



# Saints, Sinners and Storytellers

Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts at the University of Nottingham



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## Weston Gallery

D H Lawrence Pavilion,  
Lakeside Arts Centre, University Park, Nottingham  
30 April - 8 August 2010

The display has been curated by the Wollaton Library Collection research team, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and by curators in the University's Manuscripts and Special Collections department. Particular thanks are due to Professor Thorlac Turville-Petre, Professor Ralph Hanna, and Dr Gavin Cole. This guide has been prepared by Dr Dorothy Johnston, Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections. It draws on items from the exhibition cases and story boards to illustrate the principal display themes.

The Wollaton Library Collection has been the subject of a Heritage Lottery Fund award to secure the future of the collection at the University of Nottingham and to undertake work on cataloguing, preservation and other activities. The HLF project aims to raise awareness of the manuscripts and to improve understanding of them. Digital surrogates will support future access, and web resources will introduce the texts to new communities of users.

The Wollaton Antiphonal has also been the subject of conservation attention, benefiting from generous support by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, the Pilgrim Trust and other bodies.

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LAKE  
SIDE



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Arts & Humanities  
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heritage  
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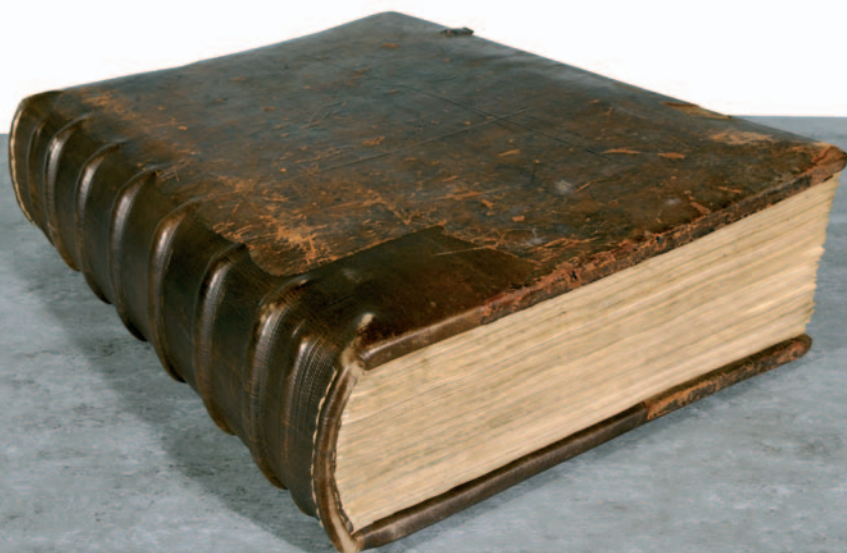
LOTTERY FUNDED

The suburban village of Wollaton, lying to the west of Nottingham, has a rich medieval heritage. Wollaton Hall, now a museum within public park land, was once the home of the Willoughby family. The modern hall, a magnificent statement of Tudor gentry aspiration, was built by Sir Francis Willoughby (1546-1596). In the Old Hall an impressive library collection already existed. Richard Willoughby (d.1471) was particularly active in its development, and also ensured that his parish church was equipped with fine service books.

Books are very vulnerable to loss and decay and most of the original library has long since been dispersed. *Saints, Sinners and Storytellers* is based on eleven surviving manuscripts. Ten of these form part of the Wollaton Library Collection, which includes early printed books from the original library at Wollaton Hall.

Also on display is the Wollaton Antiphonal, which was returned to St Leonard's church in 1924, after being held since the time of the Reformation as part of the Wollaton Hall library.

The manuscripts in question vary from a collection of French romances to a parchment fragment used in a later book binding. They offer us glimpses into many aspects of medieval life and culture: stories of knights and their quests; works of learning and instruction in moral conduct; and records of saints and of religious practice. They use the contemporary languages of English, French and Anglo-Norman as well as Latin. Occasionally they tell us something of their authors. Examined as physical artefacts, they show both beauty and utility. Their identity as a group helps us to understand more about regional medieval book ownership and use.



