

**LEGAL BOOK COLLECTING IN LATE MEDIEVAL BRISTOL:
THE CASE OF HARVARD, HOUGHTON LIBRARY, MS RICHARDSON 40**

Stephanie Jane Lahey

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ABSTRACT

Legal Book Collecting in Late Medieval Bristol: The Case of Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 40

Author: Stephanie Jane Lahey | Supervisor: Andrew Taylor | Submitted: 2015

From the late-thirteenth through late-fifteenth centuries, among the most frequently produced and widely disseminated books in England were unofficial, common law statute-based miscellanies known as *Statuta Angliæ* or ‘statute books’. In *ca.* 1470, a large format, *de luxe*, yet highly standardized, version of this codicological genre emerged; likely produced on a speculative basis, it survives in approximately two dozen exemplars. This thesis takes as its focus a member of this latter group: Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 40 (*ca.* 1460–70). After reviewing current scholarship on these codices—examining several key issues and clarifying previous descriptions to enhance our understanding—it endeavours to establish a likely provenance for MS Richardson 40, exploring the ways in which both the manuscript and the broader genre resonate with the life of the proposed patron, Philip Mede (d. 1476), merchant, twice MP, and thrice Mayor of Bristol.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- BBLI* Honourable Soc. of Lincoln's Inn. *The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn. The Black Books. Vol. 1: From A.D. 1422 to A.D. 1586.* Trans. & ed. William Paley Baildon & James Douglas Walker. London, UK, 1897. Print.
- BCM Berkeley Castle Muniments
- BGAS Bristol & Gloucester Archaeological Society
- BL London, UK, British Library
- BL Cat. British Library. Digital Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts. Web. <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/welcome.htm>.
- BnF Paris, France, Bibliothèque nationale de France
- BodL Oxford, UK, Oxford University, Bodleian Library
- BrCh* Great Britain. Crown. *Bristol Charters.* 2 Vols. Ed. N. D. Harding, & H. A. Cronne. Bristol: BRS, 1930, 1946. Print. BRS Publications 1, 11.
- BRO Bristol, UK, Bristol Record Office
- BRS Bristol Record Society
- BSA Bibliographical Society of America
- CCR 1461–68* Great Britain. Public Record Office. *Calendar of Close Rolls ... Edward IV. Vol. 1. A.D. 1461–1468.* London, UK: HMSO, 1949. Print.
- CFR 1445–52* —. *Calendar of the Fine Rolls ... Vol. XVIII: Henry VI, A.D. 1445–1452.* London, UK: HMSO, 1939. Print.
- CFR 1452–61* —. *Calendar of the Fine Rolls ... Vol. XIX: Henry VI, A.D. 1452–1461.* London, UK: HMSO, 1939. Print.
- CPR 1327–30* —. *Calendar of Patent Rolls ... Edward III. A.D. 1327–1330.* London, UK: HMSO, 1891. Print.

- CPR 1461–67* —. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... Edward IV, A.D. 1461–1467*. London, UK, 1897. Print.
- CPR 1467–77* —. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... Edward IV, Henry VI. A.D. 1467–1477*. London, UK: HMSO, 1900. Print.
- CPR 1476–85* —. *Calendar of the Patent Rolls ... Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III. A.D. 1475–1485*. London, UK: HMSO, 1901. Print.
- Dig. Scr.* *Digital Scriptorium*. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA. Web. <http://www.digital-scriptorium.org>.
- EHD 4* Myers, Alec R., ed. *English Historical Documents. Vol. 4: 1327–1485*. 2nd ed. London, UK: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- FL Cat.* Free Library of Philadelphia. Medieval Manuscripts. 2015. Web. <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/medievalman/ShelfMarkList.cfm>.
- GRB* Bristol (England). *The Great Red Book of Bristol*. 5 Vols. Ed. Edward William Wodehouse Veale. [Bristol]: BRS, 1931–53. Print. BRS Publications 2, 4, 8, 16, 18.
- GWB* —. *The Great White Book of Bristol*. Ed. Elizabeth Ralph. Bristol: BRS, 1979. Print. BRS Publications 23.
- HoC* Roskell, J. S., Linda Clark, & Carole Rawcliffe, eds. *The House of Commons 1386–1421*. 4 Vols. Stroud: Alan Sutton for the History of Parliament Trust, 1992–3. Print.
- HP* Wedgwood, Josiah Clement, ed. *History of Parliament: Biographies of the Members of the Common House, 1439–1509*. 2 Vols. London, UK: HMSO, 1936–8. Print.
- HPO* Great Britain & History of Parliament Trust. *History of Parliament Online*. 2015. Web. <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>.
- HLS Coll.* Harvard Law School. [Collection of Manuscript Magna Cartas and Early English Statutes], ca. 1300–1500. Web. <https://listview.lib.harvard.edu/lists/hollis-014294028>.
- ITL* London, UK, Honourable Soc. of the Inner Temple, Inner Temple Library
- LIL* London, UK, Honourable Soc. of Lincoln's Inn, Lincoln's Inn Library
- LMA* London, UK, City of London Corporation, London Metropolitan Archives

