engage with religious teaching. For example, the influence of Saint Birgitta of Sweden's (c.1303-1373) *Liber celestis* is evident in Kempe's conception and construction of *The Book*. Clarissa W. Atkinson writes that Birgitta's writings served as a 'literary models' for Kempe, and worked to make the written accounts of visionary women's experiences 'more than respectable'.[516] Birgitta originally recorded her revelations in her native Swedish, but they were then compiled, edited, and translated into Latin as the *Liber celestis* by Alphonse de Pecha, a Spanish hermit, and her confessors Matthias Övidsson, canon of Linköping, Prior Peter of Alvastra, and Peter Olafsson of Skänninge.[517] Figures surrounding Margery were known to be intimately acquainted with the text: Alan of Lynn, Carmelite friar and friend of Kempe, produced an index to the *Liber celestis* (now Oxford, Lincoln College, MS 69). Perhaps, then, Kempe's effort to explain the material formation of her text was in

[512] Uhlman, 'The Comfort of Voice, the Solace of Script', 52.
[513] See Wolfgang Riehle, 'Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* and Its Reception in England', in *The Secret Within: Hermits, Recluses, and Spiritual Outsiders in Medieval England,* ed. by Wolfgang Riehle and Charity Scott-Stokes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 135-150.
[514] Staley Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary', 820.
[515] See Stanley Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literacy', 827; and Clare Bradford, 'Mother, Maiden, Child: Gender as Performance in The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Feminist Poetics of the Sacred: Creative Suspicions,* ed. by Frances Devlin-Glass and Lyn McCredden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 165-181 (p. 167).
[516] Clarissa W. Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 35-36.
[517] See Claire L. Sahlin, *Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophesy* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), p. 26. Sahlin also draws attention to a passage of the text omitted in Alphonse de Pecha's edition of Bridget's *Revelations,* in which Bridget compares the editorial work of herself and her confessors to that of a carpenter who shapes and carves wood (pp. 31-32). See also, Carol F. Heffernan, 'The Revelations of St Bridget of Sweden in Fifteenth-Century England', *Neophilologus,* 101 (2017), 337-349 (340).

part to ensure that it sufficiently appealed to contemporary attitudes towards the gendered authority of mystical texts.

But what is distinctive about *The Book's* account of the writing process, however, it is the level of detail with which it is recorded. As David Lawton puts it: 'there is simply no account of textual mediation so complex and as circumstantial, almost wantonly obscure, as that provided in *The Book of Margery Kempe*'.[518] Lawton concludes that depictions of scribal labour emphasise *The Book's* dependence on Kempe's voice, namely her dictation and memory, but these descriptions also attest to her ability to impact the scribal process of penning the text. Although Margery is not enacting the scribal labour of writing *The Book*, she is, as Orlemanski writes, 'present and in control at both scenes of inscription'.[519] These scenes of inscription, I argue, are themselves significant in establishing Margery's involvement with the material creation of *The Book*. She is depicted as working in close proximity to the scribes, the two labouring, as detailed in a later chapter, 'at hom in hir chambre' (Ch.88, l. 7274). Whilst the Middle English term *chambre* can mean any private room, it is most commonly employed in *The Book* to mean a bedroom.[520] The site of inscription is therefore figured as an intimate, domestic space ('at hom') over which Margery has ownership, rather than a space associated with the male scribe, such as a hermitage, church, or scriptorium.[521] This spatial intimacy also means that the conventional items associated with scribal labour become associated with Margery. The proem acts to construct a setting in which Margery, as well as the scribe, are accompanied by all the accoutrements of writing: there are 'penne[s]' (l. 142) and 'spectacles' (l. 143), and brief descriptions of conditions which impact scribal ability, 'day-lyth' and 'candel-lygth bothe' (ll. 148-9). Margery's bedroom is consequently figured as a kind of domestic scriptorium, with her ownership of the space reflected in her authority over the creation of *The Book*.

Again, it is worth considering whether the presentation of Saint Birgitta could have influenced Kempe's self-fashioning as a woman surrounded by, although not directly using, the materials of writing. Aside from her encounters with the *Liber celestis*, Margery is also described as having direct contact with the English contingent of Bridgettines, the bookish enclosed community founded by Saint Birgitta. Margery travels to Syon Abbey, the monastery founded in 1415 and royally endowed by King Henry V, when on pilgrimage in Book II: 'Fro London sche went to Schene [corrected to 'Syon' in the margin], a iii days before Lammes Day, for to purchasyn hir pardon thorw the mercy of owr Lord' (Ch. 10, ll. 8169-8170). Whilst, like other orders, the Bridgettines took a vow

[518] David Lawton, 'Voice, Authority, and Blasphemy in the Book of Margery Kempe', in *Margery Kempe: A Book of Essays,* ed. by Sandra J. McEntire (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 93-115 (p. 101).
[519] Orlemanski, *Symptomatic Subjects*, p. 273.
[520] *MED*, chawmbre (n.), sense 1. The use of the term 'chawmbre' in *The Book of Margery Kempe* consistently refers to a bedroom when describing Margery's location, for example Ch. 27, l. 2143, when Margery stays in her chamber for six weeks and is made very sick by God.
[521] On the wider significance of bedrooms and beds in *The Book of Margery Kempe*, see Hollie M.S. Morgan, *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England: Readings, Representations and Realities* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), pp. 49-52.

of poverty, they were permitted an 'unlimited supply of books for study'.[522] Their reliance on books is foregrounded in *The Myroure of Oure Lady*, a treatise on Bridgettine religious practices which emphasises the role of reading as a devotional and contemplative, and which gestures towards a range of texts which the nuns should read, such *The Booke of Gostlye Grace* of Mechtild of Hackeborn.[523] When visiting, Margery might have seen such provision or have encountered visual depictions of Saint Birgitta, who was often represented holding or writing in a book.[524] In Maria H. Oen's study of the 'serial iconography' of Birgitta, she argues that the illustrations found of Birgitta in manuscripts work to solidify her political and religious claims, and her position as a divinely-influenced author.[525] A late fourteenth-century Italian devotional miscellany which contains the Latin version of her revelations includes a full-page author portrait of St. Bridget.[526] Bridget is shown in the bottom right-hand corner, the Virgin Mary and Christ both sending a beam of light from their left hands down on to her head as she sits with a book on her lap, her right hand raised with a pen, whilst next to her is a writing desk populated by three more books, a leather penner used to hold quills, and a pen knife. This detailed visual rendering of Birgitta's writing process is comparable to the writerly depiction of Margery in the proem of *The Book*, where she too is surrounded by the articles of book-writing (the aforementioned pens, candles, spectacles etc). Perhaps Kempe envisioned a future in which she too would be depicted visually in a manner similar to St Birgitta: she, the devout author, and her book the material meeting place of the human and the divine.

Yet Margery not only dominates the locus of inscription: she also reaches beyond her role of composer to assist in the work of penning the text, although not wielding the pen herself. Mary Carruthers writes that 'the distinction of composing (or "making" in Middle English) from writing-down continued to be honoured throughout the Middle Ages'.[527] Whilst much of the detail of the proem is focussed on the acquisition and writerly difficulties of the scribes who pen *The Book*, it is Margery who occupies the role of composer. Indeed, the proem relates how authorial control over *The Book* is closely guarded by Margery. Whilst various 'worthy and worshepful clerkys […] bodyn hyr that sche schuld don hem wryten and makyn a booke of hyr felyngys and revelacyons' (ll. 76-80), some even offering to 'wryten hyr felyngys wyth her owen handys' (ll. 80-1), Margery declines these

[522] Ann M. Hutchison, 'What the Nuns Read: Literary Evidence from the English Bridgettine House, Syon Abbey', *Medieval Studies*, 57 (1995), 205-222 (208).
[523] Ibid., 209-120.
[524] This representation of Bridget appears across artistic mediums, and across Europe. Johannes Jung's 1425 wooden sculpture of Bridget, which still stands in Vadstena Abbey, shows her seated with a large tome in her lap. A late fifteenth-century German woodcut (London, British Museum, 1934, 0609.2-4) depict St Bridget giving her rule to her order, one book supported on a lectern whilst she holds another one in each hand, each with the margins marked out.
[525] Maria H. Oen, 'The Iconography of the *Liber celestis revelacionum*', in *A Companion to Birgitta of Sweden and her Legacy in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Maria H. Oen (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 186-222 (p. 187).
[526] New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.498, f. 4^{v}. <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/85653> [Date Accessed: 31.10.2021].
[527] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 11-12.

offers. Kempe relates that Margery was 'comawndyd in hir sowle that sche schulde not wryten so soone' (ll. 81-2), a stipulation which lasts twenty years until the Lord 'comawnded hyr and chargyd hir that sche schuld don wryten' (ll. 85-6).[528] The description of the men's offers to both 'wryten and makyn a booke' on behalf of Margery is significant, as it means that they will both enact the scribal labour of 'wryt[ing]', and the authorial labour of 'makyn[g]'. Margery's disinclination to accept their offers, although credited to divine proclamation, is perhaps reflective of her desire to retain authority over the composition of *The Book*. She will only let them 'wryten'. She refuses the offers of the men precisely because of their offer to both compose and write her narrative, an authority which she is not willing to relinquish.

But the term 'makyn' can also be understood as referring to physical craft, as well as intellectual conception. Indeed, even the material process of writing the book is influenced by Margery to a significant degree. The first scribe's draft of *The Book* proves too deficient for the second scribe to read, and is described by the second scribe as:

> so evel wreytn that he cowd lytyl skill theron, for it was neithyr good Englysch ne Dewch, ne the lettyr was not schapyn ne formyd as other letters ben. Therfor the prest leved fully ther schuld nevyr man redyn it, but it wer special grace. Nevyrthelesse, he behyte hir that if he cowd redyn it he wolde copyn it owt and wrytyn it betyr wyth good wylle. (ll. 99-103)

This passage emphasises the *material* problems created by the first scribe's efforts. The letters are described as graphically deformed, 'not schapyn ne formyd as other letters ben', as well as written in an unintelligible language somewhere between English and German. This difficulty of reading the text encourages the already unsettled second scribe to shirk off his scribal duties once more, only to return again in guilt. When Margery brings him the book again, she prays that he may be granted 'grace to redyn it and wrytyn it also' (l. 129), an echo of the scribe's somewhat offhand comment that 'special grace' would be required to read it. With Margery's verbal prompts and suggestions as he reads it, 'she sumtyme helpyng where ony difficulte was' (ll. 132-133), the scribe finds reading the book 'mych more esy' (l. 131). In this case, divine intervention has less to do with the scribe's comprehension of the text than Margery's practical assistance, which enables the scribe to decode the first scribe's efforts.

Once the difficulty of reading is resolved, however, the priest's ability to write is then compromised again as 'his eyn myssyd so that he mygth not se to make hys lettyr, ne mygth not se to mend hys penne' (ll. 140-142), a condition which his 'spectacles' (l. 143) only aggravate. Here, the scribe's failing eyesight is described through the difficulties he found in enacting the material responsibilities of the scribe: he cannot see clearly enough to sharpen the quill needed to write.

[528] Christopher Cannon explores what is meant by the term 'wyth her owen handys' and its implications for the distinction between conception and writing in work of Chaucer and Langland in his article "Wyth her owen handys': What Women's Literacy Can Teach Us about Langland and Chaucer', *Essays in Criticism*, 66 (2016), 277-300.

Although Margery prays for the scribe to aid his progress, her presence proves materially helpful too, as she appears to resolve his arguably psychosomatic eye complaint by explaining that 'hys enmy had envye at hys good dede and wold let hym yf he mygth' (ll. 145-146). Under Margery's encouragement, the second scribe returns to *The Book* and sees well by 'day-lyth and be candel-lygth bothe' (ll. 148-149). Although Margery does not wield the pen, she is instrumental to the second scribe's ability to successfully complete the writing of *The Book*, whether that is through temporal encouragement or prayer.

Indeed, Margery's influence in the making of *The Book* is described as being so substantial that the scribe alters the materiality of the manuscript in order to accommodate the account of it. The second scribe explains that due to the miraculous events which took place when he and Margery were writing *The Book*, he feels compelled to detail more fully her involvement. This is related in the last lines of the later proem:

> And for this cause, whan he had wretyn a qwayr, he addyd a leef therto, and than wrot he this proym, to expressyn mor openly than doth the next folowyng, whech was wretyn er than this. (ll. 149-51)

Here, the impact of Margery's intervention motivates the scribe to 'expressyn mor openly', to describe in more detail, the production process of the text, and this requires the scribe to add a 'leef' to the fully written 'qwayr'. Although the physical manuscript made by the second scribe is lost, this account provides an insight into its possible material construction. The description of adding a leaf to the beginning of the already-written quire is, to some degree, reflective of real manuscript construction practices. For example, a dedicatory preface was added to another work from fifteenth-century Lynn, John Capgrave's *Abbreviacion of Cronicles*, with the addition of one bifolium to the start of the first quire.[529] But the later proem of *The Book* appears to suggest that a single leaf, or singleton, was added to the start of the quire: 'he added *a* leef therto'. This too was materially possible, but the length of the proem makes the validity of this claim dubious: it would be exceedingly difficult to write the text (consisting of over fifteen-hundred words) on each side of a single sheet. Indeed, in the manuscript containing the text, the second scribe's proem takes up five sides, or two and a half leaves.[530] However, even if this description is not reflective of the original manuscript, it still offers an interesting means of stressing Margery's impact on the creation of the book through describing its materiality. This short description of the scribe's amendment to the physical construction of the book acts to emphasise the importance of Margery's recollection of her spiritual journey: it is so valuable that it is worth altering the materiality of the codex by adding extra leaves. This emendation to the material text is also something of a reflection of Margery herself, whose exuberance, in the form of tears and preaching, often oversteps the bounds of her contemporary

[529] Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.12, ff.1^{v}-2^{v}. See Peter J. Lucas, ed., *John Capgrave's Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, EETS O. S. 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. xxix-xxxvii.
[530] London, British Library, Additional MS 61823, ff.1^{v}-3^{v}.

behavioural standards. The description of this altering of the material text becomes another means through which to characterise both Margery's importance, and her distinctive behaviour.

Margery's Encounters with the Material Text

Margery's relationship with books extends beyond that which she is involved in writing. Indeed, there are numerous scenes within *The Book* of Margery being read to from books. Carol M. Meale compellingly argues that modern definitions of literacy do not adequately encompass the range of readerly abilities or experiences present in late medieval England, and writes that 'the term 'reader' may need a radical redefinition if we are to understand women's use of books'.[531] Nor, I argue, do definitions of literacy reveal how those with limited literacy engage with material texts which they cannot necessarily read. In this next section, I will examine passages in *The Book* which describe Margery's reading sessions, and the other encounters which she has with material texts, in order to explore how material texts are represented when they are not being directly read from.

The texts which Margery states that she has been read are impressive in their breadth and contemporaneity. The list of books which Margery is familiar with is first given in a meeting with Richard Caister, one of her spiritual mentors:

> sche herd nevyr boke, neythyr Hyltons boke, ne [B]ridis boke, ne *Stimulus Amorys*, ne *Incendium Amoris*, ne non other that evyr sche herd redyn that spak so hyly of lofe of God but that sche felt as hyly in werkyng in hir sowle yf sche cowd or ellys mygth a schewyd as sche felt. (Ch. 17, ll. 1257-1261)

In a later chapter, a near duplication of this list of texts is offered, which Margery is described as having been read by a priest over the course of 'vii yer er viii yer':

> He red to hir many a good boke of hy contemplacyon and other bokys, as the Bybyl wyth doctowrys therupon, Seynt Brydys boke, Hyltons boke, Boneventur, *Stimulus Amoris*, *Incendium Amoris*, and swech other (Ch. 58, ll. 4818-4821).

There are four books in these two descriptions which appear twice: '[B]ridis boke', referring to the *Revelations* of Saint Birgitta of Sweden, '*Stimulus Amorys*', which by critical consensus is considered to be Bonaventura's *Stimulus Amoris* (the Middle English translation known as *The Prykke of Lofe* is described as being read in Ch. 62, l. 5162, by a priest), the *'Incendium Amoris'* by Richard Rolle, and 'Hyltons boke', which could refer to either Walter Hilton's *The Scale of Perfection* or his *Epistle on*

[531] Carol M. Meale, "…alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch, and frensch': Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 128-158 (p. 133).

the Mixed Life.[532] Elsewhere, it is evident that at least the second scribe, if not Kempe, was acquainted with the work of Elizabeth of Hungary (Ch. 62, l. 5173) and *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, which is credited for convincing him that Margery's weeping was a sign of divine influence.

As previously described, Margery's 'defawte in redyng' (Ch. 58, l. 4823) meant that she required male clerics to read aloud to her. Kempe uses the term 'lystere' (Ch. 60, l. 4921) to describe this role, a noun which denotes a priest whose duty was to read and expound on scripture whilst also functioning as a confessor.[533] The use of the term figures reading aloud to an audience as a religious duty of a priest, and frames it as an activity charged with the same intimacy as confession. Conversely, the role engages the priest and the confessor in a kind of reciprocal reading practice: Margery 'reads' the priest her sins, and in return the priest reads texts to Margery. The perception of listening to works read aloud as a devotional activity is continually foregrounded in the text. *The Book* states that Margery's exposure to books directly corresponds to an increase in prayer, and Kempe explains that 'thorw heryng of holy bokys and thorw heryng of holy sermownys, sche evyr encresyd in contemplacyon and holy meditacyon' (Ch. 59, ll. 4832-4833). Like the sermons examined in the previous chapter, then, *The Book* is a text which engages with the oral performance, and aural reception, of the material text.