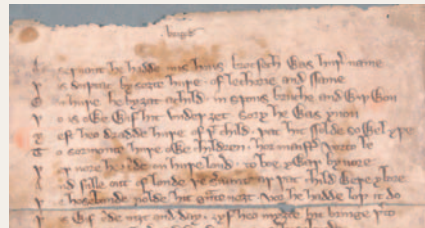
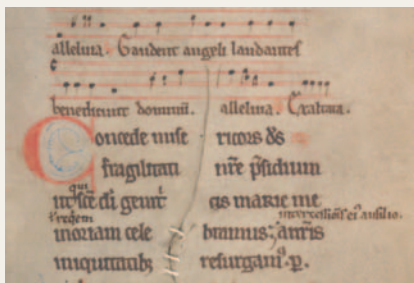




# Medieval Books and their Survival

The survival of medieval books depended on many factors, including the quality of the original materials, the utility of the text or its aesthetic appeal, the risk of exposure to flood, fire, vermin or simply poor storage, and the chances of ownership and descent.

Medieval books generally used parchment. The creation of a book involved much expense and skill. In addition to the cost of animal skins, and of their preparation to provide a suitable surface for writing, many different craftsmen might be involved. Some books were modest practical manuals, others were impressive luxury items, demonstrating current taste and social aspiration. They can today be 'read' as physical objects, yielding information about their creation, early owners, and fate over the centuries. The early thirteenth-century breviary provides an example of the potential variety of interest, with its combination of music and script, decoration, and even evidence of early damage and repair (III.3).



Bindings from the later middle ages sometimes contain material recycled from earlier volumes. Strips of parchment added strength to spines; substantial amounts of earlier text could survive in larger fragments serving as pastedowns, flyleaves or even covers for other texts. The study of these fragments reveals a variety of reasons for their fate. In cases such as the extract from the South English Legendary, the texts had probably simply fallen out of fashion and were no longer in demand by readers (Ill.4).

The binding of a medieval volume was often the first element to decay over the centuries, resulting in broken spines and missing boards. The Wollaton Library Collection contains several books with exposed binding structures revealing evidence of their early history. In a few cases surviving straps show how the parchment book was originally kept in shape within its covers (Ill.5).

abouen all ye reueniant. *Demna stella vocat Almarath annus lapis iaspis et herba plantago est.*

he teute sterre is Almarath which vpon hif & vpon deth porgh kinde of iupitre & aparte he doy what longeþ to his parte his stone is iaspie & of planteyne he hay his herbe soleyne. *Vntenna stella vocat Venenias annus lapis adamans et herba cicorea est.*

he sterre elluent is venenias pe whos nature is as it was take of venus & of pe mone in yuge which he hay for to done of Adamant is pat perre in which he worchey his mastrye pike herbe also which hi befall by Cicorea pe boke him calley. *Duodecima stella vocat Alpheta. annus lapis opazion et herba rosa marina est.*

Alpheta in pe noume sitt and is cleped pe twelf sterre zitt of Scorpio which is goined and takeþ his kinde as i am serued and hay his vtu & i pe stou which clepyd is opazion his herbe ywe is Rosmaryne which shapen is for his coveyne.

*Bernardia stella vocat Cor Scorpio mis. annus lapis Sardis et herba astro.*

f yse sterres which i mene *Sogna ē.* Cor Scorpiouis is thretene pe whos nature aparte & iove hay pouen vū to his behoue his herbe is Astrologie which foloweth his Astronomie pe stoue which pat his sterre allowey is Sardis which vū to hi bouey. *Quardecima stella vocat Sotercadent. annus lapis crisolit et herba Sa.*

he sterre which stant next p<sup>e</sup> laste.

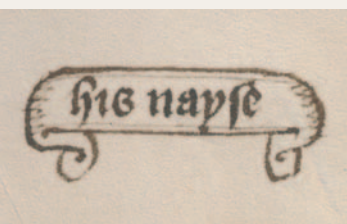
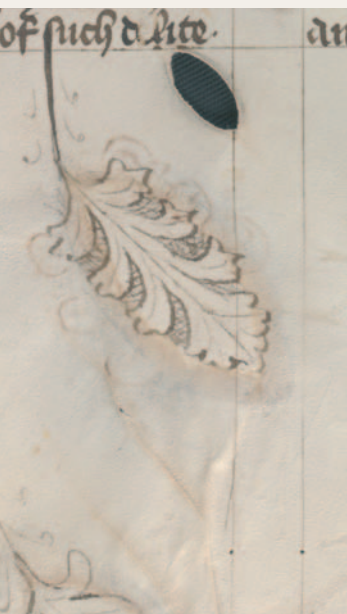
*Quinta ē.*