- LRB* Bristol (England). *The Little Red Book of Bristol*. 2 Vols. Ed. Francis B. Bickley. Bristol: W. Crofton Hemmons, 1900. Print.
- LUNA* Bodleian Library. LUNA. Vers. 6.3.6.2. Web. <http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet>.
- MED* Middle English Dictionary. 2001. *Middle English Compendium*. Ed. Frances McSparran, *et al.* University of Michigan. 22 Feb. 2006. Web. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.
- MTR* Honourable Soc. of the Middle Temple. *Middle Temple Records*. 4 Vols. Ed. Charles Henry Hopwood. London, UK: Butterworth & Co., 1904. Print.
- NLS* Edinburgh, UK, National Library of Scotland
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., 2008—. Web.
- OED* *OED Online*. Oxford: OUP, 2015. Web.
- PROME* Great Britain. Parliament. *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275–1504*. Ed. Chris Given-Wilson, *et al.* Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer for TNA & History of Parliament Trust, 2005. Print. [Leicester]: Scholarly Digital Editions. Web.
- Return* —. *Return of the Name of Every Member of the Lower House to the Parliaments of England ... 1213 to 1874. Part I*. London, UK, 1878. Print. Parliamentary Papers.
- SR* Great Britain. Crown. *The Statutes of the Realm* Ed. T. Edlyn Tomlins, *et al.* 11 Vols in 12. London, UK, 1810–1828. Rpr. London, UK: Dawsons, 1963. Print. Making of the Modern World. Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005. Web.
- SRev* —. *The Statutes. Revised Edition. Vol. 1: Henry III to James II. A.D. 1235–6 – 1685*. London, UK, 1870. Print.
- TBGAS* *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society*
- TNA* Kew, UK, The National Archives of the United Kingdom
- Yale Morris* Yale Law School. Lillian Goldman Law Library. Morris—The Law Library Catalogue. N.d. Web. <http://morris.law.yale.edu/>.

CHAPTER 1

In England, the late medieval period was one of significant transitions in administrative and legislative theory and praxis, as well as in the rôle and status of legal professionals. Among the lasting material manifestations of these shifts were a proliferation in the volume and diversity of legal literatures. The most popular of the emerging genera were *Statute Angliæ* or ‘statute books’: unofficial, statute-based miscellanies “copied out in profusion” for consumers from multiple sectors of society (Hanna *London*, 48). From approximately 1280 through the end of the 1400s, these legal compendia were among the most frequently produced and widely disseminated books in England, outstripped only by the Judeo-Christian Bible; approximately 400 copies are currently extant (*ibid.*; cf. Musson “Law”; Skemer “Reading”). By the late fifteenth century, statute books “appear to have been in virtually ceaseless demand” (Scott *Later*, 1:66n26) among not only lawyers and law students, but also the aristocracy and landed gentry, churchmen and ecclesiastical foundations, members of the mercantile and artisanal classes and their guilds—even women (Musson “Law”, 99, 104–10; Skemer “Reading”, 114–15, 129; cf. Neville).

Despite this impressive survival rate, *Statuta Angliæ* remain remarkably understudied with the bulk of scholarly attention directed towards either the few thirteenth century copies, or a set of late fifteenth century, large format, *de luxe* copies distinctive for their heavy standardization and probable speculative production which, while ultimately involving a large number of scribes and illuminators, may have been orchestrated by a single artisan (Scott *Mirrore*, 46, 49–50; McGerr *Lancastrian*, 16, 21–23ff.). Emerging ca. 1470, perhaps in response to the aforementioned demand,

creation of these standardized volumes continued until *ca.* 1495–6 (Scott *Later*, no. 131) with approximately two dozen exemplars currently extant. Unfortunately, as we shall see, although these books have received a fair degree of scholarly attention, not every member of the group has been studied in depth, and numerous questions remain.

This thesis takes as its focus a member of this standardized group: Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 40, a large format (approx. 310 × 215 mm), three-volume, *Statuta Angliæ* (*Magna Carta* to 7–8 Edward IV) manuscript in Latin and Law French. Produced by multiple scribes and artists, this sumptuous set of codices boasts three historiated and 157 decorated initials,¹ with occasional foliate bar borders. Inclusion in the standard model group has led to fairly frequent citation of MS Richardson 40, yet research upon it has been extremely limited. In addition to reviewing the current scholarship on these volumes as a group—with attention to examining a number of key issues and clarifying or expanding upon some descriptions so as to enhance our understanding—I have endeavoured to establish a likely provenance for MS Richardson 40, exploring the ways in which both this specific manuscript and the broader codicological genre resonate with the life of the proposed original patron, Philip Mede (d. 1476),

¹ Historiated initials are enlarged letters infilled with an identifiable narrative scene or figure(s), typically related to the text; decorated initials in this manuscript are usually of the champ/sprynget variety, though some are inhabited. Like their historiated counterparts, inhabited initials are enlarged and infilled with human or animal figures, but their content does not pertain to the text (Brown). Champ initials are gilt letters upon coloured grounds with sprays of coloured leaves and other motifs extending into the margin; sprynget initials are coloured letters upon gold grounds with coloured leaves, *etc.*, spraying into the margin. Where the sprays extend to form a border, the initial is a vinet or demi-vinet (Orr and Driver, 106–9; *q.v.* fig. 2 and Appendix, *infra*).

merchant, twice MP, and thrice Mayor of Bristol, including the wider socio-cultural and institutional contexts in which he moved.

One important feature of these manuscripts is that they tend to have been produced through coordinated labour “by a large number” of artisans (Scott *Later*, 1:10) following a common model, possibly under the direction of a figure known as the ‘*Nova Statuta* scribe’ (*q.v.*, “The ‘*Nova Statuta* Scribe’”, *infra*). The persistence of this scribe and of two specific artists across the nearly two dozen surviving manuscripts, along with the astonishing degree of similarity between copies, is thought to point to speculative production (Scott “Caveat”, 62*n*76). This possibility is all the more unusual given the overt opulence of these large-format legal compendia which boast dozens of decorated and historiated initials and lush borders, all in gold and colours. Combining features of the bespoke and the speculative, they occupy a bizarrely liminal position among fifteenth century English codices.