Indeed, reading was considered tantamount to prayer in the later Middle Ages.[534] For example, in London, British Library, MS Harley 1706, a devotional miscellany dating from the late fifteenth century and owned by Elizabeth Beaumont, a rubric reads that 'We schulde rede and vse bokes in to þis ende and entente. For formys of preysynge and preyyng to God'.[535] Likewise, the Second Prologue to *The Mirror of Our Lady*, a translation and commentary on the Bridgettine Office, states that 'for lyke as in prayer man spekyth to God, so in redynge God spekyth to man' (ll. 113-114).[536] *The Book* clarifies that the act of *listening* to devotional texts being read aloud also constituted a devotional activity and, moreover, one that could supersede reading silently, or being the orator. When Margery expresses anxiety that her writing of *The Book* detracts from her time spent praying, she is reassured by Christ's clarification that listening to texts read aloud is an equivalent act of worship:

---

[532] The identification of these books is discussed in detail by Windeatt, pp. 9-18. See also Jaqueline Jenkins, 'Reading and *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 113-128 (pp. 122-126).
[533] *MED*, lister (n.), sense 1.
[534] One of the most well-known equations of reading to prayer, especially in regard to a female readership, can be seen in the thirteenth century *Ancrene Wisse*, a guide for anchoresses, which declares that 'redunge is god bone', reading is a good form of prayer, see Bella Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse: A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402, With Variants From Other Manuscripts*, EETS O.S. 325-326 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 109.
[535] John C. Hirsh, 'Prayer and Meditation in Late Mediaeval England: MS Bodley 789', *Medium Aevum*, 48 (1979), 55-66 (55).
[536] *The Idea of the Vernacular, An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280-1520*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 261-262.

> I have oftyn seyd onto the that whethyr thu preyist wyth thi mowth er thynkist wyth thyn hert, whethyr thu redist er herist redyng, I wil be plesyd wyth the. (Ch. 88, ll. 7341-7343)

Ryan Perry and Lawrence Tuck write that this address from Christ establishes a binary between the somatic and performative acts of praying and reading aloud, and the internal processes of listening to readings and praying alone, with the latter credited in allowing 'a more direct engagement between worshipper and the divine'.[537] In this passage, however, the two types of prayer and reading are figured as equal in power, as indicated by the conjunction 'er'. Instead of one method being figured as superior to the other, Christ appears to indicate here that he is elevated *beyond* materiality: that the materiality of prayer or of prayer or reading is inconsequential.

What, then, does this mean for the material text? Jessica Barr argues that 'books in general are figured, in the *Book*, as purveyors of intimate experience' which '[supersede] the limited reach of oral communication and interpersonal exchange'.[538] Barr concludes that the material text is ultimately rendered transparent, writing that 'medieval visionary women exploit the medium of the book in order to make it, so far as possible, less mediate: that is, they seek strategies for rendering the book into a transparent medium'.[539] Barr's claim that the book is rendered a 'transparent medium' perhaps underplays the importance of the material text as a material focal point for meditation or prayer. For example, fifteenth-century manuscript that provides guidance for a family's devotional behaviour, stresses the importance of looking at books during the performance of mass:

> Cum vero missam audieri<ti>s nullo faciatis colloquium cum aliis, set dum cantant clerici, respiciatis in libris ecclesie.
>
> When you hear Mass, do not by any means engage in talk with other people; but while the clerks are singing, look at the books of the church.[540]

In this text, the books of the church space are presented as solid and distinctly visible devotional objects, and viewing them constitutes a devotional activity. Jessica Brantley argues that 'we should not separate medium from meaning, that it is in fact impossible to talk about meaning without taking

[537] Ryan Perry and Lawrence Tuck, "[W]heþyr þu redist er herist redyng, I wil be plesyd wyth þe': Margery Kempe and the Locations for Middle English Devotional Reading and Hearing', in *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. by Carrie Griffin and Mary Flannery (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 133-148 (p. 138).
[538] Jessica Barr, *Intimate Reading: Textual Encounters in Medieval Women's Visions and Vitae* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2020), p. 106. A similar argument is made by Marlene Villalobos Hennessey in 'The Disappearing Book in *The Revelation of the Hundred Pater Nosters*', in *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe: Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life*, ed. by Stephen Kelley and Ryan Perry (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 243-266.
[539] Ibid., p. 105.
[540] William Abel Pantin, 'Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman', in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. by J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 398-422.

medium into account' and, in direct contrast to Barr, argues that media are always 'intermedial'.[541] It is Brantley's conception which is more applicable, I argue, to *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Far from being rendered transparent, the books which are read to Margery are material intermediaries between her and God, and are important material objects which are required for a connection to be fostered.

Yet Kempe's perception of the materiality of books is, undoubtedly, influenced by the experience of being read aloud to, and this is reflected in the manner by which she describes the material text. How Margery received some of these readings is the subject of scholarly speculation. Vincent Gillespie posits that Kempe's advisors may have provided extempore translations of the Latin versions of some of the listed texts, as they are commonly referred to in *The Book* by their Latin titles, and the majority were not available in Middle English in the years in which they are recorded as being read.[542] Nicholas Orme writes that aristocratic men trained at universities to become clerics would have become fluent Latinists, but that even those whose social class ensured comprehensive schooling would not be able to manage to decode fully Latin texts alone, and would rely on 'clerics at hand who could translate and interpret the contents on their behalf' of any texts which were not 'confined to practical purposes'.[543] This intervention by the translator would perhaps result in the selective reading of a text and its glosses as appropriate to the interests or needs of the audience.[544] But however they were read, Kempe's experience of being read aloud to appears to have impacted her understanding of the material text. When Margery is read a selection of texts by Richard Caister, for example, Kempe describes the books, rather than the authors, as speaking of God's love:

> sche herd nevyr boke, neythyr Hyltons boke, ne [B]ridis boke, ne *Stimulus Amorys*, ne *Incendium Amoris*, ne non other that evyr sche herd redyn that spak so hyly of lofe of God. (Ch. 17, ll. 1257-1259)

Here, Kempe's expression reveals the impact of her readerly reception: because she listens to texts being read aloud, she describes the material text as 'speaking' to her. For Kempe, the material text and her reading experience become amalgamated, and books are described as speaking objects.

The influence of the manner through which Margery receives a read text is also evident in a later passage. In Chapter 70, Kempe describes a dinner which Margery is invited to with her spiritual

---

[541] Jessica Brantley, 'Medieval Remediations', in *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in a Post-Print Era*, ed. by N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), pp. 201-220 (pp. 206, 205).

[542] Vincent Gillespie, 'Building a Bestseller: The Priest, the Peartree, and the Compiler', in *Late Medieval Compilations in England*, ed. by Marleen Cré, Diana Dennisen and Denis Renevey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 27-62 (33). See also Roger Ellis, 'Margery Kempe's Scribe and the Miraculous Books', in *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition*, ed. by S.S. Hussey and Helen Phillips (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), pp. 161-175.

[543] Nicholas Orme, 'The Education of the Courtier', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherbourne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 63-86 (p. 81).

[544] See, for speculations on why and how Latin extempore translations may have been provided in particular texts, Joyce Coleman, 'Lay Readers and Hard Latin: How Gower May Have Intended the *Confessio Amantis* to be Read', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 24 (2002), 209-235; A.J. Minnis, *Magister amoris: The Roman de la Rose and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 299-300.

mentor, Alan of Lynn, and which is hosted by a 'worschipful woman whech had takyn the mentyl and the ryng' (Ch. 70, l. 5715), likely a pious widow. The dinner is related as follows:

> Ther was a dyner of gret joy and gladnes, meche mor gostly than bodily, for it was sawcyd and sawryd wyth talys of holy scriptur. (Ch. 70, ll. 5725-5727)

Here, Margery is described as being read scripture during the meal. The use of the term 'talys' is ambiguous: it could mean that Margery's company simply recounted stories from scripture, or that they read from the Bible. Other contemporary reading practices can help elucidate what her experience might have included. Enclosed orders were read aloud to by a nominated *lector* during mealtimes, whilst the other members ate in silence.[545] It was also common for families or large households to follow that practice, with mealtimes featuring readings either from the paterfamilias, or the chaplain.[546] It is likely, then, that Margery was read these 'talys' from the Bible itself, rather than through the ad-hoc oral remembrance of the guests. But what is significant here is that Kempe metaphorizes the readings as a kind of condiment: the meal is 'sawcyd and sawryd wyth talys of holy scriptur'. Margery's experience of being read the text whilst eating has resulted in an amalgamation of the two experiences, and being read to aloud is described as an enrichment of her meal's flavour.

This connection between eating and devotional practice is further compounded when Alan gifts Margery a pair of knives after the meal:

> And then he yaf the sayd creatur a peyr of knyvys, in tokyn that he woulde standyn wyth hir in Goddys cawse, as he had don beforntyme. (Ch. 70, ll. 5727-5729)

While the knives Margery is given are not described, it is clear that Alan and Margery understand this cutlery as signifying a friendship dedicated to God: they are a 'tokyn', a term that has appeared elsewhere in this thesis to indicate a material object which possesses immaterial qualities, in this case, a knife which represents friendship. Metal tableware such as these knives were sometimes decorated with devotional images or words, and Katherine L. French writes that 'the decorations and images adorning dishes, spoons, and drinking vessels further integrated pious behaviour with mealtimes'.[547] This kind of pious tableware is well represented by an early sixteenth-century Italian knife, which is etched with musical notation and two Latin inscriptions expressing gratitude for the meal.[548] Whilst it would be too presumptive to assume that the knives gifted to Margery were inscribed, this detail does solidify the previously made connection between eating, reading, and devotion.

---

[545] Isabelle Cochelin, 'When Monks Were the Book: The Bible and Monasticism (6th-11th Centuries)', in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, ed. by Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 61-83 (p. 66).
[546] Christine Carpenter, 'Religion', in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 134-150 (p. 139).
[547] Katherine L. French, *Household Goods and Good Households in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), p. 144.
[548] London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum no. 310-1903. See <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/a-notation-knife/> [Date Accessed: 02.02.2021].

However, while Margery is well-read by virtue of these various reading sessions, there is only one book which she is explicitly described as owning. Margery's book is described in Chapter 9, where a section of stone masonry that 'weyd iii pownd' and wood 'weyng vi pownd' (Ch. 9, ll. 662-663) fall on her in St Margaret's Church during a service. Before she is hit with the falling debris, the chapter describes how Margery 'knelyd upon hir kneys, heldyng down hir hed, and hir boke in hir hand, prayng owyr Lord Crist Jhesu for grace and for mercy' (Ch. 9, ll. 658-660). She survives seemingly without injury, an event which Alan of Lynn interprets as a 'gret myracle' (Ch. 9, l. 682), and Margery's book is implicitly credited with saving her life.

The book which Margery holds during this episode is not described any further, but it is likely to have been a Primer or a Book of Hours, books which were predominantly used as mnemonic aids for prayer both within church services and at home, and which represent the books most commonly owned by the laity.[549] How the illiterate, or those only literate in the vernacular, used such books as mnemonic prompts is the subject of speculation. These books contained a range of texts useful in following church services and in performing private prayers, and whilst most were entirely in Latin, some contained vernacular prayers, and others existed entirely in Middle English.[550] Michael Camille, for example, has argued that illustrations in Books of Hours afforded the illiterate a means of engaging with the content of the Latin.[551] Alternatively, Sandra Penketh has argued that as some sections of a Books of Hours directly followed the spoken words of the Mass, the reader could have gleaned some rudimentary understanding of the content through listening and following along.[552]

But aside from their use as *aides-mémoire* and guides for private piety, Books of Hours were also perceived as important objects, capable of projecting information about the owner, or bestowing special religious protection.[553] For late medieval lay worshippers, these books were considered signifiers of wealth and piety, repositories for family history, and, most importantly to this consideration, devotional totems or amulets capable of protection in their own right.[554] Eamon Duffy explains that they were often 'conceived as channels of sacred power independent of the texts they accompanied', operating in a similar way to devotional woodcuts with indulgences, or plaster or

[549] Barry Windeatt, *The Book*, p. 9. Perry and Tuck posit that the book may have a 'totemic function', but do not explore why this might be in 'Locations for Middle English Devotional Hearing and Reading', p. 135.
[550] Annie Sutherland, *English Psalms in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 26-31.
[551] Michael Camille, 'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History*, 8 (1985), 26-49.
[552] Sandra Penketh, 'Women and Books of Hours', in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. by Jane H. M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (London: The British Library, 1997), pp. 266-281 (p. 270).
[553] Sarah Rees Jones and Felicity Riddy note that 'the book of hours can be located […] at a number of points along a continuum that includes solitariness, intimacy, sociability, and publicness' in 'The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and the Public Sphere', in *Household, Women and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* ed. by A. B. Mulder-Bakker and J. Wogan-Browne (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 215-260 (p. 220).
[554] See Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240-1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); and Paul Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages' in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Roger Chartier and trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 141-173.

alabaster plaques which could also be found in the lay household.[555] Margery is not described as explicitly following a text, looking at illustrations, or even holding the book open; *The Book* simply states that she has 'hir boke in hir hand', but she is described as praying whilst holding it. Her praying, which is ambiguously connected to her Book of Hours, appears to save her from the falling church structure.

It is also likely that Kempe was well aware of the reputation of the Book of Hours as a gendered object, and one which was particularly associated with the Virgin Mary. Sandra Penketh compellingly argues that 'a special association existed between women and books of hours', and points towards their propensity to be commissioned, owned, annotated, and gifted, by women.[556] Records such as inventories and wills only give a partial representation of which and how many women would have owned or interacted with these books. As Carol Meale writes, property belonging to married women often deferred to men on their deaths, and it is difficult to determine female involvement in family collections, so the actual level of ownership or interaction by women could be far higher than represented in the archive.[557] The female owner portraits included in Books of Hours, which appear in deluxe copies owned by the nobility and merchants alike, often feature images of reading women alongside the reading Virgin at the Annunciation. These illustrations are often positioned before the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or before prayers specifically addressed to the Virgin, coupling visual representations of the owner with verbal homage to the most holy of women.[558] The representation of Margery as holding the book in the church consequently serves a variety of purposes. It positions Margery as a woman wealthy enough to own one, even if not educated enough to read it herself. It also shows that Kempe had an astute understanding of books as protective talismans and useful devotional tools during mass.

Kempe is also well aware of the power of books when they are used in oath-swearing performances within the text. The term *oth* in Middle English was polysemous: it could refer to the invocation of God or another holy figure to witness a promise, a legal statement which is used to provide evidence of innocence or guilt, or a swearword.[559] *The Book* provides examples of all of these kinds of oath-swearing, but the two which involve a material text are those performed as a means of invoking God. Eyal Poleg has discussed the use of the Bible as a material talisman, and has specifically noted the similarities between the treatment of the *textus* (usually a Gospel book) during

[555] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England* c.1400-1580 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 214, 231.
[556] Penketh, 'Women and Books of Hours' (p. 270). The same argument is made in Charity Scott-Stokes, 'Women's Books of Hours', in *Medieval Books of Hours, Selected Texts Translated from Latin, Anglo Norman, French and Middle English with an Introduction and Interpretive Essay* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 159-61. See also Alexandra Walsingham, 'Jewels for Gentlewomen: Religious Books as Artefacts in Late Medieval and Early Modern England', *Studies in Church History*, 38 (2004), 123-142 (127).
[557] Meale, 'Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England', pp. 132-135.
[558] Penketh, 'Women and Books of Hours', p. 270.
[559] *MED*, oth (n.), sense, 1a, 1b, and 3.

Mass, and oath-books and other biblical texts in other oath-swearing performances.[560] Poleg argues that in both of these contexts, the book functions as 'a link' between 'the mortal and divine', and that this connection solidified through a physical interaction with the material text, namely through touching with the hands and kissing.[561] Indeed, physical contact with these material texts proves vital to the oath's efficacy, and the incorrect handling of a book during a ceremony (for instance, taking the hand away from the book too soon or not kissing it after) could result in a voidance of the oath-taking.[562]

Kempe's understanding of the power of Bibles in oath-swearing is first evidenced when a priest aboard the ship to Jerusalem claims that Margery has taken some of his bedclothes. The priest swears against Margery on a 'boke': 'Than the preste swor a gret othe (and be the boke in hys hand), that sche was as fals as sche mygth be! - and dispysed hir and alto-rebukyd hir' (Ch. 28, ll. 2170-2172). Here, the adjective 'gret' could mean either a swearword delivered vehemently, or, more likely in this context due to the presence of the book, that this was a perjured oath: a wilful lie.[563] Margery's 'evyr much tribulacyoun' (Ch. 28, l. 2173) at this action seems, in this instance, to be caused by the priest's willingness not only to insult her, but to do so in the form of an oath sworn on the Bible. In another instance, Margery herself is asked to swear on the Bible. In the company of the Archbishop of York, Margery is asked to swear on the bible that she will leave York, which she refuses to do:

> "Ley thin hand on the boke her beforn me and swer that thu schalt gon owt of my diocyse as sone as thu may." "Nay, syr," sche sayd, "I praye yow, geve me leve to gon ageyn into Yorke to take my leve of my frendys." Than he gaf hir leve for on day er too. (Ch. 52, ll. 4182-4186).

Margery's perceived distaste of Bible-oaths then, stems not from a disbelief in their efficacy, but a belief that their misuse is an insult to God. Kempe perceives the Bible as a material 'link', to borrow Eyal Poleg's term, between her and God, and refuses to foster that connection when the oath-swearer is blaspheming, or swearing insincerely.