Nature on him pe name caste and clepey him Sotercadent which of his kinde obedient is to nature & to venus his stone is seide Crisolithus his herbe is cleped Saturne So as pe olde bokes seie. *Vntenna stella vocat Tania Scorpiouis annus lapis Calcedonia et herba maior.* ut now pe laste sterre of al. *Tania ē.* pe taile of Scorpio it call which to nature & to Satorne Se wepe of kinde mot retorne After pe preparacion Off due constellation pe Calcedone vū to hi longeþ which for his stone he vnderfongey of maiorane his herbe is growmed y<sup>e</sup> haue i seide how pei be founde Of euy sterre inspeciall which hay his herbe & stone w<sup>al</sup> as hermes this boke of the wittenes bereth of y<sup>e</sup> i tolde. *Pro hic de arab; illis q<sup>ad</sup> Alphonse stam p<sup>e</sup> cris studiosius itudentes libros se hor diffictis nois; copiant.*

he sterre of Astronomie which pncipall is of cleergie to deme be twene wo & welk in yuges pat bene naturele pei had a grete trauaile on honte pat mate it firste ben vnderfoute and pei also which ou more hir studie sett vpon p<sup>e</sup> lore pei weren gracionse & wise and worpi for to bere a prise and whom it likey for to wit of hem pat his science writ on of pe firste which it wrote After Roe it was Rembrote to his disciple ychounthou and mate a boke fory y<sup>e</sup> vpon



# Reading a Manuscript Page



From top:  
Ill. 7, WLC/LM/8 f. 167  
Ill. 8, WLC/LM/8 f. 168v

Opposite page:  
Ill. 6, WLC/LM/8 f. 155

A single page reveals much about a medieval book. The materials and decoration are evidence of its quality, commissioning and purpose; physical details provide clues about the stages in its production; and the use of colour, script, marginal notes and other features show how it was meant to be read.

A page from John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (Ill. 6) provides a handsome example of English book production in the early fifteenth century, with its large leaves, double columns, generous margins, running titles, colour and use of the distinctive English script *anglicana formata*. It is also clearly unfinished; blank spaces are left for larger more ornate capitals, with small guide letters to aid the illustrator. On some pages decoration has been added - to conceal a blemish in the parchment (Ill. 7).

A closer look reveals other details of the page's composition. Ruled lines, guided by tiny pricking holes in the parchment leaf, show how the scribe kept within a clearly defined space of two 46-line columns, appropriate for the work's verse form. Occasionally the text in red which introduces a passage is compressed, indicating that it was inserted at a later stage.

By convention the leaves of such a manuscript are known as folios, rather than pages; each folio is identified by its front and reverse side (recto and verso) rather than modern pagination. In the Gower manuscript, as was customary, most folios are not detached single leaves but consist of the folded halves of a double leaf, or bifolium. Four bifolia were used to create eight folios, five to make ten, and so on. On the last folio of these gatherings or quires a 'catch-word' was placed. This anticipated the first word in the next gathering and thus assisted accurate binding (Ill. 8).

Uq tu querel 7 dont mens  
 sire to uene dfrance droit  
 vnt pdom q me verendrait  
 seroit almosne 7 corcho  
 sel serueroie tant boildie  
 quant q me donast pat 7 dras  
 dunt serui me recendras  
 so nelsu pas degne asaire  
 Hegairel nepme asaire  
 Heneqer mie que merue  
 petit clain mo loier quire



nul se dex  
 me soit garas  
 tu nelsuie  
 ep plans  
 sem eltoies  
 degut fait  
 Almet rroit  
 qil ne fait  
 sone n long  
 dequq ioy  
 quant sepdom uenoit amoy  
 plus iamerone enticel dous  
 qroi ne seille enydons  
 pdom me seroit bien uen  
 quant io sui uolt 7 uolt ken  
 sime uolt on desirer  
 7 dema uore tant ieter  
 vanu seriant v chrs  
 assel lai dit bial sire aers  
 qonq chrs ueluy  
 si mepert nlt die q io sui  
 tant quel ia enmoi uer  
 qmanet endespit ex  
 seus pece i cindillies  
 tolt el sire me desillies  
 allet ia roment ouz  
 7 bien me sui apeuz  
 qhaier melleu maie mal  
 arant elu leseneleat  
 7 tempere ha dit  
 tolt eu iabant si q entie  
 se nos uol durement pier  
 decerent cest soldoier  
 car il est uen calengier  
 uol qe mil nos uengier  
 simeqer altre eueue  
 A la mande riauueure