Despite their shared schema, and the apparent centrality of this unknown copyist to their production, not all standardized copies consistently adhere to the prototype. Consequently, there is some disagreement among scholars regarding which elements of these manuscripts (initials, borders, contents, *mise en page*, etc.) are of greatest importance, and the precise boundaries of the category remain somewhat fluid. Nonetheless, a relatively undisputed, core set of standard model manuscripts recurs in the research (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 25–26, *passim*; *q.v.* Table 1, *infra*). Before outlining their contents and format in more detail, we will explore possible circumstances under which they were fabricated.

MANUSCRIPT PRODUCTION IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

By *ca.* 1400, the majority of England's illustrated books were made in commercial shops as bespoke products, crafted under "specific commission" for ownership by private households and individuals, or lay institutions (Scott *Later*, 1:31, 28). Production—which potentially drew upon nearly half a dozen trades and associated workshops that may or may not have been in close proximity to one another or to a patron's home—was overwhelmingly centred in London, where book artisans' workplaces tended to "cluster ... together" in particular areas, with adjacent establishments possibly functioning as a *de facto* "over-arching 'shop'" (*ibid.*, 1:53; *cf.* Kwakkel "Commercial", 180–81; Christianson *Directory*, 31–33).² Doubtless, the 1403 merger of the City's mistery of limners³ and the text writers' guild⁴ was a pragmatic matter, "reflect[ing] the reality of daily operations in a limner's shop" which entailed frequent interaction with a range of artisans (Scott *Later*, 1:27). Given this context, in tandem with the tendency for some limners or stationers to own and control multiple shops,⁵ a single individual taking on the rôle of "organizing entrepreneur" to subcontract a client's order to other artisans seems a natural development (*ibid.*, *cf.* 1:66). Enhancing the plausibility of the subcontractor hypothesis are the frequent affiliations

² Lynne Mooney contends that, during this period, a small number of freeman textwriters within the City of London "concentrat[ed] on the lucrative trade in the books most in demand"—such as statute books—leaving production of less popular works to moonlighting government scribes or to scriveners plying their trade in the suburbs (204).

³ A mistery was a guild or trade organization of artisans. Limners were artists specializing in the illumination of manuscripts.

⁴ The resultant body came to be known as the Company of Stationers. In London, the term 'limner' seems to have fallen out of use by 1461, though the artisans in question continued to ply their trade "until well into the sixteenth century" (Scott *Later*, 1:27).

⁵ For examples, *vide*: Christianson *Directory*, 59, 67, 69, 78, 87–88, 125.

between certain artists and scribes, the intensified specialization evinced in their products, and the survival, in some commercial manuscripts, of “instructions to multiple artisans working on different productions stages of a manuscript” (Kwakkel “Commercial”, at 181; *cf.* Scott “Mid-Fifteenth”; Orr and Driver)—a subject which we will revisit in chapter two.

STANDARDIZATION

The early 1400s gave rise to a new æsthetic austerity characterized by a cleaner, uncluttered page with more consistent, standardized layouts and reduced ornamentation⁶ (Scott *Later*, 1:23–24).

Accompanying this shift was the development of standard, text-specific iconography—a trend which “crossed all types of intellectual, social, and geographic boundaries in England” (*ibid.*, 1:52–57 at 52–53).⁷ Standardized pictorial series were developed for Missals, Psalters, and Books of Hours, leading Scott to suggest that “Sarum ‘Use’ may have extended unofficially to pictorial as well as textual matter” (*ibid.*). The tail end of the century seems to have brought the first faint hints of speculative book production. Although by no means a widespread practice in medieval England, a handful of texts are known to have been produced in this fashion, including *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (Scott *Mirrore*, 2n2), the prose *Brut* (Johnston, 3), and the ubiquitous Books of

⁶ Where figural work did occur, it tended to be highly stereotyped with a shrunken depth of field, marked linearity, and “intense, badge-like colours” (Scott *Later*, 1:48). This “resolutely flattened” style—which is deployed in the standardized statute books—remained dominant until the 1470s (*ibid.*, 1:61, 50).

⁷ In some cases, “interdiction or sense of appropriateness” may have influenced both the techniques and the imagery selected for usage. For instance, while both pen-work drawings and devotional texts such as Psalters, Pontificals, and Missals were remarkably popular in the later 1400s, it appears that the two were kept distinct: apart from a single exception (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 83, (a Missal)) no devotional manuscripts containing pen-work drawings are known (Scott *Later*, 1:52–53).

Hours (Duffy). A number of intersecting factors likely influenced the trajectory of this emerging commercial strategy.

On an individual level, the impulse towards standardization could have been at least partially buoyed by a desire for efficiency since, by our period, the demand for illustrated books began to exceed the capacity of the supply of native artisans. Tellingly, contributions by alien artists working in England were not uncommon in the fifteenth century: nearly 25% ($n = 31$) of the manuscripts surveyed by Scott feature work by limners known to be foreign (primarily French, with smaller Flemish and Dutch contributions), and it is clear that, in the majority of cases, these artists were working in England, often collaborating with native producers. Guild regulations, government legislation, and pervasive xenophobia may have challenged would-be emigrants, but the market evidently supplied sufficient demand to justify the move (Scott *Later*, 1:62–63). The guilds themselves possibly exerted a standardizing influence through the rôle of the guild apprenticeship system, or by establishing standards for popular texts (*ibid.*, 1:53–54),⁸ thereby encouraging, even if inadvertently, development of innovative production methods such as those deployed by the *Nova Statuta* scribe and his colleagues.⁹

The strangeness of the standardized *Nova Statuta* manuscripts, and the ongoing discussion regarding the intricacies of their manufacture, evoke another scholarly debate regarding a similarly curious volume, the ‘Auchinleck Manuscript’ (NLS, Advocates’ MS 19.2.1; London, *ca.* 1330s) (Burnley and Wiggins, eds.). Attention was drawn to the production context of this large anthology

⁸ Concurrently, royal charters underwent “striking” transformation, with ornate colours and gold displaced by “uniform” pen and ink work, and a new standardization in both style and content (Danbury “Decoration”, 172).