Besides her own book and those of others, the material texts which Margery most often comes in to contact with are letters. They act as a means for Margery to access spaces that she would otherwise be barred from, grant dispensation for unusual devotional practices, and establish a community of supportive and powerful figures. Unlike other writers of the period such as Rolle and Hilton, Kempe does not employ epistolary rhetoric to address her text to a particular audience. Rather, Margery's use of letters is always reported, and their contents are paraphrased rather than copied. This is perhaps reflective of Margery's letter writing practices, whereby she used friends and priests as secretaries to write and read them, which, as Christopher Cannon writes, was an

[560] Eyal Poleg, *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 59-94
[561] Ibid., p. 76.
[562] Ibid., p. 77.
[563] *MED*, oth (n.), sense 1c, and 3.

exceedingly common practice even among literate dictators.[564] For example, when a Lynn widow disregards Margery's claim of a close relationship with God, she enlists the help of a 'maystyr of dyvynite' (Ch. 18, l. 1445) to send the widow a letter claiming that the widow 'schuld nevyr han the grace that this creatur had' (Ch. 18, ll. 1446-1447). In this instance, Margery's exploitation of her 'unlettyrd' status is shrewd: she cannot write the letter herself, and by getting the Master of Divinity to pen the note she is able to silence the widow's complaints more effectively by showing his endorsement.

Despite their reputation for transiency in artful works, where they are often used as the communication of fickle lovers or scheming nobles, letters served multiple purposes in the later medieval period, functioning as means of personal communication and as legal documents, which would need to be kept.[565] Indeed, Malcolm Richardson writes that 'all the writs, wills, petitions, and charters produced so copiously in medieval courts and households were, in form and by genre, letters'.[566] The importance of letters as legal documents or authoritative materials is made apparent when Margery is accused of heresy, and imprisoned in York. To testify to her orthodox practices, Margery suggests securing an account from Lady Westmorland, Joan Beaufort, with whom she had spent time in Jerusalem, although this is rejected. In his confusion, the Bishop asks Margery what he should do, to which she replies: 'My Lord, I pray yow late me have yowr lettyr and yowr seyl into recorde that I have excusyd me ageyn myn enmys and no thyng is attyd ageyns me, neithyr herrowr ne heresy that may ben prevyd upon me, thankyd be owr Lord' (Ch. 54, ll. 4510-4513). Kempe's understanding that these letters would need to be kept 'into recorde' for perpetuity clearly shows her awareness of the power letters could wield, even if she could not read them herself.

Margery's frequent use of letters is reflective of other late medieval women's writing practice. Letters are the most common form of late medieval women's writing extant, with over two-hundred letters authored or directed by women in the late medieval period surviving, both in Latin and the vernacular.[567] The largest surviving corpus of late medieval letter-writing is the Paston Letters, a collection of written correspondence pertaining to a Norfolk gentry family during the fifteenth-century. The letter-writing habits of Margaret Paston, the matriarch of the family, demonstrate the range of subjects such letters could contain, and the impact which letters could have. Rebecca Krug

[564] See Christopher Cannon, "Wyth her owen handys': What Women's Literacy Can Teach Us about Langland and Chaucer', *Essays in Criticism,* 66 (2016), 277-300 (282).
[565] Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethouse, 'Introduction: Women Writing Letters in the Middle Ages', in *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre,* ed. by Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethouse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 1-19 (p. 4). On the distinctly medieval rhetorical craft of letter writing, *Ars dictaminis*, see Ronald G. Witt, 'The Arts of Letter Writing', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume II,* ed. by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 68-83.
[566] Malcolm Richardson, *Middle Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), p. 58.
[567] James Daybell, 'Medieval Women's Letters, 1350-1500', in *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500, Volume I,* ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 178-188.

writes that 'far from expressing independence, either personal or social, Margaret's letters are determinedly focused on her relationship to the public sphere and its ability to shape her family's future'.[568] Like Margaret Paston's, Margery's letters also act to establish and maintain particular social networks, but where Margaret's commonly act to solidify her family's social status, Margery's function to strengthen her relationships with ecclesiastical figures. For example, when Margery seeks permission from the Archbishop of Lambeth to be 'howeselyd' (to receive the Eucharist) every Sunday rather than the usual once a year, she specifically requests 'hys lettyr and hys seel thorw al hys provynce' (Ch. 16, ll. 1161-1162). The materiality of the letter and the seal become representative of the Archbishop's approval and, furthermore, of the limits of his power, the document only retaining its efficacy whilst in 'hys provynce'. The Archbishop then reinforces his support of Margery's devotional practices by waiving the fee incurred in the writing of the letter, as 'ne he wold latyn hys clerkys takyn anything for wrytyn ne for seelyng of the lettyr' (Ch. 16, ll. 1162-1164), expressing his affirmation of her behaviour through the material labour of letter writing.

The Body and The Book

However, whilst Kempe clearly understands the power of material texts, she does not necessarily accept the necessity of this power. When first travelling on to York Minster to worship St. William, Margery's right to pilgrimage is challenged. On this occasion, a 'worschepful doctowr' (Ch. 51, l. 4055) presiding over a group of clerks in the Minster asks whether she has a 'lettyr of recorde' (Ch. 51, l. 4060) which allows her to travel, to which she replies:

> myn husbond gaf me leve wyth hys owyn mowthe. Why fare ye thus wyth me mor than ye don wyth other pilgrimys that ben her, wheche han no lettyr no mor than I have? (Ch. 51, ll. 4061-4064).

Here, Margery does not rail against requiring her husband's consent to travel on pilgrimage, but rather that she should be required to show a material text in order to corroborate his permission. In this instance, the material text is a hinderance to Margery, and one which she believes to be unnecessary. Her testimony alone, she argues, should be qualification enough to be provided access: her body should offer more authentication than a material text.

This chapter has so far considered descriptions of *The Book's* making, Margery's reading practices and inscribed objects depicted within *The Book*. I will now turn to consider a more metaphorical and implied material text: that of Margery's body itself. *The Book* is filled with descriptions of Margery's body, whether she is struggling against sickness, sexual desire, and self-

[568] Rebecca Krug, *Reading Families: Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 39.

harm, or experiencing bouts of her characteristic weeping. Wendy Harding argues that the proliferation of bodily experiences detailed in *The Book* 'can be seen as a woman's attempt to signify mystical experience whose intensity cannot be written but must be inscribed by living flesh', and yet, paradoxically, texts are continually used to justify Margery's behaviour, and Kempe ultimately chooses to record her experiences in textual form.[569]

Margery continually encourages others to 'read' her like a text through her sartorial self-fashioning. Hannah Lucas, drawing on Susan Crane's practice of 'reading through clothes', states that 'Margery finds an active tool in her fabrics of devotion, using them to refashion her body in the image of a saintly matrilineage'.[570] Sometimes this sartorial self-fashioning involves the wearing of garments which bear the written word, such as Margery's inscribed ring. Margery's ring is introduced at the beginning of Chapter 31, where she suspects that it has been stolen by the woman who runs the house in which she is staying. Margery explains that the ring was crafted at Christ's behest:

> The forseyd creatur had a ryng the whech owyr Lord had comawndyd hir to do makyn whil she was at hom in Inglond and dede hir gravyn ther upon, "Jhesus est amor meus" (Ch. 31, ll. 2541-2543)

When the ring goes missing, Margery explains to the wife that the ring is symbolic of her marriage to Christ, 'my bone maryd ryng to Jhesu Crist' (Ch. 31, l. 1822). Margery does not, however, wear the ring on her finger due to the likelihood of theft, and on this occasion, she notes that she had 'let hir ryng hang be hir purs stryng whech sche bar at hir brest' (Ch. 31, ll. 1819-1820) whilst in her chamber. Notably, this detail shows that Margery was keen to display the ring and its inscription: she does not wear it on her finger (where, if the inside of the ring was inscribed, its wording could not be seen), but 'bar[s]' it by wearing it on a string about her neck.

But what is the significance of Margery's ring? Inscribed jewellery was popular in the late medieval period, and occasionally featured in texts too, the most well-known example being the brooch worn by the Prioress in Chaucer's Prologue to *Canterbury Tales* which bears the inscription *Amor vincit omnia*.[571] Christoph Witt writes that in late medieval literature, inscribed rings were closely connected the motif of inscribed hearts, and were often used to indicate 'intimate inseparability and sincerity', or, conversely, to parody this.[572] But Writt warns that inscribed rings,

---

[569] Wendy Harding, 'Body into Text: The Book of Margery Kempe' in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 158-187 (pp. 173-174).
[570] Hannah Lucas, "Clad in Flesch and Blood': The sartorial body and female self-fashioning in The Book of Margery Kempe', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 45 (2019), 29-60 (30).
[571] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 3-328 (l. 162).
[572] Christoph Witt, 'More Than Bling: Inscribed Jewellery Between Social Distinction, Amatory Gift-Giving, And Spiritual Practice', in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 291–314 (p. 300). See also Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), pp. 161-163, who notes that many posy rings 'evoke amorous sentiments or polite good wishes' (p. 161), although he writes that these sentiments change in significance depending on placement, context, and wearer.

both as material objects and as textual conceits, need to be considered within their contexts for their meaning to be understood.

The context of the inscription found on Margery's ring is hard to determine. Mary Morse notes that the inscription on Kempe's ring matches the first line of a popular poem from Richard Rolle's *Incendium amoris*, which Kempe records as a text which she has heard several times through *The Book*.[573] Gunnel Cleve, however, notes that the inscription is notably close to the motto of the Bridgettine Order, *Amor meus crucifixus est*, and posits that the inscription might have signalled her support for the Order.[574] The Allen and Meech edition of *The Book* also identifies that the same inscription, *Jhesus est amor meus*, appears on the beads left by William of Wykeham to Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, who interrogates Margery.[575] Whatever the connection between the inscription of Margery's ring and other devotional texts or mottos, it was evidently used a means of displaying an intimate connection with Christ: the inscription on the ring ensures that anyone who looks upon it perceives the close relationship Christ and Margery have. The material text, in this instance, secures how Margery herself will be 'read' by onlookers.

In other ways, however, Kempe's conception of Margery's body as text-like is more subtly conveyed. Margery's mind in particular, I argue, is figured as codex-like. This is achieved by two disparate means: firstly, through her prodigious memory, and secondly, through her propensity to receive knowledge directly from God, rather than through a secondary consultation with the material text. When reflecting on Margery's memory, critics often respond to the implicit characterization of her mind as bookish: Cheryl Glenn describes her memory as 'inscribed', Arnold Sanders terms it her 'mental library', and Lynn Staley determines the entire text to constitute 'a book of Memory'.[576] Indeed, as previously touched upon, the second proem figures Margery's memory as the organising principle of *The Book:*

> Thys boke is not wretyn in ordyr, every thyng aftyr other as it wer don, but lych as the mater cam to the creatur in mend whan it schuld be wretyn, for it was so long er it was wretyn that sche had forgetyn the tyme and the ordyr whan thyngys befellyn. And therfor sche dede no thing wryten but that sche knew rygth wel for very trewth. (ll. 134-139)

[573] Mary Morse, 'Seeing and Hearing: Margery Kempe and the *Mise-en-Page*', *Studia Mystica*, 20 (1999), 15-42 (21).
[574] Gunnel Cleve, 'Margery Kempe: A Scandinavian Influence in Medieval England', in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England, Exeter Symposium V*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe (Suffolk: St Edmundsbury Press, 1992), pp. 163-178 (p. 170).
[575] *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by Emily Hope Allen and Sanford Brown Meech, EETS O.S. 212 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 279.
[576] Cheryl Glenn, 'Popular Literacy in the Middle Ages: The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Popular Poetics: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics*, ed. by John Trimbur (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), pp. 56-73 (p. 62); Arnold Sanders, 'Illiterate Memory and Spiritual Experience: Margery Kempe, the Liturgy, and "The Woman in the Crowd"' in *Mindful Spirit in Late Medieval Literature, Essays in Honour of Elizabeth D. Kirk*, ed. by Bonnie Wheeler (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 237-248 (p. 243); Staley, *Dissenting Fictions*, p. 86.

As the proem has already noted that Margery was disinclined to write any part of her life previously, the scribe is forced to account for the veracity of her memory. Margery's memory is then described as its own editor: because Margery struggles to remember the 'tyme' and 'ordyr' of events, she only dictates those which she is certain are truthful, 'therfor sche dede no thing wryten but that sche knew rygth wel for very trewth'. The functioning of her memory determines the structure of the text.

There are also instances where Margery possesses scriptural or textual knowledge which extends beyond that which an orthodox lay woman is likely to possess, and which Margery attributes to the intervention of God. Her extensive knowledge is alternately perceived as evidence for her piety by her supporters or for her impiety by her detractors, a sentiment well summarized by a 'yong monke' in Canterbury who says to Margery that 'Eythyr thow hast the Holy Gost or ellys thow hast a devyl within the, for that thu spekyst her to us it is Holy Wrytte, and that hast thu not of thiself' (Ch. 13, ll. 874-876). This remark from the monk is intended to be a flippant misogynist dismissal, but he strikes upon Margery's own understanding of how she received scriptural knowledge which extends beyond that which she has been read. For example, when in conversation with the Abbot of Canterbury, she is described as speaking 'many good wordys, as God wold hem puttyn in hir mende' (Ch. 12, ll. 805-806), and when she speaks to Richard Caister, she is described as 'syttyng a lytyl besyde, schewyd hym all the wordys which God had revelyd to hyr in hyr sowl[e]' (Ch. 17, ll. 1231-1232). Her comprehension of Holy Writ is therefore described as extra-textual: her mind and soul become recording substrates for God to write his words directly on to, eliding the need for Margery to perform significant textual study or develop memorial techniques. In a sense, Kempe's description of God's words being inscribed directly on to Margery's mind or soul echoes the late medieval lyrics previously analysed in this thesis, but whereas these lyrics always required the reader to first consult a material text, and then appeal to God to help them memorise them, Margery is granted direct access to the Word.

This sense of Margery's mind or soul as a recording material is compounded by Kempe's use of the equivocal verb *sheuen*, to show, rather than *speken*, to speak, when describing how Margery conveys these words to others. In Chapter 18, for instance, when Margery meets William Southfield, she is described as having 'schewyd him hir meditacyons and swech as God wrout in hir sowle' (Ch. 18, ll. 1301-1302). Similarly, when she meets Julian of Norwich, she 'schewyd hir the grace that God put in hir sowle […] and ful many holy spechys and dalyawns that owyr Lord spak to hir sowle, and many wondirful revelacyons whech sche schewyd' (Ch. 18, ll. 1337-1341). The use of 'schewyd' here implies a form of communication that extends beyond the verbal, and which is more reliant on performance. Margery is figured *showing* Southfield and Julian God's words through means of her explanation: she becomes the material text from which others can see, visually, God's words.

This depiction of the miraculous insertion of words into the female mind is also evidenced in *The Life of Marie d'Oignies*, where metaphors of inscription are used to describe Marie's mind. It is likely that at least one of the scribe's employed by Kempe, if not Kempe herself, had read the two

books of her *Life*, the Book stating that the second scribe was convinced of the authenticity Margery's weeping outbursts after reading Marie's text, and even providing chapter references for excerpts he found particularly illuminating.[577] At the beginning of the Middle English *Life*, Marie is described as a particularly pious child who rejects the clothing usually worn by young women:

> Also, whan hir fader and modir, as maner is of seculers, wolde haue rayed hire with delycate garmentis and gaye, she was sory and forsoke hem as if she hadde redde, impressed naturally in hir mynde, that Seinte Petir seith wymmen thus: 'Whas araye of clothynge be not withoute for the tressynge and tiftynge of hire, or tire of golde or gownes.'[578] (pp. 87-8, I, ll. 47-51)

Here, Marie forsakes the elaborate garments not because she has read a material copy of St Peter's warning, but because she has the words 'impressed naturally in hir mind'. The process of interacting with the material text, reading its content, and remembering its material, are entirely elided. Whereas Middle English lyrics often use the metaphor of impression or engraving to describe the process of remembering a text, the use of the metaphor in regard to Marie implies the opposite: Marie, like Margery, is not required to consult the material text in order to memorize the words of St Peter, as they are already present on her mind.

This sense of Margery as a material text also extends beyond the perception of her mind and memory. At the end of Book I, the narrative voice of the scribe returns to credit Margery 'hirselfe that had al this tretys in felyng and werkyng', alongside the first scribe who worked on the text (Ch. 89, ll. 7420-7421). These two gerunds, 'felyng' and 'werkyng', are significant: 'felyng' can refer to emotional or spiritual sensitivity or sensibility, whilst 'werkyng' can refer to both physical and intellectual practice.[579] Margery's emotions and physical experiences, therefore, are credited with as much importance as her intellectual and spiritual insight. Indeed, the physical and the spiritual are inextricably intertwined throughout the text. The description of Margery's life opens with the birth of one of her children which she 'labowrd wyth grett accessys' (Ch. 1, l. 178), an event which precipitates a period of intense mental illness and resolves with her first vision of Christ at the side of her bed (Ch. 1, l. 222). As the first chapter of *The Book* is occupied with Margery's first experience of labour, her painful childbirth is twinned with bringing *The Book* in to the world, a process which, if not equally as physically painful, is at least represented as logistically and materially difficult in the proem (and which men are credited with at least being partially responsible for). Kempe returns to images of childbirth when she describes Margery's empathetic relation to Christ's suffering as a 'gostly labowr' (Ch. 28, l. 2259) which eventually 'broke owte' (Ch. 28, l.2258) of her body in the form of excessive weeping. Kempe's physical experience of motherhood, her spirituality, and her conception of authorship are all interlinked. Her spiritual life begins, as Tara Williams writes, 'too

[577] See Ch. 62, ll. 5125-5142.
[578] Jennifer N. Brown, *Three Women of Liège: A Critical Edition of and Commentary on the Middle English Lives of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina Mirabilis, and Marie d'Oignies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 87-88.
[579] *MED*, feling(e (ger.), senses 4, 5, 6 and 7;

late for her to be a holy virgin, and too early for her to be a chaste widow', and consequently Kempe seeks to monopolise on her role as a wife and mother 'to create unusually firm connections to her model, the mother of Christ'.[580]

The association between the mental conception of a text and the physical conception of a child is evidenced in wider late medieval thought concerning the Virgin Mary. Laura Saetveit Miles has convincingly argued that the image of the Virgin Mary reading at the Annunciation was important for both the female writer and the female reader, as the image of the reading Virgin solidified Mary's position as the Mother of the Word, her mental conception of the text through reading being mirror to her physical conception of Christ in her womb.[581] She explains that the reading Virgin, whether rendered verbally or visually, consequently influenced the perception of the book as a theological symbol, and provided a model for medieval women to emulate. The influence of holy women as intellectual and spiritual teachers is also felt in the content of the text itself. Although Mary does not figure as frequently in *The Book* as in other works by female mystics, nor is she ever described as reading, she is still an important revelatory figure for Margery, and one who is distinctly bookish. In Margery's vision of the Annunciation, she first sees St Anne 'gret wyth chylde' (Ch. 6, l. 547), who is then described as giving birth to Mary and keeping her 'tyl it wer twelve yer of age' (Ch. 6, l. 550). Although not explicitly described in this passage, the allusion to Mary's childhood evokes the popular late medieval image of St Anne reading to Mary, which has been previously discussed in this thesis. Mary also functions as something of a teacher later in *The Book,* as Margery explains how:

> Sumtyme owyr Lady spak to hir mend. [Sumty]me Seynte Petyr, sumtyme Seynt Powyl, sumtym Seynt Kateryn, er what seynt sche had devocyon to, aperyd to hir sowle and tawt hir how sche schuld lovyn owyr Lord and how sche schuld plesym hym. (Ch. 17, ll. 1262-1265).