Sire le der me beneio

por cho neli sairon n mie

ni est y receus

7 que luermet 7 uenuz

q tel n of uolent qbat

7 seuoelent pfoire embare

cit nlempor dela

el pnt cestu pdeca

dy seprent q tant a fait

Hecient nul hom garet deplait

Hecambient ne mareleat

vent en est al senesleat

Sire tant il hantre enuone

enoune cast q mal n fano

7 bien lai q io tant seroie

seio deriere al romanoie

bial sire car me passiez

vnt armet pouret rmes

7 v eleuer q tel port

7 touet a ne qeplut font

7 seio muer sire al passiez

cho ne murt pnt uegnt damages

heneleat fait q conois

vnt muer armet aboiois

quant erent entumelle

ha dmelement balties

7 un eluier ucaria

ligut of pnt uelaria

agut beut est derome illue

ramante enleue a o batue

sidit porer lialt baroy

y lumarit .G.

ont mlt iabe 7 elcaruy

elgnt chr embary

car armet a qit qier soient

sin iabent tolt el q tel noient

bnt gal entont 7 qnt rusees

sil ont leue mlt deuntes

q tel plus bieles q i font

hgy font uilain q ontont

y ne respont nno arois

lancut fait sil fust oiois

7 leu teneat acaleu

uengier se uolra del qmuy

toit autrement q p renchiep

quant q digne al belmeier

illue eudroit 7 genglerie

la mether uer chualerie





# The Decorated Page



Decoration of a medieval manuscript, like that of a modern web page, served a number of functions. A balance of text and image helps readers to find their place and conveys implicit messages about the owner or author as well as being visually appealing. Decoration of an initial letter in a passage effectively drew the eye and could vary from simple colouring to enlarged letter forms or their elaboration into small pictures. (Ill. 10) Fashion and purpose, as well as cost and materials, influenced the choice of style.

The volume of *French Romances and Fabliaux* is the most important illustrated work in the Wollaton Library Collection (Ill.9). The French vernacular stories of knightly deeds and romance are accompanied by 83 miniatures, the majority of which refer to the narrative. The early thirteenth-century date gives it a claim to be the earliest fully illustrated surviving collection of romances.

The full page shows the planning and execution of the decoration. Space was allocated for the miniatures before the text was written, and the verse lines broken to fit the format.

Elsewhere on the page, marginal flourishes in red and blue attracted attention to important passages.

The Wollaton Antiphonal was made more than two centuries after the *Romances* and, with its liturgical function, belongs to a different tradition. Many initials are 'historiated', depicting an image that can generally be linked to a long iconographic tradition in Western Christian art: here the letter 'B' (for 'Beatus') is decorated with an image of King David to introduce the Psalms (Ill.11).

Opposite page:  
Ill.9, WLC/LM/6 f.164

This page, from top:  
Ill.10, WLC/LM/7 f.70  
Ill.11, MS 250 f.213



**A** Studite pple me legem manū:

Of a gret clerc schelbrith hi his bokes.  
 Off alle creatures pat god made in heuene & in erthe  
 In wat' or in eyr or in oght ellys.