⁹ For very sound cautions regarding the applicability of the concepts of ‘mass production’ and ‘specialization’ to the late medieval book industries, *vide* Scott *Later*, 1:58–59.

—which is among “the most important surviving manuscripts of medieval English poetry” (Pearsall and Cunningham “Introduction”, vii)—by Laura Hibbard Loomis who claimed that it had been created in a “bookshop”, or secular scriptorium—that is, an atelier.¹⁰ While Loomis recognized that “the cooperative nature of the enterprise” entailed production within “a laicized operation modelled on a monastic scriptorium” (Hanna *London*, 75), her work has been criticized for indulgence in romantic generalizations at the expense of rigorous analysis. In particular, the existence of ateliers in fourteenth century England has not been established (Porcheddu).

By contrast, Derek Pearsall (in Pearsall and Cunningham) contended that Auchinleck constitutes an early example of ‘piecework production’ in which a stationer or patron acts as a subcontractor, parcelling out allotments of a book to individual artisans working in different locations whose labour he coordinates. This became a widespread production method in fifteenth century England (Doyle and Parkes).¹¹ Timothy A. Shonk posits a now widely accepted, modified version of the piecework theory according to which Auchinleck was mainly copied by a single scribe who drafted other artisans for assistance where necessary, and relied on piecework contributions to fill in some sections (“Study”). Shonk’s hypothesis thus notes that an artisan engaged in the creation of a given manuscript might concomitantly, albeit intermittently, act as a subcontractor, organizing labour upon it, and perhaps upon related manuscripts—as appears to be the case with the standardized *Nova Statuta* books. Strengthening this theory are the “analogies [to

¹⁰ As Ralph Hanna notes, Loomis’ work has “often been read as if [it was] *The Sun*—for the flashy bits and page 3” (*London*, 75), and, in fairness, Loomis did not clarify whether the artisans of her ‘bookshop’ worked “under one roof or not” (“Auchinleck”, 597). Nonetheless, her language throughout does appear to allude to an atelier, and is usually so construed.

¹¹ Note that aspects of this model are being challenged somewhat by Mooney and Stubbs (*Scribes*).

this method found] in early legal manuscripts” (Hanna *London*, 77), such as the late thirteenth century statute book, Huntington, MS HM 25782 (217 × 147 mm).¹²

Despite occasional mention of ateliers in the literature on standardized *Nova Statuta*—e.g. Wieck’s reference to “‘mass production’ by a single workshop” (96; cf. Scott *Later*)—late fifteenth century standardized statute collections were more plausibly fabricated via the piecework subcontracting approach outlined by Doyle and Parkes, possibly under the direction of the *Nova Statuta* scribe, in a scenario similar to that envisaged by Shonk for the Auchinleck manuscript. Such a hypothesis better accounts for the high production volume of these manuscripts—strongly suggested by their extant numbers given what is known of the survival rates for medieval manuscripts—, the period in which they were created, the recurrence of a few core artisans across multiple copies, and the conspicuous inter-copy similarities.

¹² Indeed, piecework-style approaches remain common in legal publishing, with ‘looseleaf’ and ‘pocket part’ subscriptions in wide use (Boston College; *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Pocket part”). While ongoing, piecemeal assemblage of the physical common law codex has thus persisted for at least 800 years, its demise seems to be fast approaching (Mirando) and little mourned (Lambert; Munro “Death”).

CONTENTS AND BASIC FORMAT OF THE STANDARD MODEL

FORMAT

All standard model *Nova Statuta* manuscripts are large format—*sc.* ‘folio sized’, averaging 341 × 242 mm; written space: 222 × 149 mm¹³—, *de luxe* codices, primarily in Law French with some Latin, though a few copies contain the odd enactment in Middle English, *e.g.* TNA, MS E164/11. The statutes are always presented in a single column, which may range from approximately 30 to 40 lines, with running headers and marginal (roman numeral) chapter numbers, and paraps (usually red and blue) punctuating the text itself. A large decorated (usually historiated) initial, in colours and gold, graces the first statute of at least some reigns; these same opening folia also feature decorative borders in colours and gold. Smaller decorated—typically champ, spryng, or inhabited—initials, in colours and gold, with spray work (*q.v.* ‘Borders and secondary initials’, *infra*) introduce each of the statutes within reigns.

CONTENTS

At the textual core of these manuscripts lie the *Nova Statuta*: common English law enactments from 1 Edw. III (1327) through the fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries; a few copies also include

¹³ Of the core standard model copies, the tallest and shortest are TNA, MS E164/11 at 365–370 mm, and BL, Hargrave MS 257 at 300 mm (*SD*=22.64). The widest and narrowest are BL, Cotton Nero MS C. I at 265 mm, and Free Lib., MS LC 14.10 at 205 mm (*SD*=19.37). The tallest and shortest written spaces occur in BL, MS Lansdowne 274 at 245 mm, and in Houghton, MS Richardson 40 at 187–204 mm (*SD*=16.01). The widest and narrowest are found in BL, MS Lansdowne 522 at 175 mm, and MS LC 14.10 at 124 mm (*SD*=15.27). At the time of writing, precise measurements were not available for all manuscripts discussed in this thesis; these figures are means calculated from known measurements of core standard model copies; liminal copies and approximate measurements were excluded. For MS Richardson 40, the mean of all three volumes was used.