In these conversations, Margery's 'sowle' is 'tawt' by various saints, and her revelations become a mirror of the schoolroom which, as explored previously in this thesis, was associated with book-teaching. Significantly, all of the saints listed were commonly depicted holding books, and each of them are patrons of book-related trades: St. Peter of stationers, St. Paul of writers and authors, and St. Catherine of educators, scribes, and secretaries. In turn, Margery becomes a kind of teacher herself. Although her capacity for teaching is curbed by both her illiteracy and her religious orthodoxy (she frequently repudiates claims that she is a preacher), she is credited with inspiring her religious confidants to seek out other devotional literature, one priest stating that she 'cawsyd him to lokyn meche good scriptur and many good doctor, whech he wolde not a lokyd at that tyme, had sche ne be' (Ch. 58, ll. 4815-4817). *The Book*, likewise, becomes an educative tool, the proem expressing its

[580] Tara Williams, 'Manipulating Mary: Maternal, Sexual, and Textual Authority in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', *Modern Philology,* 107 (2010), 528-555 (530).
[581] Laura Saetveit Miles, *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2020), p. 21. See also Miles' earlier article, 'The Origins and Development of the Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation', *Speculum*, 89 (2014), 632-699, for a detailed account of the development of the reading Virgin from a figure directed at ninth and tenth century male clerics and monks, into one for religious women.

aspirations to be used as a text for 'ower exampyl and instrucciyoun' (l. 7). Consequently, Margery's physicality, that which makes her a wife and a mother, offers her the opportunity to construe herself as a female educator. Kempe's modelling of Margery on Mary is, evidently, still readily felt by twenty-first century editors of *The Book*: the cover of Barry Windeatt's scholarly edition of the text, uses an image of a fifteenth-century stained-glass rendering of the reading Virgin at the Annunciation.[582]

Margery's is not the only body presented as a textual support, however: Kempe employs the popular late-medieval conceit of comparing Christ's body to a written document. In Chapter 14, in which Margery imagines the ways in which she might suffer a violent martyrdom, Christ speaks to her and explains that:

> schal no man sle the, ne fyer bren the, ne watyr drynch the, ne wynd deryn the, for I may not forgetyn the how thow art wretyn in myn handys and my fete; it lykyn me wel the peynes that I have sufferyd for the. I schal nevyr ben wroth wyth the, but I schal lovyn the wythowtyn ende. (Ch. 14, ll. 952-955)

Interestingly, this passage is similar to Thomas Spofford's sermon for the Feast of Mary Magdalene analysed previously in this thesis, where the wicked fire of convertase and the water of fleshly desire are described as washing away God's words.[583] In this passage from *The Book of Margery Kempe*, however, Christ states that because Margery is inscribed *within* the wounds resulting from the crucifixion ('thow art wretyn in myn handys and my fete'), he will never be angry with her, and will love her continually. This is something of a reversal of the kinds of writing metaphors which are used in late medieval lyrics, as discussed previously, in which a narrative voice usually begs for Christ's words to be engraved on their hearts or minds so that they might remember him. Instead, Christ is here stating that his wounds are a reminder of Margery, or a written material text *about* her. This representation of Christ's wounds as a kind of writing is closer to Richard Rolle's representation of Christ's wounds in his second *Meditation on the Passion*:

> And yit, swet Jhesu, þy body is lyke a boke written al with rede ynke; so is þy body al written with rede woundes. Now, swete Jhesu, graunt me to rede upon þy boke, and somwhate to undrestond þy swetnes of þat writynge, and to have likynge in studious adbydynge of þat redynge.[584]

There is a difference in Kempe's insistence that it is Margery who is 'wretyn' in Christ's hands, which appears to be part of Kempe's wider project of illustrating the intimacy between herself and

[582] The photograph used on Windeatt's edition (detail from stained glass of the fifteenth-century Norwich School of glass-painting, All Saints Church, Bale, Norfolk) appears to show Mary turning a page, whilst in the wider panel another book is also present on a table. The entire stained-glass shows four Marys at the Annunciation, each with books.
[583] See page pp. 113-118 of thesis.
[584] Richard Rolle, 'Meditations on the Passion, Text II, Bodl. MS. E Musaeo 232, f.1v', in *The English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole*, ed. by Hope Emily Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), pp. 27-36 (p. 36).

Christ. Sarah Beckwith writes that in demonstrating this intimacy, 'Christ and [Margery] try on a variety of societal and familial roles in relation to each other', and Margery is variously cast as a mother, a daughter, a sister and a wife, although these roles, as Beckwith states, are often malleable.[585] Whether Christ's wound is more closely allied with the maternal or erotic has been the subject of scholarly debate, but Sarah Allison Miller argues that Christ's wound is polysemous, occupying a 'boundary zone between fertility and eroticism' that ultimately represents unity.[586] This quality of multivalent intimacy with Christ's body proved to be a useful image for late medieval mystics, and allusions to the wound as vulva appears in a variety of works, including Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, the *Stimulus Amoris* and the meditations of the Monk of Farne.[587]

Although the argument that Kempe is representing a feminised Christ in this passage may appear something of a critical leap, the biblical context from which it is taken itself contributes to a sense of Christ as simultaneously a child, a mother, and a husband, although it should be noted that it was medieval Christian theology which interpreted this section of the Bible as being spoken by Christ. Christ's explanation that 'thow art wretyn in myn handys and my fete' in *The Book* is taken from Isaiah 49.16, *Ecce in manibus meis descripsi te* ('behold, I have graven thee in my hands'). In this chapter of Isaiah, Christ speaks of his own conception as The Word in Mary's womb, 'The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he hath been mindful of my name' (Isaiah, 49:1), frames himself as an ever-loving mother, 'Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee' (Isaiah, 49.15), and casts the listener as his bride, 'I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt be clothed with all these as with an ornament, and as a bride thou shalt put them about thee' (Isaiah, 49.15). Indeed, it seems that Kempe and her scribe were following the chapter exceedingly closely, as Christ's words to Margery, 'And yet schal no man sle the, ne fyer bren the, ne watyr drynch the, ne wynd deryn the' (Ch. 14, ll. 952-3) is similar to Isaiah 49.10, 'They shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them'. Kempe's use of an inscription metaphor, therefore, highlights her intimacy with Christ and acts as a further example of *imitatio Christi*: just as she writes *The Book* about her interactions with Christ, so Christ has Margery written in himself.

The seven-page quarto pamphlet printed in c.1501 by Wynkyn de Worde contains twenty-eight extracts from Kempe's text. These extracts are divorced from any specificity to time or place, and indeed are presented in a different order from where they are placed in *The Book*.[588] A later 1521

---

[585] Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Society, and Culture in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 83.
[586] Sarah Allison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 124. Miller's chapter 'Monstrous Love: The Permeable Body of Christ in Julian of Norwich's *Showings*' offers a summation and alternative conclusion to the two theories of Christ's wound (the wound is primarily maternal, and that the wound is primarily erotic).
[587] Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 46-47.
[588] *Here begynneth a shorte treatyse of contemplacyon taught by our lorde Jhesu cryste, or taken out of the boke of Margerie kempe of lyn[n]* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1501), EEBO

reprint and amendment to the pamphlet text appears in an anthology of devotional texts printed by Henry Pepwell, where it sits alongside sections from Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor*, *The Divers Doctrines of Saint Katherin of Seenes*, Walter Hilton's *Song of Angels*, and three works associated with *The Cloud of Unknowing*: the *Epistle of Prayer*, *Epistle of Discretion in Stirring of the Soul*, and the *Treatise of Discerning of Spirits*.[589] Interestingly, Margery, Kempe, and *The Book* are conflated penultimate line of both texts: 'Here endeth a shorte treatyse called Margerie Kempe de Lynn'. *The Book* is no longer *of* Kempe, it *is* Kempe. She has blended with the material text which bears her name.

This chapter has shown that *The Book of Margery Kempe* is a text important not only for examining conceptions of orality and authorial control, but also for considering the perception of material texts. The material texts in *The Book* are described through Margery's interactions with them, and consequently offer a glimpse of how they were perceived by fifteenth-century lay women with limited reading ability. *The Book* exposes Kempe's intimate knowledge of what the material text represents: she understands the authority conveyed to the maker of a book, both materially and authorially, but also understands that this authority is potentially dangerous; she is aware of how different types of material texts – books, letters, inscribed objects, heavenly books – contain different kinds of written information which are often reflected in their material properties, and that these objects convey different kinds of relationships with their readers or owners. She also possesses, just as much as the authors of lyrics and sermons, a nuanced understanding of how the body can be perceived as a metaphorical text, a creative act which would not be possible without a detailed knowledge of the book as a symbol.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2240869646/99840481?accountid=13042> [Date Accessed: 06.11.21]. Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Sel.5.27. See Windeatt, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 429-434.

[589] *Here foloweth a veray deuoute treatyse (named Benyamyn) of the myghtes and vertues of mannes soule, of the way to true contemplacyon, compyled by ... Rycharde of saynt Vyctor. B.L.* (London: Henry Pepwell, 1521). London, British Library, General Reference Collection C.37.f.19. See Windeatt, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 429-434.

Conclusion: Placing the Book-Mark

The Wycliffite *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, written between around 1370 and 1425, is ostensibly a treatise against the performance of mystery plays, but through its refutation of the practice it also offers an insight into why such performances were so popular in the late medieval period. Significantly, in the *Tretise's* parroting of arguments supporting the performance of the plays, a comparison is made between the value of painting and drama, expressed through a bookish metaphor:

> And betere they ben holden in mennes minde and oftere rehersid by the pleyinge of hem than by the peintinge, for this is a deed bok, and tother a quick.[590]

[590] Clifford Davidson, ed., *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1981), p. 98 (ll. 183-185).

This metaphor is complicated. Neither plays nor paintings are books (although both can be contained within a codex), but both are described as such to convey their ability to present a narrative. Moreover, these metaphorical books are described through a second metaphor of animation. Here, dramatic performances are described as 'quick' books, living books, whilst painting is described as a 'deed bok', a dead book. The aim of this metaphor is to emphasise the impact of bodily enactment: plays are animate through virtue of being performed by living bodies, whilst paintings are inanimate, or dead, as they are made from static materials. This does beg the question as to what kind of animate status books themselves are given, but ultimately this statement argues that the latent vivacity of plays renders them more appealing to the lay viewer than the fixed image of a painting. In this example, books are used as metaphors: the *Tretise* technically states that that these plays *are* books but, as they are not, the implication is that they are *like* books, but *not* books themselves.

And yet plays do include references to material texts. Plays might not initially appear the most likely kind of writing to include references to material text, as performances of these plays were likely to have occurred off-script. However, as other examples in this thesis have shown, self-reflexivity was not always required for metaphors and images of material texts to have been usefully employed, although this is the critical trajectory which most studies on textual materiality have taken. Indeed, such references often rely on immaterial ideas about material texts, and gesture towards the material qualities of a range of textual supports.

This thesis has not yet discussed late medieval drama, but the questions asked in this thesis could be extended to encompass play texts and performances too. One example of such a metaphor is found in *Christ's Burial*, a text which recounts Christ's crucifixion and interment:

> [M]AVDLEN: O, sisters, who may hold theire cheres?
> Thes are the swete fete I wipet with heris,
> And kissid so deuowtlye.
> And now to see tham thyrlite with a nayle,
> How shulde my sorowfulle harte bot fayle,
> And mowrn contynually?
> Cum hithere, Joseph, beholde and looke,
> How many bludy letters beyn written in þis buke—
> Smalle margente her is!
> [JO]SEPHE: Ye, this parchment is stritchit owt of syse!
> O, derest Lorde, in how paynfulle wise
> Haue ye tholit thus! (ll. 265-276)[591]

In this excerpt, Christ's body is compared to the material text in a manner reminiscent of that found in the *Charters of Christ* poems, where Christ is described as a legal document. Here, however, Mary Magdalene and Joseph compare Christ's tortured body to two different kinds of material text, or two

[591] 'Christ's Burial', in *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160*, ed. by Donald C. Baker, John L. Murray, and Louis B. Hall Jr., EETS O.S. 283 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 141-168.

different stages of the codex production process in reverse order. Mary metaphorizes Christ's body as a book, and compares his wounds to letters, 'How many bludy letters beyn written in þis buke' (l. 272). In Mary's final exclamation, 'Smalle margente her is!' (l. 273), Christ's body is likened to a page so covered with writing that it possesses only narrow margins: his skin so excessively wounded that there are few places left untouched. Joseph, whilst confirming Mary's assessment, does not elaborate on her representation of Christ as a whole codex complete with text and margins. Instead, he moves backwards through the production process and describes Christ's body as 'parchment' which is so extended that it is 'stritchit owt of syse!' (l. 274). Mary and Joseph are here stressing two different physical manifestations of Christ's torture: Mary's metaphor of Christ as a book is concerned with the myriad wounds made to his body, whilst Joseph's metaphor is occupied with Christ's stretching on the cross. These two different material texts, the book and the parchment sheet, operate in conjunction with one another to convey a comprehensive sense of Christ's suffering, but they provide a strangely muddled sense of the material text.

These metaphors of the material text are also significant when considering the performance of this text. It is unclear whether *Burial* was indeed intended for performance, or as a meditation intended to be privately read. Donald C. Baker, John L. Murray, and Louis B. Hall Jr., write that 'it seems clear that the plays began as an extended meditation' and, indeed, the opening lines of the text make reference to it being read: 'A soule that list to singe of loue/ Of Crist that com tille vs so lawe,/ Rede this treyte, it may him moue' (ll. 1-3), although it was not uncommon for plays to be referred to as treatises.[592] This is complicated, however, as the text develops. Some stanzas are ambiguous in their performance properties, such as the following excerpt:

> O, alle the pepille that passis here by,
> Beholde here inwardlye with your ees gostly,
> Consider welle and see,
> Yf that euer only payn or torment
> Were lik vnto this which this innocent
> Haves suffer thus meklee! (ll. 277-282)

Here, the 'pepille that passis here by' (l. 227) could refer to readers, who are passing by the text, or in this case more likely spectators, who are passing by the performance. Similarly, the command to 'behold here inwardlye with your ees gostly' (l. 228) could apply to readers and spectators alike, as both observe narrative through sight, and both are capable of imagining their own trails in comparison to those of Christ and his mother, which could be conveyed visually or through rhetorical images

[592] Ibid., p. lxxxviii. Notably, the title page of the printed edition of the play *Everyman* refers to itself as a 'treatys'. *Everyman* (London: Rychard Pynsons, 1515), EEBO <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2240852680/99849862/1?accountid=13042> [Date Accessed: 08.11.2021].

only. Paratextual details further corroborate that *Burial* could be performed or read privately. A note written in red ink at the base of f.140^{v}, reads:

> This is a play to be played, on part on Gud Friday afternone, and þe other part opon Ester Day after the resurrection in the morowe, but at <the> begynnynge are certen lynes which <shuld> not be said if it be plaied.

This conflicting textual evidence has led critics to conclude that the *Burial* represents an incomplete translation of one form into another, Rosemary Woolf and James Hogg writing that the text was initially a play which was here partially transformed as a meditation, and Donald C. Baker and Daniel Wakelin arguing the reverse.[593] Rather than focussing on how the text is generically defined, Jessica Brantley instead considers how the gestures towards performance within the text impact readily experience. Brantley writes that 'thinking about the stage while in private added a layer of performative meaning to the experience of the text', and compares this kind of performative thinking to the private reading of the liturgy and sermons.[594] *Burial*, then, is a text whose materiality is itself ambiguous.