Therfore souerayn cause & pe stile whi pat he made he  
 Was his olbue good wille & his godurss  
 Thorgh what goodnesse as he is alle gode  
 He wolde pat summe creatures of goo p' he made  
 Wey' commuies to pe blisse pat euey' more lastey  
 And for no creatur myghte come to pat blisse  
 With olbren kuolbyuse as pat clerc techeth  
 He made skilful creatures angelus & man  
 Of wit & wisdom to kuolben god al myghty  
 And for to hey' kuolbyuse to loue him & seue him  
 And so come to pat blisse pat pey wey' mad to  
 His man of kuolbyuse haddeu omy' forney faderes  
 In pe stat of innocēce pat pey wey' mad inure  
 And so scholde we haf had 3ef we hadde not sinned  
 Nat so mikel as holy soules haue nold in heuene  
 But mikel more pan we haue nold in erthe  
 For omy' forney fader sinned seynt pe pphete  
 And we bey' he pe whorednesse of hey' unfoodes  
 For pe kuolbyuse pat pey hadde of god al myghty  
 Pat hadde hit of godes 3efte at hey' byzmyuse  
 With oute twayle or taryng or passyng of tyme  
 And al pe kuolbyuse pat we haue in his world of hit  
 Is of heynge & leynge & techyng of omy'  
 Of pe salwe & of pe loze pat lousey to holy churche  
 Whiche alle creatures pat loue god al myghty  
 Olbren to kuolbe & kenne & lede hey' les aftry  
 And so come to pat blisse pat schal wele bliue  
 And for pat mikel folc nold in his world  
 Is not wel inolk seyned to kuolbe god al myghty

# Devotional Reading in the Household

The significance of religious faith in the middle ages, and lay understanding of the church's moral teaching, is revealed through a number of vernacular texts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In England, Anglo-Norman was initially used for these works in preference to Latin, but the desire to communicate them as widely as possible led to translations and new English texts. Statements in these works contain evidence about contemporary language use (Ill.13).

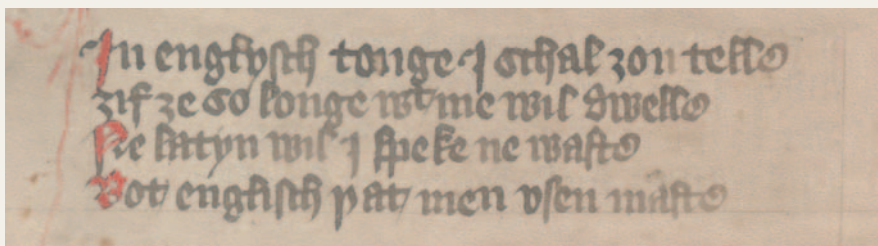
This genre of devotional reading is associated with the requirement after 1215 that people make annual confession to their parish priests. Priests had to prepare their congregations for this, and the new texts met the needs both of the clergy and, increasingly, the educated laity. Private copies, such as those surviving in the Wollaton Library Collection, are particularly interesting in telling us who acquired and used the texts.

The message of these texts, expounded in verse through sermons, commentaries and illustrative stories, encouraged spiritual contemplation and penitence. The image of a mirror, emphasising the texts' reflective qualities, was used in the title of both the Anglo-Norman *Mirur* of Robert de Gretham and the Middle English *Speculum Vitae* (*Mirror of Life*).

The lay, and possibly female, readership aimed at by Robert is suggested by the dedication to his patron, Elena de Quincey, with the claim that it will provide an alternative to worthless tales of adventure and history. By contrast, the composition of John Gaytryge's *Lay Folks' Catechism*, seen here in an early fifteenth-century Leicestershire copy, can be explicitly related to the diocesan instructions of John Thoresby, Archbishop of York (Ill.12).

Opposite page:  
Ill.12, WLC/LM/9 f.24B

Below:  
Ill.13, WLC/LM/9 f.1v





des tentes encontre elz iront  
 pes des lices les troueront  
 si filent il cho fu uertes  
 Quant deior parut la clartés  
 toires loigens filent armes  
 7 lor batailles deuise



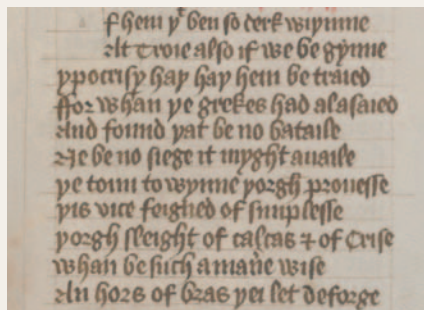
ien ordene  
 cho mest aus  
 se sont tot  
 al uoie mis  
 trouens cundie  
 rent suancie  
 aail bielement  
 et p loizis

se sont issen de laire  
 pnt de bataille conree  
 puis cheualcierent lagement  
 penchaslee donent  
 sen est leior mlt entremise  
 tolt ensi com ele deuise  
 Quos enferoie lone plait

# Storytelling

Opposite page:  
ILL.14, WLC/LM/6 f.124

This page, from top:  
ILL.15, WLC/LM/8 f.14  
ILL.16, WLC/LM/37



Stories were told in many different ways in the middle ages, with narrative in verse particularly popular. Texts in the Wollaton Library Collection include some of the most famous narrative works of medieval literature, and show that a Midlands gentry family had the interest and opportunity to acquire fine manuscript books.