Vetera Statuta (enactments of Henry II, Edward I, and Edward II, along with so-called *statuta incerti temporis*)¹⁴ or solely *Magna Carta*. The unknown exemplar(s) employed by copyists of the standard model *Nova Statuta* closely “reflects divisions in extant statute rolls” (Scott *Mirroure*, 48), suggesting that one or more of these artisans had access to the rolls in Westminster—perhaps as a professional courtesy (*cf.* Mooney)—, or had regular contact with an exemplar carefully copied from them. Aside from common law statutes, other commonly incorporated texts are,

1. the *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*: an anonymous fourteenth century treatise providing a heavily idealized outline of English Parliamentary procedure (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 18–19; Scott *Later*, 2:345; Giancarlo, 2; *cf.* Maddicott *Origins*)
2. the *Tractatus de Senescalsia Angliæ*: another treatise, probably also dating from the fourteenth century (Taylor, 314–16; Valente, 128, 137; Weber, 160), on the responsibilities and authority of the seneschal of England (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 18–19; Scott *Later*, 2:345)
3. an abridgement of, or table of capitula to, the statutes: a chronological listing of the statutes and their chapters found in *Nova Statuta* (Skemer “Reading”, 123)
4. an index to the statutes: subject indices in medieval English legal compendia occur in three main versions: *Assisa-Xpien Court*—the earliest, providing modest coverage of *Vetera* and *Nova Statuta* through 3 Henry V (1415/6); *Accusations-Worsted*—a “far more comprehensive” index, but covering only *Nova Statuta* through 23 Henry VI (1444/5); and *Abiutacion-Utlagarie*—a late version, rarely found in manuscript,

¹⁴ The transition from *Vetera* to *Nova statuta* occurred soon after the eponymous legislative shift. Although the terminological distinction between the two arose with Coke (*Institutes* II, IV), his usage reflected long-established judicial theory and praxis (*cf.* Pronay and Taylor, 18–19).

which incorporates the Latin iteration of the *Expositiones Vocabulorum* known as the *Sok–Averpeny* index, and covers both *Vetera* and *Nova Statuta* (Skemer “Reading”, 124–25 at 124). Subject indices in standard model *Nova Statuta* are usually the *Accusations–Worsted* version (Ker, 1:126, 140, *et passim*), though at least one copy (LIL, MS Hale 183) contains the *Assisa–Xpien Court* index (Ker, 1:138).

The above texts may have been proffered as optional ‘add-ons’ for extra purchase since they were copied in separate gatherings, sometimes diverge in stylistic details from the main volume, do not occur in all standard model copies, and occasionally survive as discrete manuscripts (Scott *Mirrore*, 47; McGerr *Lancastrian*, 22–23; *cf.* Skemer “Reading”, 124). For example, Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 32.1 is a short manuscript closely adhering to the style and format of standard model *Nova Statuta*, but containing only the *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*; Scott believes that it may have originally been part of BodL, MS Hatton 10 (*Later*, 2:345).

In addition to these textual accessories, many copies contain multiple blank folia, often already ruled and lineated, *e.g.* Oxford, St. John’s College, MS 257, with twenty-one ruled and lineated blanks (Scott *Mirrore*, 68n1); and MS Richardson 40, with two. Presumably, their inclusion aimed to facilitate subsequent updating of the volume (Skemer “Reading”, 118–19; Ker, 3:701–2).

THE ‘NOVA STATUTA SCRIBE’

Research by Jeremy Griffiths, Neil Ker, Malcolm Parkes, Pamela Robinson, and Kathleen Scott has revealed that the hand of one scribe and the work of several artists recur throughout the group (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 16). This copyist, who has come to be called ‘the *Nova Statuta* scribe’ (*ibid.*, 26; Parkes *Hands*, 45n81; Robinson, 1:57), wrote a “fancy” albeit “ugly but clear legal anglicana”

characterized by “many hairlines and a deeply split *t*” (Ker, 1:19, 87), in conjunction with a Textura semi-quadrata variant with “distinctive ... treatment of final minims” (Parkes *Hands*, 45n81). The hand was originally noted by Jeremy Griffiths in an unpublished, but widely-cited, 1980 paper (*vide, inter alia*, McGerr *Lancastrian*, 16; Skemer “Reading”, 130), and first published by Neil Ker (1:19, 87, 140, 190), who identified it in six statute collections: BodL, MS Hatton 10 (*ca.* 1470 + *ca.* 1495/6 (Scott *Later*, 345; Scott *Mirrore*)); LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007 (*olim* ‘*Cartæ Antiquæ*’; *ca.* 1470–83 + *ca.* 1495/6 (Scott *Later*, 346 no. 132)); TNA, MS E164/11 (*ca.* 1496 (Scott *Dated*, 110)); ITL, MS Petyt 505—a somewhat earlier statute book (*ca.* 1452) in a different format (Scott *Mirrore*, 48)—; LIL, MS Hale 194 (*ca.* 1470 (Scott *Later*, 346), or between 1461 and 1471 (Robinson, 1:58 no. 107); and the third volume of Houghton, MS Richardson 40.

Upon textual and stylistic grounds, the latter volume has been dated to *ca.* 1468–69 (Wieck, 96–7; Scott “Late”) or *ca.* 1470 (Scott *Later*, no. 131; Harvard *Illuminated*, 24),¹⁵ placing it at the inception of the standard model. This date, however, is only accurate for the beginning of the final volume (Wieck, 96) which was partially copied by the main scribe of BodL, MS Hatton 10, and features an historiated initial by an illuminator both of the latter manuscript and of LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007 (Pächt and Alexander, 3:100)—both of which, as we shall see, are important members of the standard model group. By contrast, the first two volumes were produced slightly earlier, and do not quite adhere to the standardized style in all details.

¹⁵ While a few researchers have noted that the first two volumes are earlier in date (Wieck, 96; Scott “Late”), and one auction catalogue suggests a date of *ca.* 1460–70 (Anderson and Garland, no. 357), it appears that no scholar has endeavoured to date them precisely.