But what does this mean for metaphors of material texts within *Burial*? If we are to consider *Burial* a text which was to be privately read and meditated upon, the metaphor spoken by Mary becomes materially self-reflective. Mary's metaphor – that Christ's body is an inscribed book with only small margins – is particularly apt when looking at MS e Museo 160: the folios which Burial occupies often have narrow margins because of the red brackets which indicate the text's end-rhymes. These margins themselves are often occupied with marginal speech headings in red or performance directions, and initials are often accented with red, again compounding the comparison of Christ's wounds with 'bludy letters' (l. 272).[595] Contrary to this, Joseph's metaphor of Christ's body being stretched out like parchment is not reflective of the manuscript itself, which is formed entirely of paper, and instead relies on the reader or spectator's experience or comprehension of the parchment production process. Joseph's metaphor of stretched parchment, when read privately, is one that relies on immaterial imaginings of material texts, but if this text were to be performed without the play-script in front of the reader or audience then both of these metaphors would become immaterial references to material texts. This example, like others in this thesis, emphasises the complicated

[593] See Rosemary Woolf, *The English Mystery Plays* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1972), pp. 331-335; James Hogg, 'Carthusian Drama in Bodleian MS E. Museo 160?', in *Langland, The Mystics, and the Middle English Religious Tradition: Essays in Honour of S. S. Hussey*, ed. by Helen Philips (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), pp. 259-270; Donald C. Baker, 'When is a Text a Play?: Reflections Upon What Certain Late Medieval Dramatic Texts Can Tell Us', in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, ed. by Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldeway (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 20-40; Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English, Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), pp. 152-155.
[594] Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 299.
[595] Sian Witherden also notes this striking parallel, and provides a discussion of this play in regards to haptic and tactile engagement in 'Touch in Late Medieval English Theatre' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2019), pp. 184-230 (pp. 201-202).

nature of references to material texts, which can be both self-reflexive and representative of immaterial ideas about texts.

But what happens when a material text is used as a prop in a play, when it is an undeniable material reality on the stage? The allegorical morality play *Everyman*, which dates from the turn of the sixteenth century and which was translated and adapted from the Dutch play *Elckerlijc*, contains many references to one particular book. When Death approaches Everyman at the beginning of the play, he tells him that:

> On thee thou must take a longe journey.
> Therfore thy boke of counte with thee thou brynge,
> For turne agayne thou cannot by no waye;
> And loke thou be sure of thy rekenynge. (ll. 103-106) [596]

Here, Death has asked Everyman to bring a 'boke of counte', an account book, with him on his journey. Although the content of this 'boke of counte' is never fully expounded, it appears to consist of a double-entry system of accounting for all of Everyman's sins and acts of repentance which, at the beginning of the play, is in severe deficit.

The accounting book of sins is a particularly apt image within the context of the play. This account book functions as a humorous parallel to the account books which a character like Everyman, who is preoccupied with material and financial gain, would be exceedingly familiar with. Many members of the audience (the true 'everymen') would share this familiarity with account rolls and books, which were used by large households, farmers, merchants, guilds, government bodies, church authorities, and royal administration. Double-entry book-keeping of the kind hinted at in *Everyman* became common in Europe from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, but this more systematised form of account keeping did not guarantee ease or accuracy.[597] There are many references in medieval literature to the struggles of balancing account books. In the *The Shipman's Tale*, for example, the merchant is described as retreating to his counting-house to calculate his finances:

> And up into his countour-hous gooth he
> To reken with himself, wel may be,
> Of thilke yeer how that it with hym stood,
> And how that he despended hadde his good,
> And if he were encressed were or noon.
> His bookes and his bagges many oon

[596] *Everyman and its Dutch Original, Elckerlijc*, ed. by Clifford Davidson, Martin W. Walsh, and Ton J. Broos (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007).
[597] See Alfred W. Crosby, *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 199-224. For examples of editions of late medieval account books, see Christopher Dyer, *A Country Merchant, 1495-1520: Trading and Farming at the End of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Lisa Jefferson, *The Medieval Account Books of the Mercers of London: An Edition and Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

He leith biforne hym on his countyng-bord.[598]

Significantly, both Everyman and the Shipman's Tale use the verb *rekenen* to describe their book-balancing, a term which can refer to the act of performing numerical calculations, but which can also mean accounting for one's sins.[599] Furthermore, as James Aho writes, 'commerce [was] consistently maligned in medieval moral theology', and so the dubious tallying of accounts was twinned with a lack of spiritual accountability.[600] Indeed, when asked for his book of accounts by Death, Everyman replies that the book is not ready:

> For all unredy is my boke of rekenynge.
> But twelve yere and I myght have abydynge,
> My countynge boke I wolde make so clere
> That my rekenynge I sholde not nede to fere. (ll. 134-137)

This account book appears to contain a record of Everman's sins, as later Good Deeds states that 'Your boke of accounte full redy now had be/ Loke the bokes of your workes and deeds eke' (ll. 502-503), differentiating Everyman's account book from those which document his works and deeds. Interestingly, Erik Jager suggests that Everyman's account book would have been a stage prop, and therefore have been displayed throughout the performance.[601] The extended metaphor of the account book, which represents Everyman's sins, consequently becomes a material allegory represented by a real book used as a prop, an effect which drama, as a materially embodied medium, can offer.

These plays provide another example of how an analysis of material text metaphors prove fruitful, and there are many other devotional texts not considered in this thesis which would also offer interesting perceptions of the material text. Such examples include late medieval hagiography where, as Sarah Kay and Nicole Nyffenegger have compellingly argued, there are plenty of connections to be made between the bodily torture of a saint's body and the creation of a material text.[602] Furthermore, these hagiographies sometimes offer their readers protection reading or owning the text, their textual content rendering the material text a spiritually thaumaturgic object. The many references to material texts in William Langland's *Piers Plowman,* too, deserve a more sustained analysis, and one which

[598] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Shipman's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 203-208 (ll. 77-83).
[599] *MED*, rekenen (v.), senses 3a and 3d.
[600] James Aho, *Confession and Bookkeeping: The Religious, Moral, and Rhetorical Routes of Modern Accounting* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), p. 44.
[601] Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 117. For a discussion of later book-props, see Sarah Wall-Randall, 'What Is A Staged Book? Books as "Actors" in the Early Modern English Theatre', in *Rethinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), pp. 128-152 and Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[602] See Sarah Kay, 'Original Skin: Flaying, Reading, and Thinking in the Legend of St Bartholomew and Other Works', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 36 (2006), 35-74; Nicole Nyffenegger, 'Saint Margarget's Tattoos: Empowering Marks on White Skin', *Exemplaria,* 25 (2013), 267-283.

brings its references to legal texts and scripture, which are often considered separately, into conversation with one another.

An analysis of works which are not distinctly devotional would also offer an interesting avenue for considering the perceptions of the material text, devotional or otherwise. The prefatory complaint and dialogue of Hoccleve's *Series*, a text which is entirely occupied with its own making, could also be studied further for its perceptions of material texts.[603] Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* contains plenty of descriptions and references to writing, sending and receiving letters, and many of the tales in *The Canterbury Tales* refer to a variety of material texts, as has sometimes been touched upon in this thesis. Other kinds of writings might also prove useful. Letters, such as the fifteenth-century letters of the Paston family, might be analysed both for their use and understanding of the letter form and the books which they refer to reading, owning, and making.[604] Other documentary forms, such as wills and inventories, might likewise be analysed for their categorisation of material texts (how are texts described? Who are they defined as belonging to? Who are they gifted to, and why?). Alternatively, material texts which have garnered less literary and book-historical criticism, such as wall paintings, inscribed jewellery, graffiti, and brass and stone monuments, could be studied for what they reveal about perceptions of writing, reading, and making texts.

Whilst these examples show that the topic has further potential, this thesis has also yielded important conclusions through the texts already examined. In the examples examined here, many images and metaphors of the material text prove to be based, at least in part, on the real material texts which were encountered in late medieval England. These references, however, often imaginatively expand on the formal qualities of such material texts, affording them attributes which could not be realised in temporal texts, but could be imagined of their divine or spiritual counterparts. Many of these references, for example, describe texts which are able to endure throughout time, or which exist inside or on objects which could not materially bear writing, such as the human heart, the mind, or the memory. This kind of reference to material texts, which was based on lived experience but supplemented by the imagination of writers and readers, enabled metaphors and images to expand beyond those which were self-reflexive. It also allowed such references to textual materiality to be included in texts such as sermons, which would have been orally performed. This has important implications for the study of material texts, as it shows that references to these material forms need not correspond to those which the reader engaged with as they read, but which were known because

[603] This has been partially engaged with in David Watt, *The Making of Thomas Hoccleve's Series* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

[604] For an analysis of the value of letters for female merchants, see Brian W. Gastle, 'Breaking the Stained-Glass Ceiling: Mercantile Authority, Margaret Paston, and Margery Kempe', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 36 (2003), 123-147; Jennifer Douglas, "Kepe wysly youre wrytyngys': Margaret Paston's Fifteenth Century Letters', *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, 44 (2009), 29-49. For details regarding book ownership and making in the Paston Letters, see Curt F. Bühler, 'Sir John Paston's Grete Booke, a Fifteenth-Century "Best Seller"', *Modern Language Review*, 56 (1941), 345-351; G.A. Lester, 'The Books of a Fifteenth-Century English Gentleman, Sir John Paston', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 88 (1987), 200-217.

of the graphosphere in which the individual operated. This conclusion could allow a far greater range of texts to be analysed, and a far broader and more nuanced understanding of perceptions of the material text to be gleaned. In turn, this could also lead to a more synergistic relationship between the History of the Book and literary studies, whereby both codicological reality and artistic expression can inform one another, rather than only finding moments of disjunction.

This thesis has also shown that metaphors and images of material texts often collapse into one another. As book-craft recipes have shown, although material texts could be extremely varied in their material qualities and uses, they were understood as comparable types of object: through the compendiousness of the craft recipe collection, the book, the document, the decorative text, and the inscribed object were placed in proximity to one another, rather than isolated according to material or required crafting expertise. The interconnectivity between material texts is evident in religious literature, with many metaphors melding different kinds of material texts together: images of parchment transform into images of wax imprinting, and written documents becomes inscribed stone. This kind of collapsing often emphasises both the shared qualities of material texts and their differences in order to create richer, multifaceted images which play on both the material and conceptual characteristics of various kinds of material texts. Consequently, this thesis has displayed the value of considering material forms beyond that of the codex. This has enabled reflections on how the book itself was perceived, but also where metaphors and images of other material texts such as wax tablets or inscribed objects proved more popular in use, for example in metaphors relating to memory and retention.

The references to the material text are, however, differing in their affective potential. Whilst some examples have proved distinctly affective, others are more intellectually puzzling. For example, the book metaphors found in lyrics often proved to be more explanatory than impassioned, even though lyrics themselves are often regarded to be a highly affective literary form.[605] Some texts, such as the Charters of Christ, have instead exhibited a careful balance between the emotive and the illustrative by using the metaphor of a legal document in correspondence with Christ's tortured body and sacramental logic. References to material texts, through an analysis of their affective potential, have proved to be extremely flexible: they can be represented as objects of mundane practical use, or of extreme emotive potency.

Furthermore, these references prove to have influenced how individuals perceived themselves as readers, writers, and pious followers of Christ. This thesis has shown that textual authority is often conflated with control over the material text. For example, the authority of Margery Kempe is cemented through her control over the writing of her book, from the location of its writing to the eyesight of her amanuensis, even though she is not described as penning the text herself. Sermons, too, employ metaphors which twin the act of scribal creation and correction with authority, but this

[605] Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 18-31.

control over the material text is afforded to different figures between examples: sometimes the metaphorical scribes are the individuals being preached to, whilst in other sermons it is Christ, or the devil, who wields the pen. These references to material texts also offer models for emulation for readers and onlookers alike. In the devotional literature examined in this thesis, Mary has often been figured as an ideal reader, whilst many of the texts have explained how an onlooker might metaphorically 'read' the visual sufferings of Christ.[606] Beyond this, some of the texts, such as *The Book of Margery Kempe*, provide direction for the illiterate individual who might not be able to read, but who is capable of following a preached narrative in an illustrated Book of Hours.

As explained in the introduction, these references generated perceptions of the material texts of the late Middle Ages which endured throughout time, even when the technology of material texts altered and was rendered less popular or obsolete. These perceptions, however, affected how people perceived new methods of textual production, which in turn shaped the perceptions of future generations. The ever-greater reliance on paper and the rise of the printing press ushered in a range of different materials and processes which could be metaphorically employed. Paper, of course, was available to the late medieval writer, as Orietta da Rold has shown.[607] Many of the texts analysed in this thesis, even those which use metaphors of parchment, were written on paper, and there are plenty of textual images of material texts which do not describe the recording substrate and which feasibly could refer to paper or parchment. Direct metaphors and images of paper are also found in examples of late medieval literature.[608] As she notes, for example, the castle of Hautdesert, home of Lord and Lady Bertilak in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is described using a paper metaphor: 'Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed'.[609] Here, the castle's crenelations are so crisply crafted, and its stone is so white, it appears to be made from paper. However, as has been shown in this thesis, these paper metaphors rarely occur in devotional works of the period.[610] Perhaps, then, this comparative scarcity of paper metaphors in late medieval devotional writing indicates less wide-spread familiarity with the material properties and production process of paper. Notably, there are no recipes describing how to make paper, or requiring paper as an ingredient, in any of the book-craft recipes documented by Clarke.[611] Indeed, the production of paper (mostly manufactured abroad) and the use of the printing

[606] See Laura Saetveit Miles, *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation: Reading, Interpretation, and Devotion in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
[607] Orietta da Rold, *Paper in Medieval England: From Pulp to Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 53.
[608] For more examples of paper metaphors and images in late medieval literature, see da Rold, *Paper in Medieval England*, pp. 180-209.
[609] J. J. Anderson, ed., 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience* (London: J.M. Dent, 1996), pp. 167-278 (l. 801).
[610] They do, however, appear in later examples such as Henry Vaughan's 'The Book' (1655), which discusses the creation of paper from plant to recording substrate, in order to emphasise God's omnipotence. See Henry Vaughan, 'The Book', in *The Complete Poetry of Henry Vaughan*, ed. by French Fogle (New York: New York University Press, 1965), pp. 346-347.
[611] Mark Clarke, ed., *The Crafte of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyng: Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators*, EETS O.S. 347 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

press both required specialised equipment and a large amount of skilled labour, and so producing a book would be beyond the scope of an individual amateur craftsperson. Maybe, then, it was this lack of familiarity with the creation of paper which rendered it less likely to be employed metaphorically than other material texts, especially the more familiar medium of parchment. Alternatively, perhaps writers simply found metaphors of parchment more rhetorically useful in devotional literature than that of paper due to the material's uncanny resemblance to human skin.

Metaphors and textual images of printing are, like those of paper, found in late medieval literature. However, as this thesis has shown, these metaphors of impression and imprinting often refer to wax, rather than the printing of texts through a press and moveable type. Indeed, the first use of the verb imprint (or *emprenten* in Middle English) which decisively refers printing of this kind is in William Caxton's 1474 preface to *The Game and Playe of the Cheese,* the second book printed in English, an example which sits relatively late into the timespan examined in this thesis.[612] Its metaphorical employment, then, can be understood to have developed in the proceeding years as, to re-visit the writing of Margaret Aston, 'things do not become metaphors until they have well and truly arrived'.[613] The printing press, with its mechanised equipment and skilled workforce, enabled works to be produced faster and more cheaply than manuscript books, as well as producing a range of new types of so-called 'ephemeral' material texts, such as broadsheets and chapbooks.[614] It also birthed a new range of metaphorical expressions and images. For example, the printer Robert Copland's playful verses of address at the beginning of the 1530 *Assemblie of Foules* (later to be known as the *The Parliament of Fowls*) by Geoffrey Chaucer twins the act of impressing a text with a printing press to that of impressing a narrative into a reader's memory:

> Chaucer is deed the whiche this pamphlete wrate
> So ben his heyres in all suche besynesse
> And gone is also the famous clerke Lydgate
> And so is yonge Hawes / god theyr soules adresse
> Many were the volumes that they made more and lesse
> Theyr bokes ye lay vp / tyll that the lether moules
> But yet for your myndes this boke I wyll impresse
> That is in tytule the parlyament of foules. (ll. 9-16)[615]

Here, Copland claims that he will rejuvenate the book written by Chaucer, which currently sits mouldering inside its leather binding, by printing it, which will in result in its story becoming impressed into the mind of the reader: 'But yet for your myndes this boke I will impresse'. Such images and metaphors of early printed books and material texts are analysed in depth by Sarah Wall-

[612] *MED*, emprenten (v.), sense 3, quotation 1.
[613] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), p. 104.
[614] For a history on the development of printing in England and Europe, see David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[615] Robert Copeland, 'The Assemble of Foules', in *Robert Copeland: Poems*, ed. by Mary Carpenter Erler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 137-143.

Randall, whose research adopts a method similar to that found in this thesis.[616] As she writes, and as this example shows, references to the material text (even to the older technology of the parchment manuscript) did not dissipate because of the rise of printing and the continued spread of literacy and book-ownership, but rather expanded to encompass developments in technology.[617]

Alongside these technological developments, the religious landscape of England also underwent dramatic changes which influenced perceptions of material texts. In 1526, Cardinal Wolsey ordered the burning of all Lutheran texts. In 1549 the *Book of Common Prayer* was introduced, and inhabitants of Devon and Cornwall then revolted against it in the Prayer Book Rebellion of the same year. In 1552, a new revised edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* was printed, and in 1563 *Foxes Book of Martyrs* was published by John Day.[618] As the events of these thirty-seven years exhibit, both Catholics and Protestants used material texts to disseminate their arguments and display their convictions in the form of mass media. They also used material texts to identify their enemies, and burned material texts alongside their readers.[619] But amid all of this political, religious, and technological upheaval, or perhaps because of them, images of material texts continued to pervade literature of all kinds, but in ever changing ways.[620]

In later medieval literature too, as this thesis has proven, the metaphors and images references to the material text proved diverse and complicated, and they often use more than one kind of material text in order to elucidate sometimes complicated theological concepts. The perceptions of material texts which these metaphors and images display vary between genres and individual works, but each of them exhibits evidence of a widespread familiarity with a range of material texts and their production processes, and a readerly interest in their material and conceptual qualities.