Medieval romances were often concerned with kings and knights and their pursuit of chivalric quests. In many cases familiar classical themes provided inspiration.

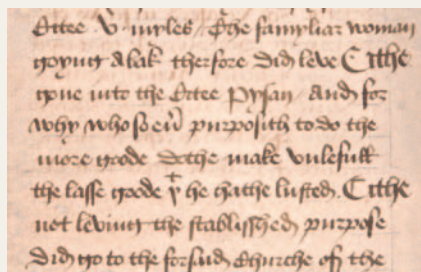
For example, Benoît de Sainte-Maure retells the story of the Trojan war in *Le Roman de Troie* (*The Romance of Troy*), here preserved in a French verse manuscript of the early thirteenth century (ILL.14). In the same volume are six other romances and a series of fabliaux – comic or bawdy tales about ordinary life.

Firmly rooted in Western European and Christian experience, the romances influenced popular notions of British history. Familiar tales of King Arthur and the Holy Grail look back to these origins. The adventures of the Biblical figure Joseph of Arimathea and his companions as they travel to Britain are told in the early thirteenth-century *L'estoire del Saint Graal*.

John Gower, writing in the late fourteenth century, also drew on classical characters and events such as the Trojan War in his allegory *Confessio Amantis* (*The Lover's Confession*) (ILL.15). Through the literary convention of a dream he presents a dialogue between an ageing lover, 'Amans', and his 'Confessor', a priest of Venus the goddess of love, and in so doing provides instruction, entertainment and reflections on behaviour in love.

A single leaf from a *Life of St Zita* (ILL.16) illustrates the popularity of biographies of saints. This is our only evidence of an English life of the Italian saint who enjoyed a Midlands cult in the fifteenth century.

11





ante in + me pueri pueri et munda de reg  
pate de no autem autem adu + a regit munda  
ut duntaxat ad pueri autem autem autem.



Et puer  
finit nig  
infinitus  
est annis in lumen delectat in uerba terra.

Laudate pin. Magnificatus

est rex pueri sup omnes reges in  
uote terr. Laudate. d. o. g.

re qua ppe est regnum dei annis dico uo  
bis quia non tardabit. Laudate nra in

quatuor capita uestra erit appropina  
bit redemptio uestra. Laudate d. n. w.

ompleni sunt dies mane ut pueret

filium suum primo geniti. Laudate ihesu

spiritus genitum qui ambulat  
in tribus iudicium mag  
nam: habitantibus in regione in

die moris  
ut oia  
pro. iuda et iherusalem

poli te tunc re tras e  
gredimini Et do inuis e  
ut nobis

qui. Conuersus mor in  
tribus amaram domum sup nos.

tras. Gloria in tu et fi  
ho et sumtu sanc to. Et do.

in redemptor genitum  
ostende partum uirginis uirgine omne  
seruatum talis dicit partus domi.

filium suum primo geniti. Laudate ihesu

spiritus genitum qui ambulat  
in tribus iudicium mag  
nam: habitantibus in regione in

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in redemptor genitum  
ostende partum uirginis uirgine omne  
seruatum talis dicit partus domi.





# The Wollaton Antiphonal

Opposite page:  
ILL.17, MS 250 f.34

This page, from top:  
ILL.18, MS 250 f.206v  
ILL.19, MS 250 f.246v

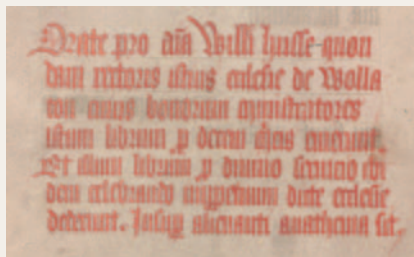
**T**he Wollaton Antiphonal has had an extraordinarily long association with a single owner, St Leonard's Church, Wollaton. It was purchased in

1460 by the executors of the late rector, William Husse, who wished to provide a gift for the church (ILL.18).