Between roughly *ca.* 1470 and 1492¹⁶ the *Nova Statuta* scribe was involved in the creation of approximately a dozen extant statute books (Parkes *Hands*, 45). Although not generally the primary copyist of the volumes in question, his hand's inclusion in so many late fifteenth century legal compendia suggests that he was a notable figure among the period's London book artisans, and could have played a rôle in developing the "more efficient", regularized approach that emerged during the century's closing decades (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 26; Scott *Later*, 1:345). In the aforementioned unpublished paper, Griffiths posited that this copyist may have been instrumental in establishing and organizing systematic production of the standard model manuscripts (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 16). The current scholarly consensus is that the *Nova Statuta* scribe and his colleagues were a London-based group of book artisans engaged in speculative production of statute books, plausibly under his direction (Scott *Later*, 1:345; *cf.* Scott "Late"; Robinson; Parkes; McGerr *Lancastrian*).

Subsequent research has expanded the number of manuscripts to which the *Nova Statuta* scribe contributed, and identified other codices that, while not copied by this scrivener, closely follow other features of those to which he did contribute, and appear to be part of the same standardized system of production (*q.v.* Table 2, *infra*). In addition, several other copies are more tenuously included among the standard model books, or might be at least attributed to our scribe, although they diverge from the standardized model in other respects. The status of these volumes is contentious. According to Malcolm Parkes, the copyist of Oxford, St. John's College, MS 257 appears to be identical with the copyist of TNA, MS E164/11, as well as that of ITL, MS Petyt 505; thus, the St. John's College manuscript possibly warrants inclusion within the group (*Hands*,

¹⁶ Scott, citing Griffiths, notes possible "temporal gaps" in the output of the *Nova Statuta* scribe during one or both of 23–27 Henry VI (*ca.* 1444–49) and 8–12 Edward IV (*ca.* 1468–73) (*Later*, 1:345).

45n81). Pamela Robinson, concurring with Griffiths, argues that LIL, MS Hale 71 (1488 × 1504) should also be added to the œuvre of the *Nova Statuta* scribe (1:64). Concomitantly, while agreeing with Parkes' assertion that the scribe of MS Petyt 505 also copied MS E164/11, Robinson rejects inclusion of a second Lincoln's Inn copy, MS Hale 194, contending that the latter manuscript was copied by a single scribe who is *not* that of MS Petyt 505 (1:57–8, 2:pl.56).

Complicating this, MS Petyt 505 contains statutes only up to 29 Henry VI (1450–1) (Scott *Mirrore*, 48). While the fact that Henry VI's post-1451 statutes likely only became available for copying after 1461 permits us to push production of this manuscript into the 1460s (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 27), MS Petyt 505 also diverges in format from the other copies in the list (Ker, 1:87). As Rosemarie McGerr observes, “[m]ore detailed discussion of the hands in these manuscripts and greater understanding of the variations in a single scribe's work over time are needed in order to determine the extent of the *Nova Statuta* scribe's work and influence” (26).

SECONDARY INITIALS AND BORDERS

In the preponderance of standardized *Nova Statuta*, each reign opens at a new folio, ornamented with a large decorated initial (discussed *infra*) and elaborate, typically foliate, border in gold and colours. Individual statutes within each copy, aside from the first statute of each reign (*q.v.*, ‘Historiated initials’, *infra*), open with three- to twelve-line initials, decorated in gold and colours. The borders were produced by up to half a dozen limners per manuscript, for a total of at least ten to twelve artists across the entire standard model group (Scott *Later*, 2:345). Unfortunately, the number of spray artists is not clear as the secondary initials in the standard model group have not received as much scholarly attention as some other features of these books. While there appears to be at least some overlap between the border limners, and the “spray artists” responsible for the

smaller, secondary initials opening each statute, these two decorative elements were not necessarily produced by the same artist(s) in a given manuscript. For instance, in Free Library, MS Carson LC 14.9(5) (*ca.* 1470 (Free Lib.)), all six borders are by a single limner who did not produce any of the historiated or secondary initials in the codex (Scott *Later*, 2:344–45).

Like the *Nova Statuta* scribe, the aforementioned limner appears to have been a “central figure” in London’s book trade until *ca.* 1483/4, following which his work is never found. Among his œuvre are at least six standard model statute books (*q.v.* Table 4, *infra*), along with a wide range of other texts, including BodL, MS Bodley 283, a distinctive copy of the *Mirrore of the Worlde* created *ca.* 1470–80—whence his cognomen, the ‘Bodley Artist’ or ‘Bodley Border Artist’ (Scott *Mirrore*). Despite this epithet, he appears to have also worked on decorative initials, as in BodL, MS Hatton 10, where he seems to be responsible for the spray initials at ff. 45–94^v, as well as at ff. 98–307 (*ibid.*, 47*n*9). In the statute books, his hand co-occurs with that of “at least ten illustrators ... and with a number of other border artists”; Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5) is thought to contain his “earliest work” on this codicological genre (Scott *Later*, 2:345). Borders by the Bodley Artist “*never* appear in the statute books ... after the border for the reign of Edward IV, which would have been made after the scribe had written through 8 Edward IV” (Scott *Mirrore*, 48). Since an exemplar for the statutes from 1–8 Edward IV were probably available no earlier than late 1469 or early 1470 (*ibid.*), the latter date thus provides a convenient *terminus post quem* for standardized *Nova Statuta* production. The accession of Edward IV seems to be a significant year insofar as it marks a turning point in multiple aspects of these manuscripts (Scott *Later*, 2:347).

All statute books which include work by the Bodley Border Artist were copied, in whole or in part, by the scribe of ITL, MS Petyt 505 (Scott *Mirrore*, 48) who, as we have seen, may be the

Nova Statuta scribe. This recurring correlation between the contributions of specific artisans appears to lend some strength to the speculative subcontracting hypothesis.

