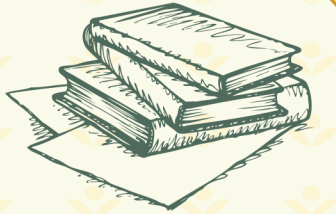


MEDIEVAL SURVIVALS

COLLECTED
WORDS



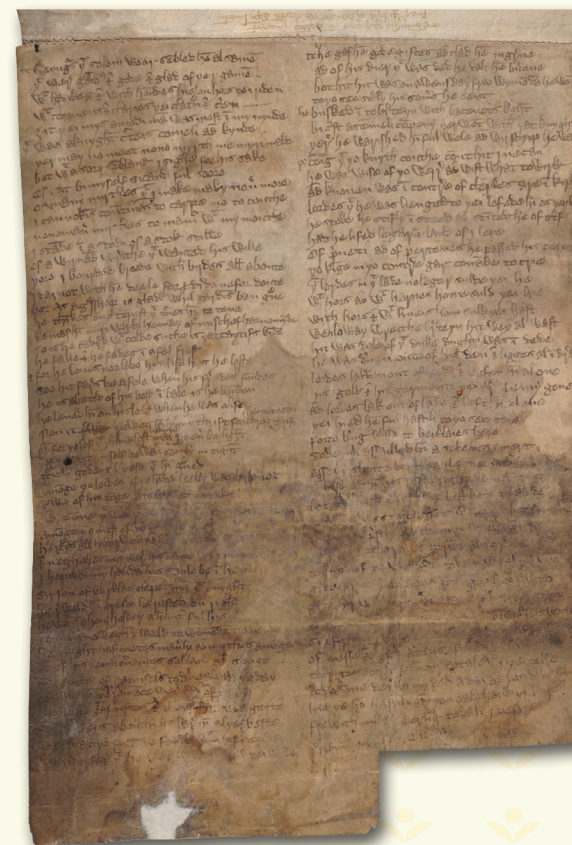
from the Literary Collections at the University of Nottingham

Some fine examples of medieval literature have survived in the extensive private library from Wollaton Hall once owned by the Willoughby family (later Barons Middleton). They were deposited with the University in 1947 by the 11th Baron, who had a long association with the University in its early years, together with their family archive (the Middleton Collection), which records the family's role as wealthy landowners.

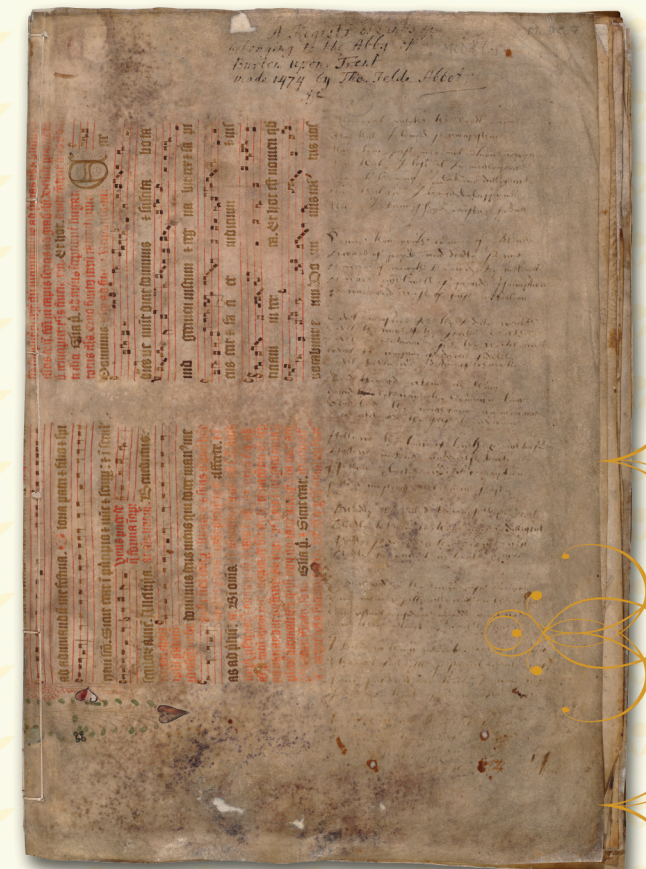
In 2007 assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund allowed the University to purchase some of the literary manuscripts from the private library.

These are now known as the Wollaton Library Collection. Their continuity of ownership, thought to be from the time of Francis Willoughby (1546–1596), and their known archival context gives these manuscripts particular regional significance and relevance to the study of patronage, readership and provincial culture. The Wollaton Library Collection includes several volumes which were commissioned for wealthy clients, demonstrating their appetite for literature. The Middleton Collection contains some unique early poems which, in contrast to the literary volumes, have only survived, preserved as part of the archive, because they were written on documents intended for other purposes.

The image to the right shows an English poem written in contemporary hand, perhaps by a local clerk, on the reverse of a document relating to land drainage in Nottinghamshire. The poem is a lament for Sir John Berkeley of Wymondham (near Melton Mowbray) in Leicestershire, who died in 1374 on an expedition to Brittany. It is presumed that it was composed by a Leicestershire poet in around 1375 who may have been a member of Berkeley's retinue. It contains a vivid account of the grief experienced by Berkeley's wife.



Reverse of a commission of sewers for Bingham and Newark, 1394–1395. Middleton Collection Mi O 1/4.



Cover of a cartulary of the Abbey of Burton-on-Trent, c. 1431–1492. Middleton Collection Mi Dc 7.

The image above shows the cover of a volume documenting legal matters relating to the Abbey which is made of pages from a religious service book. On the right hand side is a curious alphabetical poem in Middle English, repenting the follies of youth, beginning 'Alas, what rulythe the brydle rayne'.



Painting of Wollaton Hall by Jan Siberechts, 1697. From ACC 1752.



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