This thesis represents a journey through varying perspectives of the material text. I began by considering book-craft recipes: instructional texts whose content showed that late medieval people were thinking theoretically about the material properties of their texts, and that this kind of thinking impacted their representation in more artful works. My consideration of the Charters of Christ poems then showed not only that they self-reflexively responded to their own materiality (as previous critical work on the material text has considered), but that they also required the reader to bring their own ideas about material text – ideas which are not represented in the poem's self-reflexivity – to the poems. In the lyrics chapter I probed this further, and concluded that references to textual materiality

---

[616] Sarah Wall-Randell, *The Immaterial Book: Reading and Romance in Early Modern England* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2013).
[617] Ibid., pp. 9-12.
[618] For a concise history of the development in book history in the late medieval and Tudor period, see Pamela Neville-Sington, 'Press, Politics and Religion', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III, 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 576-607.
[619] See David Cressy, 'Book Burning in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 36 (2005), 359-374.
[620] See Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001). See also James Daybell and Peter Hinds, *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture, Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

not only required readers to imagine diverse and varied images, but encouraged them to use these imaginings to inform their reading, understanding, and memorial practices. In my examination of sermons, I moved sideways to consider how orality impacted references to the material text, and how orthodox and Wycliffite sermon writers conceptualised the infallible immaterial divine Word, and the eminently fallible material text. Lastly, I considered the references to material texts from a voice that had previously been missing from the thesis: that of a woman, Margery Kempe. These different case studies have provided points of correlation and incongruity in their representation of material texts, sometimes between genres, and sometimes between individual texts.

Often, immaterial ideas about material texts have proved as important to these references as reflections upon their real use in late medieval culture, and often meant that these metaphors and images have endured even when their technology has been superseded. In this age of touch-screen tablets and audiobooks, for example, we still 'turn over a new leaf'. In this thesis, I have offered a new way of approaching the complex metaphors and images of material texts, and one which challenges the idea that form always makes meaning: I consider how late medieval literature can provide reflections *on* materiality, as well as *of* materiality. Religious literature of the late medieval period offers an important and fruitful opportunity to consider perceptions of the material text, perceptions which would prove to endure through time, indelibly written in the minds of generations of readers.

Bibliography

Manuscripts Consulted

The items listed have been consulted in person unless otherwise indicated in the footnotes.

Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Additional 6686

Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.50[621]

MS R.3.21[622]

London, British Library, Additional Charter 5960

MS Additional 37049[623]

[621] Wren Digital Library <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=B.14.40&n=B.14.40#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=-2979%2C-278%2C9791%2C5486> [08.11.21].

[622] Wren Digital Library <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/uv/view.php?n=R.3.21&n=R.3.21#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=-2098%2C-194%2C6906%2C3870> [Date Accessed: 08.11.21].

[623] British Library Digitised Manuscripts <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_37049> [Date Accessed: 08.11.21].

MS Sloane 3292

MS Stowe 620

Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354[624]

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 54

MS Bodley 789

MS Ashmole 198

MS Ashmole 61

MS Bodley 806

MS Bodley 95

MS Douce 45

MS Kent Charter 233

MS Rawl. poet 175

MS Rawlinson B.408

MS Rawlinson C.506

MS Tanner 407

Suffolk, Helmingham Hall, The Tollemache Book of Secrets[625]

Woodcuts

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. G. f. 13[626]

Arch. G. f. 14[627]

Primary Texts

Allen, Emily Hope and Sanford Brown Meech, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe*, EETS O.S. 212 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940)

-- ed., *The English Writings of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931)

Anderson, J. J., ed., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience* (London: J.M. Dent, 1996)

[624] Digital Bodleian <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/e0d10554-db39-4b58-a944-45da5e66248e/> [Date Accessed: 08.11.21].
[625] Jeremy Griffiths and A.S.G. Edwards, ed., *The Tollemache Book of Secrets, A Descriptive Index and Complete Facsimile* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 2001).
[626] Bodleian Digital <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/502960d2-6643-4e09-b60a-e4076e5a1242/> [Date Accessed: 08.11.21].
[627] Bodleian Digital <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/30d89cdc-b1a8-4a3d-bc13-e537b4bd161c/> [Date Accessed: 08.11.21].

Baker, Donald C., John L. Murray, and Louis B. Hall Jr. *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160,* EETS O.S. 283 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Austin, Thomas, ed., *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery Books, Harleian Ms. 279 (ab. 1430), & Harl. Ms. 4016 (ab. 1450), with Extracts from Ashmole Ms. 1429, Laud Ms. 553, & Douce Ms. 55,* EETS S.S. 91 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1888)

Benson, Larry D., ed., *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Brown, Carleton, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924)

Brown, Jennifer N., ed., *Three Women of Liège: A Critical Edition of and Commentary on the Middle English Lives of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina Mirabilis, and Marie d'Oignies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008)

Clarke, Andrew, ed., *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, Near Oxford: Written About 1450,* EETS O.S. 129 (London: K. Paul, 1911)

Clarke, Mark, ed., *The Craft of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyg: Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators,* EETS O.S. 347 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Davidson, Clifford, ed., *A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1981)

--Martin W. Walsh, and Ton J. Broos, eds., *Everyman and its Dutch Original, Elckerlijc* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007)

Erler, Mary Carpenter, ed., *Robert Copeland: Poems* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993)

Fein, Susanna Greer, *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998)

Fogle, French, ed., *The Complete Poetry of Henry Vaughan* (New York: New York University Press, 1965)

Furnivall, Frederick James ed., *Political, Religious and Love Poems, from Lambeth MS. 306 and other sources,* EETS O.S. 15 (London: Trübner, 1866)

-- ed., *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, The Parliament of Devils and other Religious Poems, Chiefly from The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth MS. No. 853,* EETS O.S. 24 (London: Trübner, 1867)

Gradon, Pamela, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons,* vol. II, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)

Greene, Richard, ed., *A Selection of English Carols* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962)

Hiatt, Constance B. and Sharon Butler, eds., *Curye on Inglysch,* EETS S.S. 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Hudson, Anne, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons,* vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

Knight, Ione Kemp, ed., *Wimbledon's Sermon, Redde Rationem Villicationis Tue: A Middle English Sermon of the Fourteenth Century,* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1967)

Langland, William, *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B-Text*, ed. by A.V.C. Schmidt, 2nd edn. (London: Dent & Sons, 1987)

Louis, Cameron, ed., *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acle, An Edition of Tanner MS 407* (London: Garland Publishing, 1980)

Lucas, Peter J., ed., *John Capgrave's Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, EETS O.S. 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

MacCracken, Henry Noble, ed., *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* Vol. I, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Trübner, 1911)

--*The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* Vol. II, EETS E.S. 192 (London: Trübner, 1934)

Moreau-Guibert, Karine, ed., *Pore Caitif: A Middle English Manual of Religion and Devotion* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020)

O'Mara, Veronica, ed., *Four Middle English Sermons: Edited from British Library MS Harley 2268* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2002)

Powell, Susan, ed., *John Mirk's Festial, Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II,* Vol II, EETS O.S. 335 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Reimer, Stephen R., ed., *The Works of William Herebert, OFM* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988)

Spalding, Mary Caroline, *The Middle English Charters of Christ: A Dissertation* (Maryland: J.F. Furst, 1914)

Windeatt, Barry, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004)

Wogan-Brown, Jocelyn, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular, An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280-1520* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999)

Secondary Texts

Acker, Paul, and Eriko Amino, 'The Book of Palmistry', in *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England*, ed. by Lister M. Matheson (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1994), pp. 141-184

Aho, James, *Confession and Bookkeeping: The Religious, Moral, and Rhetorical Routes of Modern Accounting* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005)

Alford, John A., *Piers Plowman: A Glossary of Legal Diction* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988)

Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)

Altman, Meryl, 'How Not to Do Things with Metaphors We Live By', *College English*, 52 (1990), 495-506

Amsler, Mark, 'Affective Literacy: Gestures of Reading in the Later Middle Ages', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18 (2001), 83-110

-- *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011)

Arendholz, Jenny, Wolfram Bublitz, Monika Kirner, and Iris Zimmermann, 'Food for Thought – or, What's (in) a Recipe? A Diachronic Analysis of Cooking Instructions', in *Culinary Linguistics: The Chef's Special*, ed. by Cornelia Gerhardt, Maximiliane Frobenius, and Susanne Ley (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), pp. 119-138

Ashe, Laura, 'The "Short Charter of Christ": An Unpublished Longer Version, From Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 6686', *Medium Aevum*, 72 (2003), 32-48

Aston, Margaret, *Lollards and Reformers: Images of Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984)

Atkinson, Clarissa W., "In the Likeness of a Man': The Tradition of Affective Piety' in *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 129-156

--*Mystic and Pilgrim* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

Baker, Donald C., 'When is a Text a Play?: Reflections Upon What Certain Late Medieval Dramatic Texts Can Tell Us', in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, ed. by Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldeway (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 20-40

Baldick, Chris, 'Imagery', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 4th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Bale, Anthony, 'Richard Salthouse of Norwich and the Scribe of The Book of Margery Kempe', *The Chaucer Review*, 2017 (52), 173-187

Bannister, A. T., *The Register of Thomas Spofford, Bishop of Hereford (1422-1448)* (Hereford: Wilson and Phillips: 1917)

Barker, Nicholas, ed., *Two East Anglian Picture Books: A Facsimile of the Helmingham Herball and Bestiary and Bodleian MS. Ashmole 1504* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 1988)

Barr, Jessica, *Intimate Reading: Textual Encounters in Medieval Women's Visions and Vitae* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2020)

Barrett, James H., 'Medieval Fishing and Fish Trade', in *The Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology in Britain*, ed. by Christopher M. Gerrard and Alejandra Gutiérrez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) pp. 128-140

Beal, Peter, *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology, 1450-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Beckwith, Sarah, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Beehler, Sharon A., 'Close vs. Closed Reading: Interpreting the Clues', *The English Journal*, 77 (1988), 39-43

Beidler, Peter G., ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500,* vol. XI (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1984)

Berenbeim, Jessica, *Art of Documentation: Documents and Visual Culture in Medieval England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2015)

Bertrand, Paul, *Documenting the Everyday in Medieval Europe: The Social Dimensions of a Writing Revolution, 1250-1350* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019)

Bischoff, Bernhard, *Latin Palaeography, Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. by Dáibhí ó Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Bloxam, Jim, 'The Beast, the Book and the Belt: An Introduction to the Study of the Girdle or Belt Books for the Medieval Period', in *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Alexander Pluskowski (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), pp. 80-97

Boffey, Julia, "The Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost' and its Role in Manuscript Anthologies', *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 33 (2003), 120-130

Boulton, Meg, 'Embroidered Stones: Considering the Symbolism of Anglo-Saxon Skeuomorphs and the Kirkdale Grave Slab', in *The Art, Literature and Material Culture of the Medieval World: Transition, Transformation and Taxonomy,* ed. by Meg Boulton, Jane Hawkes, and Melissa Herman (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), pp. 198-216

Bower, Hannah, *Middle English Medical Recipes and Literary Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), forthcoming

Boyarin, Adrienne Williams, 'Inscribed Bodies: The Virgin Mary, Jewish Women, and Medieval Female Legal Authority', in *Law and Sovereignty in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,* ed. by Robert S. Sturges (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011) pp. 237-260

-- 'Sealed Flesh, Book-Skin: How to Read the Female Body in the Early Middle English *St Margaret',* in *Women and the Divine in Literature before 1700: Essays in Memory of Margot Louis,* ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Victoria: ELS Editions, 2009), pp. 87-106

-- *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010)

Boyd, Beverly, *The Middle English Lyrics of the Virgin* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1964)

Bradford, Clare, 'Mother, Maiden, Child: Gender as Performance in The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Feminist Poetics of the Sacred: Creative Suspicions,* ed. by Frances Devlin-Glass and Lyn McCredden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 165-181

Brantley, Jessica, 'Medieval Remediations', in *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in a Post-Print Era,* ed. by N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), pp. 201-220

-- 'Vision, Image, Text', in *Middle English,* ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 315-334

-- *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)

Braswell, Laurel, 'Utilitarian and Scientific Prose', in *Middle English Prose, A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*, ed. by A.S.G. Edwards (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), pp. 337-388

Breeze, Andrew, 'The Number of Christ's Wounds', *The Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 32 (1985), 84-91

Brown, Bill, 'Objects, Others and Us (The Refabrication of Things)', *Critical Inquiry*, 36 (2010), 183-217

-- 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2001), 1-22

--*A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003)

Brown, Michelle P., 'Images to be Read and Words to be Seen: The Iconic Role of the Early Medieval Book', in *Iconic Books and Texts*, ed. by James W. Watts (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2013), pp.93-118

-- 'The Book as Sacred Space', in *Scared Space: House of God, Gate of Heaven*, ed. by Philip North (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 43-64

Browne, Clare Woodthorpe *et al.*, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicanum* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Bühler, Curt F., 'Lydgate's Horse, Sheep and Goose and Huntington MS. HM 144', *Modern Language Notes*, 55 (1940), 563-569

-- 'Sir John Paston's Grete Booke, a Fifteenth-Century "Best Seller"', *Modern Language Review*, 56 (1941), 345-351

Burger, Glenn and Holly A. Crocker, eds., *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019)

Butterfield, Ardis, 'Why Medieval Lyric?', *ELH*, 82 (2015), 319-343

Calhoun, Joshua, 'The World Made Flax: Cheap Bibles, Textual Corruption and the Poetics of Paper', *PLMA*, 126 (2011), 327-344

-- *The Nature of the Page: Poetry, Papermaking, and the Ecology of Texts in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020)

Camille, Michael, 'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History*, 8 (1985), 26-49

-- 'The Book as Flesh and Fetish in Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon*', in *The Body and The Book*, ed. by Dolores Warwick Frese and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), pp. 34-77

Campion, Matthew, *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches* (London: Ebury Press, 2015)

Cannon, Christopher, "Wyth her owen handys': What Women's Literacy Can Teach Us about Langland and Chaucer', *Essays in Criticism*, 66 (2016), 277-300

Carmazzi, Patricia, 'Book Material, Production, and Use from the Point of View of the Paratext', in *Inscribing Knowledge in the Medieval Book: The Power of Paratexts*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant, Patrizia Carmassi, Gisela Drossbach, Anne D. Hedeman, Victoria Turner and Iolanda Ventura (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2020), pp. 304-330

Carpenter, Christine, 'Religion', in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 134-150

Carrie Griffin, *Instructional Writing in English, 1350-1650* (London: Routledge, 2019)

Carruthers, Mary, *The Book of Memory, A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Cawsey, Kathy, 'Tutivillus and the "Kyrkchaterars": Strategies of Control in the Middle Ages', *Studies in Philology*, 4 (2005), 434-451

-- *Images of Language in Middle English Vernacular Writings* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2020)

Cervone, Cristina Maria, *Poetics of Incarnation: Middle English Writing and the Leap of Love* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013)

-- 'John de Cobham and Cooling Castle's Charter Poem', *Speculum*, 83 (2008), 884-916

Champneys, A.C., 'The Character of the Devil in the Middle Ages', *The National Review*, 11 (1888), 176-191

Charles, Sara, 'Teaching Manuscripts', <https://www.teachingmanuscripts.com/blog> [Date Accessed: 28.06.2012].

Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Chartier, Roger, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007)

Cherewatuk, Karen, and Ulrike Wiethouse, 'Introduction: Women Writing Letters in the Middle Ages', in *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre*, ed. by Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethouse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 1-19

Christianson, C. Paul, 'A Community of Book Artisans in Chaucer's London, *Viator*, 20 (1989), 207-218

-- 'The Rise of London's Book Trade', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 128-147

-- *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300-1500* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1990)

Christopher Cannon "Wyth her owen handys': What Women's Literacy Can Teach Us about Langland and Chaucer', *Essays in Criticism*, 66 (2016), 277-300

Clanchy, M.T., *From Memory to Written Record*: *England 1066-1307*, 3rd edn. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

Clarke, Mark, 'Recipes and Reception: Late Medieval English Colour Recipes and Amateur Illuminators', in *Manuscripts in the Making: Art and Science, Vol II*, ed. by Stella Panayotova and Paola Ricciardi (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2018), pp. 55-65

-- 'Writing Recipes for Non-Specialists c.1300: the Anglo-Latin *Secretum Philosophorum*, Glasgow MS Hunterian 110', in *Sources and Serendipity, Testimonies of Artists' Practice: Proceedings of the third symposium of the Art Technological Source Working Research Group*, ed. by Erma Hermens and Joyce H. Townsend (London: Archetype, 2009), pp. 50-64

-- *The Art of All Colours: Mediaeval Recipes for Painters and Illuminators* (London: Archetype Publications, 2001)

Clemens, Raymond and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (London: Cornell University Press, 2007)

Cleve, Gunnel, 'Margery Kempe: A Scandinavian Influence in Medieval England', in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England, Exeter Symposium V*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe (Suffolk: St Edmundsbury Press, 1992), pp. 163-178

Cochelin, Isabelle, 'When Monks Were the Book: The Bible and Monasticism (6th-11th Centuries)', in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, ed. by Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 61-83

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015)

Coleman, Joyce, 'Lay Readers and Hard Latin: How Gower May Have Intended the *Confessio Amantis* to be Read', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 24 (2002), 209-235

-- *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Conneller, Chantal, 'Deception and (Mis)representation: Skeuomorphs, Materials, and Form', in *Archaeology After Interpretation: Returning Materials to Archaeological Theory*, ed. by Benjamin Alberti, Andrew Meirion Jones, and Joshua Pollard (California: West Coast Press, 2013), pp. 119-133

Connolly, Margaret, and Raluca Radulescu, eds., *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain* (Oxford: British Academy, 2016)

Cooper, Lisa H. and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: With a Critical Edition of 'O vernicle'* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

-- 'The Poetics of Practicality', in *Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 491–505

-- and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

-- *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late-Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Cornell, Christine, '"Purtreture" and "Holsom Stories": John Lydgate's Accommodation of Image and Text in Three Religious Lyrics', *Florilegium,* 10 (1988), 167-178

Crampton, Georgia, 'Chaucer's Singular Prayer, an ABC', *Medium Aevum*, 59 (1990), 191-213

Crane, Susan, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012)

Cressy, David, 'Book Burning in Tudor and Stuart England', *Sixteenth Century Journal,* 36 (2005), 359-374

Crosby, Alfred W., *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Curtius, Ernst Robert, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. by Willard R. Tusk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 302-327

Cyrus, Cynthia J., *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009)

Da Rold, Orietta, 'Materials', in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500,* ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 12-33

-- *Paper in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Daniell, Cristopher, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Daybell, James, 'Medieval Women's Letters, 1350-1500', in *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500, Volume I,* ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 178-188

-- and Peter Hinds, *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture, Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)

-- *The Material Letter in Early Modern England, Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter Writing, 1512-1635* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. by Steven F. Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984)

Dodgeson, Campbell, 'English Devotional Woodcuts of the Late Fifteenth Century, with Special Reference to those in the Bodleian Library', *The Volume of the Walpole Society,* 17 (1928-1929), 95-108

Donavin, Georgina, 'Alphabets and Rosary Beads in Chaucer's *An ABC*', in *Medieval Rhetoric: A Casebook,* ed. by Scott D. Troyan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), pp. 25-40

Douglas, Jennifer, "Kepe wysly youre wrytyngys': Margaret Paston's Fifteenth Century Letters', *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, 44 (2009), 29-49

Driver, Martha W., 'Reading Images of Reading', *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003), 186-202

Dubrow, Heather, 'Rewriting Close Reading: A Response to Judith Anderson and Theresa M. DiPasquale', *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate*, 28 (2019), 85-94

Duffy, Eamon, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240-1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

-- *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England* c.1400-1580 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992)

Duggan, Lawrence G., "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?", in *Reading Images and Texts: Medieval Images and Texts as Forms of Communication*, ed. by Mariëlle Hageman and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 63-107

Durling, Nancy Vine, 'British Library MS Harley 2253: A New Reading of the Passion Lyrics in Their Manuscript Context', *Viator*, 40 (2009), 271-307

Dutton, E., 'Christ as Codex: Compilation as Literary Device in Book to a Mother', *Leeds Studies in English*, 35 (2004), 81-100

Dyer, Christopher, *A Country Merchant, 1495-1520: Trading and Farming at the End of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Eamon, William, *Science and the Secrets of Nature, Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Ellis, Roger, 'Margery Kempe's Scribe and the Miraculous Books', in *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition*, ed. by S.S. Hussey and Helen Phillips (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), pp. 161-175

Erler, Mary C., 'Devotional Literature', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume III 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Helinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 495-525

Farr, William, *John Wyclif as Legal Reformer* (Leiden: Brill, 1974)

Fein, Susanna Greer, 'Why Did Absolon Put a "Trewelove" Under His Tongue? Herb Paris as Healing "Grace" in Middle English Literature', *The Chaucer Review*, 25 (1991), 302-317

Flannery, Mary C., 'Multimedia Lydgate and Stories "Shewyd in Fygur"' (2014) <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-004?rskey=Y8aF7w&result=3> [Date Accessed: 22.09.2021]

Fleming, Juliet, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001)

Ford, Judy Ann, *John Mirk's Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006)

Foster, Eliza A., Julia Perratore, and Stephen Rozenski, *Devotional Interaction in Medieval England and its Afterlives* (Leiden: Brill, 2018)

Franklin, Simon, *The Russian Graphosphere, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019)

French, Katherine L., *Household Goods and Good Households in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)

Friedman, John B., 'Safe Magic and Invisible Writing in the Secrectum Philosophorum', in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. by Claire Fanger (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), pp. 76-86

Frison, Guido and Giulia Brun '*Compositiones Lucenses* and *Mappæ Clavicula*: Two Traditions or One? New Evidence From Empirical Analysis and Assessment of the Literature', *Heritage Science*, 6 (2018), 1-17

G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters & of the English People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933)

Gallop, Jane, 'The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading', *Profession*,1 (2007), 181-186

Gameson, Richard, 'Colophons', in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain, Cha-G*, ed. by Siân Echard and Robert Rouse, *et al.* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp. 539-542

Gayk, Shannon, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)

Gellrich, Jesse M., 'The Art of Illumination: Illuminating Speech and Writing Letters in Later Medieval Manucripts' in *Vice & Virtue: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*, ed by. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 93-119

-- *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language, Theory, and Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Genette, Gérard and Marie Maclean, 'Introduction to the Paratext', *New Literary History*, 22 (1991), 261-272

-- *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Ghosh, Kantik, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Gibson, Walter S., 'Prayers and Promises: The Interactive Indulgence Print in the Later Middle Ages', in *Push Me Pull You: Imaginative, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Laura Gefland (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 275-324

Gilchrist, Roberta, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012)

Gillespie, Vincent, 'Building a Bestseller: The Priest, the Peartree, and the Compiler', in *Late Medieval Compilations in England*, ed. by Marleen Cré, Diana Dennisen and Denis Renevey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 27-62

-- 'Medieval Hypertext: Image and Text from York Minster', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Readers, Essays presented to M.B. Parkes*, ed. by P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Ashgate: Scholar Press, 1997), pp. 206-229

-- *Looking in Holy Books: Essays on Late Medieval Religious Writing in England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011)

Glenn, Cheryl, 'Popular Literacy in the Middle Ages: The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Popular Poetics: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics*, ed. by John Trimbur (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), pp. 56-73

Goering, Joseph and Randall Rosenfeld, 'The Tongue is a Pen: Robert Grosseteste's Dictum 54 and Scribal Technology', *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, 12 (2002), 114-140

Gonzalez, Sonsoles Garcia, 'The tabulae: Ephemeral epigraphy in the surroundings of medieval tombs', *Church Monuments*, 31 (2016), 66-84

Göttling, Klaus, 'Skeuomorphism is Dead, Long Live, Skeuomorphism', The Interaction Design Federation (2020) <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/skeuomorphism-is-dead-long-live-skeuomorphism> [Date Accessed 04.10.2021]

Gransden, Antonia, *Historical Writing in England II, c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996)

-- *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992)

Gray, Douglas, *Later Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

-- *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge, 1972)

Green, Richard Firth, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999)

Griffin, Carrie, 'Reconsidering the Recipe: Materiality, Narrative and Text in Later Medieval Instructional Manuscripts and Collections', in *Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe 1350–1550: Packaging, Presentation and Consumption*, ed. by Emma Cayley and Susan Powell (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 156-170

-- *Instructional writing in English, 1350-1650: Materiality and Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2019)

Griffith, David, 'A Newly Identified Verse Item by John Lydgate at Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, Suffolk', *Notes and Queries*, 58 (2011), 364-367

-- 'A Portrait of the Reader: Secular Donors and their Books in the Art of the English Parish Church', in *Imagining the Book*, ed. by Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 205-235

Griffiths, Jeremy and A.S.G. Edwards, ed., *The Tollemache Book of Secrets, A Descriptive Index and Complete Facsimile* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 2001)

Gwara, Joseph J. and Mary Morse, 'A Birth Girdle Printed by Wynkyn de Worde', *Library*, 13 (2012), 33-63

Halleux, Robert, 'Recettes d'artisan, recettes d'alchimiste', *Artes mechanicae, Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique*, 34 (1989), 25-50

Hamburger, Jeffrey, 'Openings', in *Imagination, Books and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Gregory Kratzmann (Victoria: Macmillan Art Publishing, 2009), pp. 50-133

Harding, Wendy, 'Body into Text: The Book of Margery Kempe', in *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 158-187

Hargreaves, Henry, 'Some Problems in Indexing Middle English Recipes', in *Middle English Prose: Essays on Bibliographical Problems*, ed. by A.S.G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall (Garland: New York, 1981), pp. 91-113

Harman, Graham, 'The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012), 183-203

-- *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court, 2002)

Hector, L.C., *The Handwriting of English Documents*, 2nd edn. (London: Edward Arnold, 1996)

Heffernan, Carol F., 'The Revelations of St Bridget of Sweden in Fifteenth-Century England', *Neophilologus*, 101 (2017), 337-349

Heffernan, Thomas J., 'The Virgin as an Aid to Salvation in some Fifteenth-Century English and Latin Verses', *Medium Aevum*, 52 (1983), 229-238

Hennessey, Marlene Villalobos, 'Passion Devotion, Penitential Reading, and the Manuscript Page: "The Hours of the Cross" in London, British Library Additional 37049', *Mediaeval Studies*, 66 (2004), 213-252

-- 'The Disappearing Book in the Revelation of the Hundred Pater Noster', in *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe: Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life*, ed. by Stephen Kelley and Ryan Perry (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 243-266

Hind, Arthur M., *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut: With a Detailed Survey of Work in the Fifteenth Century, Volume III* (London: Constable and Company, 1935)

Hindley, Katherine, '"On Parchment or On Bread": Textual Magic in Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 2017)

Hirsh, John C., 'Author and Scribe in "The Book of Margery Kempe"', *Medium Aevum*, 44 (1975), 145-150

-- 'Prayer and Meditation in Late Mediaeval England: MS Bodley 789', *Medium Aevum*, 48 (1979), 55-66

Hogg, James, 'Carthusian Drama in Bodleian MS E. Museo 160?', in *Langland, The Mystics, and the Middle English Religious Tradition: Essays in Honour of S. S. Hussey*, ed. by Helen Philips (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990), pp. 259-270

Holsinger, Bruce, 'Of Pigs and Parchment: Medieval Studies and the Coming of the Animal', *PLMA*, 124 (2009), 616-623

-- *Music, Body and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (California: University of Stanford Press, 2001)

Horner, P.J., 'Preachers at Paul's Cross: Religion, Society and Politics in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University: Proceedings of International Symposia at Kalamazoo and New York,* ed. by Jacqueline Hamesse, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, Debra L. Stroudt, and Anne T. Thayer (Louvain-La-Neueve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1998), pp. 261-282

Horstmann, Carl, *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, An English Father of the Church and His Followers* (London: Sonnenschein, 1896)

Hughes, M., "The Feffement That Fals Hath Ymaked': a Study of the Image of the Document in "Piers Plowman" and Some Literary Analogues', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 93 (1992), 125-133

Hutchison, Ann M., 'What the Nuns Read: Literary Evidence from the English Bridgettine House, Syon Abbey', *Medieval Studies*, 57 (1995), 205-222

Indictor, Nyr, 'Alphabet Poems: A Brief History', *Word Ways: The Journal of Recreational Linguistics*, 28 (1979), 131-135

Jager, Eric, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

Jefferson, Lisa, *The Medieval Account Books of the Mercers of London: An Edition and Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009)

Jenkins, Jaqueline, 'Reading and *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in *A Companion to The Book of Margery Kempe,* ed. by John H. Arnold and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 113-128

Jennings, Margaret, 'Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon', *Studies in Philology,* 74 (1977), 1-97

Johnson, Lynn Staley, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 820-838

Jones, Sarah Rees and Felicity Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and the Public Sphere', in *Household, Women and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* ed. by A. B. Mulder-Bakker and J. Wogan-Browne (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 215-260

Kay, Sarah, 'Legible Skins: Animals and the Ethics of Medieval Reading', *Postmedieval,* 2 (2011), 13-32

-- 'Original Skin: Flaying, Reading and Thinking in the Legend of St Bartholomew and Other Works,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies,* 36 (2006), 35-75

-- 'Post-Human Philology and the Ends of Time in Medieval Bestiaries', *Postmedieval,* 5 (2014), 473-485

-- 'Surface and Symptom on a Bestiary Page: Offices on f.61^{v}-62^{r} of Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 20', *Exemplaria*, 26 (2014), 127-147

-- *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017)

Keen, Jill Averil, *The Charters of Christ and Piers Plowman: Documenting Salvation* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002)

Keiser, George, 'Practical Books for the Gentleman', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol III, 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 470-494

Kenney, Anthony, *Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Kieckhefer, Richard, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Kittel, Thomas, 'Early Modern Merchant's Marks in Medieval English Manuscripts', *Renaissance Studies*, 34 (2019), 208-227

Klein, Jackie, *Grayson Perry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009)

Knapp, Peggy Ann, *The Style of John Wyclif's English Sermons* (Paris: Mouton, 1977)

Knappett, Carl, 'Photographs, Skeuomorphs, and Marionettes: Some Thoughts on Mind, Agency and Object', *Journal of Material Culture*, 7 (2002), 97-117

Knight, G. Wilson, *Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearian Tragedy*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2001)

Krug, Rebecca, *Reading Families: Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002)

Kwakkel, Erik, 'A New Type of Book for a New Type of Reader: The Emergence of Paper in Vernacular Book Production', *The Library*, 4 (2003), 219-248

-- 'Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation', in *The Production of Books in England 1360-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 173-191

Lähnemann, Henrike, 'Text und Textil. Die beschriebenen Pergamente in den Figurenornaten', in *Heilige Röcke. Kleider für Skulpturen in Kloster Wienhausen*, ed. by Charlotte Klack-Eitzen, Wiebke Haase and Tanja Weißgraf (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2013), pp. 71-78

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983)

Lavinsky, David, *The Material Text in Wycliffite Biblical Scholarship: Inscription and Sacred Truth* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017)

Lawton, David, 'Voice, Authority, and Blasphemy in the Book of Margery Kempe', in *Margery Kempe: A Book of Essays*, ed. by Sandra J. McEntire (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 93-115

Leach, Arthur Francis, *The Schools of Medieval England* (New York: Macmillan, 1915)

Lepine, David, and Nicholas Orme, *Death and Memory in Medieval Exeter*, Devon and Cornwall Records Society, N.S. 47 (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2003)

Lester, G.A., 'The Books of a Fifteenth-Century English Gentleman, Sir John Paston', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 88 (1987), 200-217

Levy, Ian Christopher, 'The Place of Holy Scripture in John Wyclif's Theology', in *The Wycliffite Bible: Origin, History and Interpretation*, ed. by Elizabeth Solopova (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 27–48

Lewis, Michael John and Ian Richardson, *Inscribed Vervels: A Corpus and Discussion of Late Medieval and Renaissance Hawking Rings Found in Britain* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2019)

Long, Pamela O., 'Invention, Secrecy, and Theft: Meaning and Context in the Study of Late Medieval Technical Transmission', *History and Technology*, 16 (2000), 223-241

-- *Openness, Secrecy, and Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to Renaissance* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2001)

Love, Heather, 'Close But Not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn', *New Literary History*, 41 (2010), 371-391

-- 'Close Reading and Thin Description', *Public Culture*, 25 (2013), 401-434

Lucas, Hannah, "Clad in Flesch and Blood': The sartorial body and female self-fashioning in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 45 (2019), 29-60

Luengo, Anthony E., 'Magic and Illusion in "The Franklin's Tale"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 77 (1978), 1-16

MacClure, Millar, *The Saint Paul's Cross Sermons, 1534-1642* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958)

MacDonald, A. A., ed., *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998)

Manuel, Lima, *The Book of Trees: Visualising Branches of Knowledge* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2014)

Marcus, Sharon, Heather Love, and Stephen Best, 'Building Better Descriptions', *Representations*, 135 (2016), 1-21

Marks, Richard, 'Picturing Word and Text in the Late Medieval Parish Church', in *Image, Text and Church, 1380-1600, Essays for Margaret Aston*, ed. by Linda Clark, Maureen Jurkowski and Colin Richmond (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2009), pp. 162-202

-- *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004).
materiale-textkulturen database, University of Heidelburg <https://inschriftlichkeit.materiale-textkulturen.de/index.php> [Date Accessed: 29.03.2021]

Mattison, J.R., 'Books in Books: The Idea of the Book in the Fifteenth-Century English Visual Imagination', *Book History*, 24 (2021), forthcoming

McAvoy, Liz Herbert, '"Aftyr hyr owyn tunge": Body, Voice and Authority in the Book of Margery Kempe', *Women's Writing*, 9 (2002), 159-176

Mcdevitt, Mary, "The Ink of Our Mortality': The Late Medieval Image of the Writing Christ Child' in *The Christ Child in Medieval Culture: Alpha Es Et O!* ed. by Mary Dzon and Theresa Kenney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 224-253

McKenzie, D. F., *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

McKitterick, David, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

McNamer, Sarah, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Compassion* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010)

McShane, Kara L., 'Deciphering Identity in The Book of John Mandeville's Alphabets', *Philological Quarterly*, 97 (2018) 27-53

Meale, Carol M., 'Amateur Book Production and the Miscellany in Late Medieval East Anglia', in *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain,* ed. by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 158-174

-- 'London, British Library, Harley MS 2252, John Colyns' "Boke": Structure and Content', *English Manuscript Studies*, 15 (2009), 65-122

-- "…alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch, and frensch': Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1150-1500,* ed. by Carol M. Meale, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 128-158

-- 'Amateur Book Production and the Miscellany in Late Medieval East Anglia', in *Insular Books: Vernacular manuscript miscellanies in late Medieval Britain*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 157-174

Michael, M. A., 'Urban Production of Manuscript Books and the Role of the University Towns', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume II 1100-1400,* ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 168-194

Miles, Laura Saetveit, 'The Origins and Development of the Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation', *Speculum*, 89 (2014), 632-669

-- *The Virgin Mary's Book at the Annunciation: Reading, Interpretation, and Devotion in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2020)

Miller, Sarah Allison, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (London: Routledge, 2010)

Millett, Bella, ed., *Ancrene Wisse: A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402, With Variants From Other Manuscripts*, EETS O.S. 325-326 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Minnis, A.J., *Magister amoris: The Roman de la Rose and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Misson, James, "See and read this book': Reading the Typography of English, 1509-1592' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2020)