The magnificent volume had been recently commissioned for Thomas Chaworth of Wiverton, Nottinghamshire. Its physical creation was a major achievement, involving the preparation of more than 207 skins to make 412 leaves measuring 575 x 366mm. Its decoration was equally ambitious. As well as 23 historiated initials, it contains many heraldic elements, honouring the ancestors of Chaworth and his wife Isabella Aylesbury (ILL.19).

Typical features of the most beautiful leaves can be illustrated by the folio containing the antiphon for Vespers of the Nativity, "Rex pacificus magnificatus est", which was sung on Christmas day (ILL.17). The miniature shows Mary, in blue, lying in childbed, surrounded by the familiar images of the ox and ass and Joseph. The entire page is framed with borders, with delicate foliage extending into the generous margins. On the right border are placed the quartered arms of Chaworth and Caltoft beneath a helm with a Caltoft mantle and a calf crest. The shield or escutcheon for Thomas and Isabella dominates the lower border.

The Antiphonal inevitably suffered over the centuries, with damp and mould destroying whole sections and its decayed binding limiting any opening. When it was placed in the care of the University of Nottingham in 1974, growing concern about its condition led to restrictions on access. Since 2001 its conservation has steadily progressed, with generous support from a number of funders. The late Dr Nicholas Hadgraft had completed over half of the volume before his sudden death in 2004. Its treatment has continued and digital images are being captured to support future research.



**C**oram facie dei et voce domini. **E**t  
in deo pater hostiam quam et immolationem  
vram pro nobis in inferis probois. amplexus  
annem tuam et amplexus in dicit sanguinem tuum  
ad libendum. et posuisti in inferis et in vultu  
spūs. timorens. **A**de quodamque feceris. **I**n  
memoria facietis. **E**go p. sanguinem tuum ad inferos in inferis  
spūs. **E**go p. hunc mundum et in inferis. **E**nter  
et indignus se amare dignatus es. ut laudares nos a  
gratue tuo doce me indigni. **S**erui tui quem in inferis  
officiū pater dicit. vocare dignatus es nullis meis meritis sed sola dig  
natione misericordie tue. doce me quies p. spiritū sanctū tuū. tantum  
tractare inferos ea reuerentia et honore et deuotione et timore. quib;  
oportet et deet. **H**ic me p. gratiam tuā scilicet illud de tanto misero crede  
et intellige. sentire et firmi retinere. dicit et cogere quod tibi pla  
cet et expediat aīe mee. **I**nter spūs tuus bonus in cor meū. qui sonet  
bi sine sono et sine strepitu verborū loquitur oīem iustitiam tantorū  
inferos. **P**rofundū sunt quippe nimis et sacro teatū velamine. **P**rop  
ter magnā clementiā tuā concede michi p. m. in inferis solē a p. m.  
corde et munda mente celebrare. **L**ibera cor meū ab inuidiis et nephan  
dis vauis et uorīs cogitationib;. **M**uni me dñe beatorū angelorū p.  
et fida tutela atq; fortissima custodia. ut oīu bonos hostes conuifi di  
cedant. **P**er virtutē tantū mīsterij et p. manū sancti āgeli tu repel  
le a me et a cunctis seruis tuis diuissimū spūtu supbie et conodo  
ic. inuidie et blasphemie. fornicatōis et inuidiā. dubitatis et diffi  
dēcie. **C**onfundantur qui nos p. sequuntur. **P**eat ali qui p. dē. cūta  
fest. **D**ec virgini amatores castitatis et integritatis deus celesti ro  
re libidinis. **E**tingue in toto corpore meo totū fontem arde  
tis libidinis. ut maneant in me tenet totius castitatis corpus et aīe.  
**M**ortificā in membris meis carnis sensualos oīes q. libidinosos cōmon  
nes. et da michi veram et p. cū castitate cū reteris domis tuis.  
que tibi placent in iustitie ut sacrificiū laudis casto corpore et mī  
do corde cotidie tibi valeam offerre. **Q**uāta em corā contritōe et  
lacrimarū fuit. **Q**uāta reuerentia et tremore. **Q**uāta corpus castitate et  
aīe puritate istud diuini et celesti sacrificij est celebrandum. **D**ñe libi

# Preservation and Access

The challenge of providing access to medieval manuscripts while ensuring

their survival for future generations has been at the heart of the Wollaton Library Collection project. Each of the manuscript volumes has required conservation assessment (Ill.20 & Ill.21). Access to several had for some years been restricted, to limit further damage in handling. Exceptions were John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and the collection of *French Romances and Fabliaux*, both of which were repaired and rebound in the early 1990s with the support of the British Library.