HISTORIATED INITIALS AND THEIR STANDARDIZATION

Nova Statuta adhering closely to the standardized model open the first full regnal year of each monarch with a sizeable historiated initial—at least eight to twelve, and up to sixteen lines (*e.g.* LIL, MS Hale 194 (Ker, 1:140))—, in gold and colours. The iconography depicts a crowned king, seated upon a canopied throne, bearing a sceptre and (usually) orb. Posed in full-frontal orientation, the monarch is flanked by secular and ecclesiastical advisors. This ‘standard king-and-court scene’ appears regularly “at the first regnal year of eight different kings in at least twelve” standard model statute books (Scott “Caveat”, 33; *q.v.* figs. 6–11, *infra*).¹⁷

The late fifteenth century standardized *Nova Statuta* were not the first *de luxe* statute books to be decorated with historiated initials of kings. While a significant proportion of early common law compilations are relatively plain—*e.g.* Huntington, MS HM 25782 (s. xiii^{ex}, 217 × 147 mm) (*Dig. Scr.*); and Harvard Law Library, MS 39 (*ca.* 1294, 203 × 146 mm) (HLS Coll.)—, larger format illuminated copies appear throughout the tradition—*e.g.* Harvard Law Library, MS 12 (*ca.* 1325, 330 × 225 mm) (*ibid.*); and BL, MS Egerton 656 (s. xiv^{1/4}, 230 × 155 mm) (BL Cat.). Even so, in non-standardized copies of both the fifteenth century and earlier, the infill of decorated initials can be remarkably diverse, often consisting of abstract or foliate designs, or portraying subject matter with no or little relation to law, governance, or the focus of the particular statute it decorates.

¹⁷ NB: McGerr asserts that standard king-and-court scene initials appear in eleven copies (*Lancastrian*, 48). The iconography was also incorporated into the earliest printed legal texts, such as John Rastell’s 21 December 1516 imprint of Fitzherbert’s *Abridgement of the Year Book* (Scott *Later*, 2:345).

For example, both decorated initials in BL, MS Egerton 656 (s. xiv^{1/4}, 230 × 155 mm) depict a master with students (BL Cat.), and the opening of *Magna Carta* at f. 20 in Huntington, MS EL 34 A 8 (s. xiv^{med.}, 130 × 86 mm) boasts a twelve-line initial, in colours and gold, inhabited by a wyvern¹⁸ (*Dig. Scr.*).

Enthroned kings do occur in non-standard model copies, albeit somewhat sporadically. Even when monarchs are depicted, however, details of the scene vary considerably both between and within manuscripts. BL, MS Lansdowne 1174 (125 × 80 mm), a statute collection dating from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, includes twenty-nine major initials, accompanied by three-sided borders with figural and grotesque decoration, all rendered in colours and gold (BL Cat.). Many of these initials portray the king enthroned, albeit in a medley of contexts and postures (e.g. ff. 3, 24, 39, 76, 134, 142^v), whereas others do not depict the monarch at all (e.g. ff. 19, 67^v, 159^v, 163, 164, 165).

Some degree of standardization in the historiated initials of these manuscripts began to emerge by the early 1400s with a more consistent use of kings, along with what appear to be recurring models, perhaps reflecting the broader impulse towards standardization in fifteenth century English book production. One notable example is Huntington, MS HM 19920, a large-format (348 × 230 mm) statute collection dated s. xv^{1/4} (*Dig. Scr.*; Dutschke *et al.*; cf. Scott *Later*, 84–5 no. 20).¹⁹ Each of its trio of seven- to eight-line historiated initials depicts a crowned king—ff. 1: Henry III, 173: Richard II, 227: Henry IV (*q.v.* fig. 5, *infra*)—, clad in ermine-trimmed robes,

¹⁸ A heraldic monster resembling a winged dragon with two legs (Woodcock and Robinson, 206).

¹⁹ As evinced by the note *examinatur per rotuli*, this book—copied by Richard Frampton and an unknown colleague—was verified against the Parliamentary rolls, strongly suggesting London origin (Scott *Later*, no. 20); on the practice of examining copies against the rolls, *vide*: Skemer “Reading”, 120–22.

grasping a sceptre, and seated upon a low platform or backless throne. Positioned at three-quarter profile, these figures gesture and gaze towards the text (ff. 1, 227), or up at the heavens (f. 173).

Their artist, known as the ‘Carmelite–Lapworth Master’ (Scott *Later*, no. 20), was also “the dominant illustrator” of ‘the Big Bible’, BL, MS Royal 1. E. IX (*ibid.*, no. 26 at 103).²⁰ Created at least a generation later, the historiated initials in the first two volumes of MS Richardson 40 provide a striking iconographic echo of this earlier version in the monarch’s solitude, as well as in the positioning of his body and (in vol. 1, f. 57^r) the direction of his gaze; *q.v.* figs. 3–4, *infra*. The inspiration of, or model followed by, the early illustrator(s) of the Houghton *statuta* is unknown, but the artist of vol. 1, f. 57^r appears to be somewhat influenced by either the Carmelite–Lapworth Master, or the Scheerre School, generally.²¹

By contrast, the historiated initial opening volume III of MS Richardson 40 uses the standardized king-and-court scene described *supra*. Nearly always found in standardized statute books from the enactments of 1 Edw. IV onwards (Scott *Later*, 2:345), the scene was replicated by “[a]t least ten, and probably as many as twelve” different illustrators across numerous *Nova Statuta* (Scott *Mirrore*, 50). In some copies, only a single artist, or a cluster of very closely related artists, was responsible for all or most of the historiated initials, *e.g.* Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5) (*q.v.* fig. 11, *infra*); BL, MS Cotton Nero C. 1 (*ca.* 1483/4 (Scott *Later*, 345)); and Holkham Hall, MS 232 (*ca.* 1483 (Scott *Later*, 347)). Others, such as LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007, feature up to four different artists. While the preponderance of these illustrators worked on multiple manuscripts, four

²⁰ 633 × 430 mm, *ca.* 1405–15, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=18457>. While earlier scholarship identified the limner of Royal 1. E. IX as Hermann Scheerre (BL Cat.), Scott asserts that its 143 initials were made by eight different illuminators striving “to produce a consistent, commercial product” (*Later*, no. 26 at 103).