Mitchell, W. J. T., *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Montesano, Marina, 'Adam's Skull', in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture,* ed., Barbra Baert, Anita Traninger, and Catrina Santing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 15-30

Mooney, Linne R., 'Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval Scientific and Utilitarian Texts', in *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A.G. Rigg* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 184–202

Morgan, Hollie M.S., *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England: Readings, Representations and Realities* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017)

Morse, Mary, 'Seeing and Hearing: Margery Kempe and the *Mise-en-Page*', *Studia Mystica*, 20 (1999), 15-42

Morse, Mary, 'Two Unpublished English Elevation Prayers in Takamiya MS 56', *Journal of the Early Book Society,* 16 (2013), 269-277

Multhauf, Robert P., *The Origins of Chemistry* (London: Oldbourne, 1966)

Neven, Sylvie, 'Recording and Reading Alchemy and Art-Technology in Medieval and Premodern German Recipe Collections' *Nuncius*, 31 (2016), 32-49

Neville-Sington, Pamela, 'Press, Politics and Religion', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III, 1400-1557,* ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 576-607

Noonan, Sarah, 'A Translation of Body and Form: Setting the Short Charter of Christ to Music in BL Additional MS 5465', *Viator,* 45 (2014), 335-355

-- 'Bodies of Parchment: Representing the Passion and Reading Manuscripts in Late Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Washington University, 2010)

Norri, Juhani, *Dictionary of Vocabulary in Middle English, 1375-1550: Body Parts, Sicknesses, Instruments, and Medical Preparations, Part I and II* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2016)

Norrick, Neal R., 'Recipes as Texts: Technical Language in the Kitchen', in *Sprache, Diskurs und Text: Akten des 17. Linguistischen Kolloquiums: Brüssel 1982, Bd. 1,* ed. by René Jongen, Sabine De Knop, Peter H. Nelde, and Marie-Paule Quix (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1983), pp. 173-183

Nyffenegger, Nicole, 'Saint Margarget's Tattoos: Empowering Marks on White Skin', *Exemplaria*, 25 (2013), 267-283

O'Mara, Veronica and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons,* 4 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007)

-- 'The <<hallowing of þe tabernakyll of owre sawle>> according to the Preacher of the Middle English Sermons in BL MS Harley 2268', in *Models of Holiness in Medieval Sermons, Proceedings from the International Symposium (Kalamazoo, 4-7 May 1995)*, ed. by Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Louvain-La-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1996), pp. 229-242

-- 'A Checklist of Unedited Late Middle English Sermons that Occur Singly or in Small Groups,' *Leeds Studies in English*, 19 (1988), 141-166

O'Reilly, Jennifer, *Early Medieval Text and Image, Volume 2, the Codex Amiatinus, the Book of Kells and Anglo-Saxon Art,* ed. Carol Ann Farr and Elizabeth Mullins (London: Routledge, 2019)

Oen, Maria H., 'The Iconography of the *Liber celestis revelacionum*', in *A Companion to Birgitta of Sweden and her Legacy in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Maria H. Oen (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 186-222

Olsen, Vibeke, 'Penetrating the Side: The Wound in Christ's Side as Performative Space', in *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Cultured*, ed. by Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 313-339

Oppenheim, A. Leo, *Glass and Glassmaking in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: The Corning Museum of Glass, 1970)

Orlemanski, Julie, 'Jargon and the Matter of Medicine in Middle English', *Journal of Medieval and Middle English Studies*, 42 (2012), 395-420

-- *Symptomatic Subjects: Bodies, Medicine, and Causation in the Literature of Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019)

Orme, Nicholas, 'Indulgences in the Diocese of Exeter, 1100-1536', *Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art*, 120 (1988), 15-32

-- 'The Education of the Courtier', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherbourne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 63-86

-- *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001)

-- *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

Ott, Michael R., 'Culture in Nature: Writing on Wood' in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature,* ed. by Ricarda Wagner, Christine Neufeld and Ludger Lieb (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 167-178

Owen, Nancy H., 'Thomas Wimbledon', *Mediaeval Studies*, 24 (1962), 377-381

-- 'Thomas Wimbledon's Sermon: 'Redde Racionem villicacionis tue", *Mediaeval Studies*, 28 (1966), 176-197

Owen-Crocker, Gale R., 'Woolsack', in *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and Maria Hayward (Leiden: Brill, 2012) <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2197/10.1163/2213-2139_emdt_SIM_000833> [Date Accessed: 06.08.2021]

Owst, G.R., *Preaching in Medieval England, An Introduction to the Sermon Manuscripts of the Period, c.1350-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926)

Pace, George, 'The Adorned Initials of Chaucer's ABC', *Manuscripta*, 23 (1979), 88-98

Pantin, William Abel, 'Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman', in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. by J.J.G. Alexander and M.T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 398-422

Parkes, M.B., *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon, 1991)

Paz, James, *Nonhuman Voices in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017)

Penketh, Sandra, 'Women and Books of Hours', in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. by Jane H. M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (London: The British Library, 1997), pp. 266-281

Perrow, Eber Carle, 'The Last Will and Testament as a Form of Literature', *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 17 (1913), 682-753

Perry, Ryan and Lawrence Tuck, "[W]heþyr þu redist er herist redyng, I wil be plesyd wyth þe': Margery Kempe and the Locations for Middle English Devotional Reading and Hearing', in *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. by Carrie Griffin and Mary Flannery (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 133-148

Poleg, Eyal, *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013)

Price, Leah, 'From the History of a Book to a "History of the Book"', *Representations*, 108 (2009), 120-140

Punter, David, *Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 2007)

Resl, Brigitte, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2007)

Rezak, Brigitte Bedos, *When Ego was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011)

Richards, I. A., *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937)

Richardson, Malcolm, *Middle Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011)

Ricœur, Paul, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. by Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (London: Routledge, 2003)

Riehle, Wolfgang, 'Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* and Its Reception in England', in *The Secret Within: Hermits, Recluses, and Spiritual Outsiders in Medieval England*, ed. by Wolfgang Riehle and Charity Scott-Stokes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 135-150

-- *The Middle English Mystics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981)

Roberts, Phyllis B., 'Sermons and Preaching in/and the Medieval University', in *Medieval Education*, ed. by Ronald B. Begley and Joseph W. Koterski (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 83-98

Robertson, Kellie, 'Medieval Materialism: A Manifesto', *Exemplaria*, 22 (2010), 99-118

-- 'Medieval Things: Materiality, Historicism and the Premodern Object', *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), 1060-1080

Robson, J.A., 'Wyclif and Ultrarealism', in *Wyclif and the Oxford Schools* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 141-171

Roswell, Roger, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008)

Rouse, Richard H., and Mary A. Rouse, 'Wax Tablets', *Language & Communication*, 9 (1989), 175-191; Elisabeth Lalou, 'Les comptes sur tablettes de cire de Cîteaux (1321-1325)', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 155 (2011), 175-188

-- and Mary A. Rouse, *Bound Fast with Letters: Medieval Writers, Readers and Texts* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013)

Roy, Bruno, 'The Household Encyclopaedia as Magic Kit: Medieval Popular Interest in Pranks and Illusions', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 14 (1980), 60-69

Rubin, Miri, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Ruddick, Andrea, *English Identity and Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Rudy, Kathryn M., 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal', *The Electronic British Library Journal* (2011) <https://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/pdf/ebljarticle52011.pdf> [Date Accessed: 18.03.2021]

-- 'Skeuomorphs in Late Medieval Europe: Playful and Utilitarian Approaches to New Materials' (2019) <https://memo.imareal.sbg.ac.at/wsarticle/memo/2019-rudy-skeuomorphs/> [Date accessed: 20.09.2021]

Russell, Alexander, *Conciliarism and Hersey in Fifteenth-Century England, Collective Authority in the Age of the General Councils* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Rust, Martha Dana, 'Revertere! Penitence, Marginal Commentary, and the Recursive Path of Right Reading', in *Reading and Literacy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Ian Fredrick Moulton (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 1-24

-- 'The "ABC of Aristotle"', in *Medieval Literature for Children*, ed. by Daniel T. Kline (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 63-78

-- *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books: Exploring the Manuscript Matrix* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Ryley, Hannah, ‘Constructive Parchment Destruction in Manuscripts’, *Book 2.0*, 7 (2017), 9-19

-- ‘Waste Not, Want Not: The Sustainability of Medieval Manuscripts’, *Green Letters*, 19 (2015), 63-74

-- *Re-Using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press), forthcoming

Saenger, Paul, ‘Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages’, in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Roger Chartier and trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 141-173

Sahlin, Claire L., *Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophesy* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001)

Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within, Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Sanders, Arnold, ‘Illiterate Memory and Spiritual Experience: Margery Kempe, the Liturgy, and “The Woman in the Crowd”’ in *Mindful Spirit in Late Medieval Literature, Essays in Honour of Elizabeth D. Kirk*, ed. by Bonnie Wheeler (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 237-248

Sandler, Lucy F., ‘The Image of the Book Owner in the Fourteenth Century: Three Cases of Self-Definition’, in *England in the Fourteenth Century, Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: Watkins, 1993), pp. 58–80

Sargent, Michael G., ‘Affective Reading and Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection* at Syon’, in *Reading and Writing in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Mary C. Erler*, ed. by Martin Chase and Maryanne Kowaleski (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2019), pp. 130-149

Saul, Nigel, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Sawyer, Daniel, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript, c.1350-c.1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Sayers, William, ‘Tregetours in “The Franklin’s Tale”: Stage Magic and Stage Machines’, *Notes and Queries*, 56 (2009), 341-345

Scase, Wendy, ‘Writing and the Plowman: Language and Literacy’, *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 9 (1995), 121-139

Schmidt, Kari Anne Rand, ‘The Index of Middle English Prose and Late Medieval English Recipes’, *English Studies*, 75 (1994), 423-429

--‘The Index of Middle English Prose: An Assessment After Twenty Volumes’, *Studia Neophilologica*, 86 (2014), 134-143

Sciacca, Christine, ‘Raising the Curtain on the Use of Textiles in Manuscripts’, in *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing: Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Barbara Baert and Kathryn M. Rudy (Turhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 161-190

Scott, Kathleen, 'Representations of scribal activity in English manuscripts c.1400-c.1490: A mirror of the craft?' in *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools*, ed. by Michael Gullick (Walkern: The Red Gull Press, 2006), pp. 115-150

Scott-Stokes, Charity, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval Books of Hours, Selected Texts Translated from Latin, Anglo Norman, French and Middle English with an Introduction and Interpretive Essay* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2006)

Seaman, Myra, *Objects of Affection: The Book and the Household in Late Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021)

Sears, Elizabeth, 'The Afterlife of Scribes: Switcher's Prayer in the Prüfening Isidore', in *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools*, ed. by Michael Gullick (Walkern: The Red Gull Press, 2006), pp. 75-96

Sheingorn Pamela, '"The Wise Mother": The Image of St Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary', *Gesta,* 32 (1993), 69-80

Shklovsky, Viktor, 'Art as Technique', in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 11–16

Simmons, Patricia, 'The Flaming Heart: Pious and Amorous Passion in Early Modern European Medical and Visual Culture', in *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Meaning, Embodiment and Making*, ed. by Katie Barclay and Bronwyn Reddan (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), pp. 19-43

Skemer, Don C., *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006)

Smith, Cyril Stanley and John G. Hawthorne, '*Mappae Clavicula*, A Little Key to the World of Medieval Techniques', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society,* 64 (1974), part 4, pp. 3-128

Smith, Kathryn A., *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (London: British Library, 2003)

Smith, Lesley and Jane H.M. Taylor, eds., *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* (London: The British Library, 1996)

Smith, Margit J., *The Medieval Girdle Book* (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2017)

Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Chained Library, A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library* (London: Macmillan, 1931)

Smyth, Adam, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Somerset, Fiona, *Feeling Like Saints: Lollard Writings After Wyclif* (London: Cornell University Press, 2014)

Southern, R.W., *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953)

Spearing, A. C., 'The Book of Margery Kempe; or, The Diary of a Nobody', *The Southern Review,* 38 (2002), 625-635

Spencer, H. Leith, 'Sermon Literature', in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. by A.S.G. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 151-170

-- *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Springborg, Peter, 'Courtly Love Under a Bishop's Mitre?' (2017) <https://manuscript.ku.dk/motm/courtly-love-under-the-bishops-mitre/> [Date Accessed: 07.10.2021]

Spurgeon, Caroline F. E., *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935)

Stacey, R. H., *Defamiliarization in Language and Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1977)

Staley, Lynn, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994)

Stanbury, Sarah, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals & Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2011)

Steiner, Emily, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Strickland, Debra Higgs, 'Animal Iconography', in *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography*, ed. by Colum Hourihane (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 504-517

Sutherland, Annie, *English Psalms in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Swanson, R. N., *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Swift, Helen, 'Representing the Dead and 'Fictional Will", in *The Routledge Companion to Death and Literature*, ed. W. Michelle Wang, Daniel K. Jernigan, and Neil Murphy (London/New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 256-264

Symes, Carol, 'Out in the Open, in Arras: Sightlines, Soundscapes and the Shaping of a Medieval Public Sphere', in *Cities, Texts, and Social Networks, 400-1500: Experiences and Perceptions in Medieval Urban Space*, ed. by Caroline Goodson, Anne Elizabeth Lester, and Carol Symes (Surry: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 279-303

Taavitsainen, Irma and Paivi Pahta, 'Vernacularisation of Medical Writing in English: A Corpus-Based Study of Scholasticism', *Early Science and Medicine*, 2 (1998), 157-185

-- 'Middle English Recipes: Genre Characteristics, Text Type Features and Underlying Traditions of Writing', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 2 (2001), 85-113

Tarvers, Josephine K., 'The Alleged Illiteracy of Margery Kempe: A Reconsideration of the Evidence', *Medieval Perspectives*, XI (1996), 113-124

Thompson, Rodney and Nigel Morgan, ‘Language and Literacy’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume II 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 23-38

Trapp, J. B., ‘Verses by Lydgate at Long Melford’, *The Review of English Studies*, 6, (1955), 1-11

Tuczay, Christa Agnes, ‘Medieval Magicians as Entertainers: Magic as Demonic Illusion or Stagecraft’, in *Pleasure and Leisure in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Cultural-Historical Perspectives on Toys, Games, and Entertainment*, ed. by Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 161-188

Tuer, Andrew W., *A History of the Horn Book* (New York: Arno Press, repr. 1979)

Uhlman, Diane R., ‘The Comfort of Voice, the Solace of Script: Orality and Literacy in "The Book of Margery Kempe"’, *Studies in Philology*, 91 (1994), 50-69

Varnam, Laura, *The Church as Sacred Space in Middle English Literature and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018)

W. Gastle, Brian, ‘Breaking the Stained-Glass Ceiling: Mercantile Authority, Margaret Paston, and Margery Kempe’, *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 36 (2003), 123-147

Wakelin, Daniel, ‘Urinals and Hunting Traps: Curating Fifteenth-Century Pragmatic Books’, *New Medieval Literatures*, 20 (2020), 216-254

-- ‘When Scribes Won’t Write: Gaps in Middle English Books’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 36 (2014), 249-278

-- ‘Writing the Words’, in *The Production of Books in England 1360-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 34-58

-- *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018)

--*Scribal Correction and Literary Craft, English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Walker, Katie L., *Middle English Mouths: Late Medieval Medical, Religious and Literary Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Walker-Bynum, Caroline, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011)

Wall-Randall, Sarah, ‘What Is a Staged Book? Books as “Actors” in the Early Modern English Theatre’, in *Rethinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare’s England*, ed. by Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), pp. 128-152

-- *The Immaterial Book: Reading and Romance in Early Modern England* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2013)

Walsingham, Alexandra, ‘Jewels for Gentlewomen: Religious Books as Artefacts in Late Medieval and Early Modern England’, *Studies in Church History*, 38 (2004), 123-142

Watt, David, *The Making of Thomas Hoccleve’s Series* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013)

Webb, Heather, *The Medieval Heart* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010)

Wenzel, Siegfried, *Preachers, Poets and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986)

White, Tom, 'Blackness and the Medieval Page' (2016) <http://www.materialtexts.bbk.ac.uk/?tag=medieval> [Date Accessed: 08.10.2021]

-- 'Written in Trees', *Postmedieval*, 9 (2018), 444-454

Whitehead, Christiania, 'Middle English Religious Lyric', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. by Thomas G. Duncan (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), pp. 96-119

Wilcox, Jonathan, ed., *Scraped, Stroked, and Bound: Materially Engaged Readings of Medieval Manuscripts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013)

Williams, Deanne, *The French Fetish: From Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Williams, Steven J., *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Careers of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2003)

Williams, Tara, 'Manipulating Mary: Maternal, Sexual, and Textual Authority in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', *Modern Philology,* 107 (2010), 528-555

Williamson, Beth, 'Material Culture and Medieval Christianity', in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. by John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 60-75

-- 'Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence', *Speculum*, 88 (2014), 1-43

Wilson, Edward, *A Descriptive Index of the English Lyrics in John of Grimstone's Preaching Book* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1973)

Witherden, Sian, 'Touch in Late Medieval English Theatre' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2019)

Witt, Christoph, 'More Than Bling: Inscribed Jewellery Between Social Distinction, Amatory Gift-Giving, And Spiritual Practice' in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 291–314

Witt, Ronald G., 'The Arts of Letter Writing', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume II*, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 68-83

Wolfe, Cary, 'Moving Forward, Kicking Back: The Animal Turn', *Postmedieval*, 2 (2011), 1-2

Woolf, Rosemary, *The English Mystery Plays* (London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1972)

-- *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968)

Woolgar, C.M., *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

Zieman, Katherine, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England*

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)