The preservation programme for the remaining volumes was determined by a significant feature – their relatively untouched condition, yielding evidence of their construction and history. For historians of the book, attention was drawn to their fragile bindings, showings exposed spines, gatherings, threads and sewing stations.

Conservation work focused therefore on essential repairs to stabilize pigments, ease cockled leaves, undertake minor parchment repairs and strengthen bindings within their existing structures. No rebinding was attempted; the three volumes that lack boards are protected with new paper covers and pressure boxes.

The manuscripts will therefore inevitably remain fragile. The conditions of display, which also take into account the risks presented by exposure to light, demonstrate the limitations on opening the vulnerable parchment leaves. Future access will primarily be through surrogate copies in digital or print form.

There are, fortunately, other ways of supporting access and extending appreciation of the volumes. The value of digitization, another major strand of the project, is also shown here. High resolution images show how the camera can reveal more than is clear to the naked eye, and shots of detailed conservation work in process will help future users to study the physical history of the artefacts (Ill.22).



Opposite page:  
Ill.20, WLC/LM/11 f.1

This page, from top:  
Ill.22, WLC/LM/11  
Ill.21, WLC/LM/3 f.5



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1. Front cover: *Romances and fabliaux*, early 13th C.; detail from the tale of *Ille et Galeron* by Gautier d'Arras (WLC/LM/6 f.164).
2. John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* and other works, c.1425, rebound (WLC/LM/8).
3. *Breviary*, late 12th-early 13th C., incomplete (WLC/LM/1 f.23 detail, with medieval repair).
4. Life of St. Bridget, fragment from the *South English Legendary*, c.1310 (WLC/LM/38).
5. *L'Estoire del Saint Graal*, early 13th C., incomplete, in original binding (WLC/LM/7).
6. Gower, *Confessio*; extract concerning astronomy (WLC/LM/8 f.155).
7. Gower, *Confessio*; hole in parchment and decoration covering blemish (WLC/LM/8 f.167).
8. Gower, *Confessio*; catchwords 'his nayse' (nose). (WLC/LM/8 f.168v).
9. *Romances*; *Ille et Galeron* by Gautier d'Arras (WLC/LM/6 f.164).
10. *L'Estoire*; a lombard initial introduces a new section (WLC/LM/7 f.70).
11. *Wollaton Antiphonal*; King David, the psalmist, with a scroll (MS 250 f.213).
12. *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, early 15th C.; opening passage "On learning" (WLC/LM/9 f.248).
13. *Speculum Vitae*, early 15th C.; "In englysch tonge I schal you telle / Yif ye so longe with me wil dwelle / Ne latyn wil I speke ne waste / Bot englysch that men usen maste" (WLC/LM/9 f.1v).
14. *Romances*; detail from Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie* (WLC/LM/6 f.124).
15. Gower, *Confessio*; extract relating to the Trojan War (WLC/LM/8 f.14).
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18. *Antiphonal*; invitation to pray for the soul of William Husse (MS 250 f.206v).
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20. *Prayer book*, 1450-1475; first folio, before conservation (WLC/LM/11 f.1).
21. Robert de Gretham, *Mirur*, mid-13th C; cockled leaves, before conservation (WLC/LM/3 f.5).
22. *Prayer Book*; detail of spine sewing, before conservation (WLC/LM/11).
23. Rear cover: *Antiphonal*; The image of a fool, Psalm 52 (MS 250 f.228v).





Manuscripts and Special Collections is located at King's Meadow Campus, about 3 miles from the centre of Nottingham and 1 mile from the main University campus.

Information to accompany the exhibition and the Wollaton Library Collection, including a new learning resource on medieval women are available on our website: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/mss](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/mss).

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III 23, MS 250 f.228v

# Saints, Sinners and Storytellers

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