²¹ On Scheerre’s ‘School’ or ‘Workshop’, *vide*: Spriggs “Unnoticed”; Scott *Later*, 2:109–10, *et passim*.

apparently contributed to but a single statute book—in each case, producing the initial for Edward IV. Further, in five standard model copies—BL, MS Cotton Nero C. I; BL, MS Hargrave 274 (*q.v.* fig. 6, *infra*); Holkham Hall, MS 232; LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007; and Yale, Goldman Library, MSSG +St11 no. 1 (*sic.*)—, a single artist or shop produced the first five (out of six) of these initials, only to abruptly disappear with the enactments of Edward IV (Scott *Mirrore*, 50).

The illustrator who took over at this juncture, well-known from other manuscripts, has been dubbed the Placentius Master due to his contributions to several texts by Italian astrologer and prognosticator Gulielmus Parronus Placentius,²² to wit, a copy of his 1499 *De Astrorum Succincte Vi Fatali*—BodL, Selden Supra 77 (1499), at f. 4—, and a brace of copies of his 1502 *Liber de Optimo Fato*—BL, MS Royal 12 B. VI; and Paris, BnF, lat. 6276 (both post-1491 to pre-1509) (Scott *Later*, 2:347). Although somewhat subpar by modern standards, his style seems to have been “well regarded by his contemporaries”, and Scott notes that he is the sole illustrator covered in her extensive survey “who can with some truth be described as a court artist” (*ibid.*): the Bodleian manuscript appears to be a dedication copy for Henry VII; MS Royal 12 B. VI was likely produced for the same monarch; and the Paris copy is dedicated to, and was probably made for, Henry VIII during his tenure as Prince of Wales (*ibid.*). In addition to the foregoing, the Placentius Master contributed to Holkham Hall, MS 232 (ff. 87, 128, 177, 193, 300^v); TNA, MS E164/11 (ff. 1, 39, 46); BodL, MS Hatton 10 (f. 336^v) (*q.v.* fig. 9, *infra*); along with a handful of other manuscripts, at least one of which also includes a variant on the king-and-court initial similar to those found in the

²² Usually known in England as William Parron, Placentius was attached to Henry VII’s court until leaving in disgrace after the death of the queen consort, Elizabeth of York, on her 37th birthday. Shortly before her demise, Parron had disastrously predicted that she would live to be 80 (*ODNB*, *s.v.* “Parron, William”).

statuta—as does the Paris codex listed *supra* (cf. Scott *Later*, 2:347). In statute books, his hand typically first appears with the accession of Edward IV. (On the other recurring illustrators, *q.v.* Table 3, *infra*).

Kathleen Scott wryly observes that “‘use of models’ is too weak a phrase to describe the process used in reproducing these king-and-court scenes; ‘slavish copying’ would be more accurate” (*Mirrore*, 50). The model was not a longstanding tradition: as discussed above, the basic structure of the standard king-and-court scene—an enthroned monarch, positioned centrally, and flanked by groups of advisors—is virtually unknown in earlier English legal manuscripts (Scott *Later*, 2:283). Instead, the iconography is believed to derive from a miniature in BL, MS Royal 18. D. II, a post-1455 copy of, *inter alia*, Lydgate’s *Troy Book* and *Siege of Thebes*, which was likely commissioned by Sir William Herbert, 1st Earl Pembroke, and his wife, Anne Devereux, as a presentation gift for Henry VI or Edward IV (BL Cat.).²³ At f. 6^r of this volume, the text of *Troy Book* opens with a large miniature that bears striking similarities to the *statuta* king-and-court scene, and may have acted as its pictorial prototype (Scott *Mirrore*, 50; *q.v.* fig. 8, *infra*). This same codex features work by the Bodley border artist, who limned at least half a dozen standardized statute books (*ibid.*, 50; *q.v.* Table 4, *infra*).

Despite this unabashed plagiarism, the iconography in some manuscripts—and particularly for initials opening reigns prior to that of Edward IV (Scott *Later*, 2:345)—has undergone modification (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 21). For instance, LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007 features eight initials by four different illustrators: artist A: ff. 37, 95; artist B: ff. 134^v, 157^v, 175^v; artist C: f. 236^v;

²³ The codex is among the British Library’s digitized manuscripts, and can be perused at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_18_d_ii_f006r; the catalogue entry may be accessed at: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8704>

artist D: ff. 273^v, 281. The similarity of the first three leads Scott to propose that they constituted a single ‘shop’, with artists B and C being junior colleagues of, or apprentices to, artist A; the work of artist D appears to be of a later date or from a different shop (*Later*, 2:346).²⁴ While historiated initials throughout the manuscript largely conform to the king-and-court scene, those by artists A through C deviate slightly in depicting the secular councillors in the striped robes worn by medieval common lawyers (*ibid.*, 2:346). Three of this manuscript’s artists produced king-and-court scene historiated initials in other standard model statutes: artist A in LIL, MS Hale 194 at f. 34; and in Yale, Goldman Library, MssG +St11 no. 1 at ff. 198, 235^v, 261; artist C in MS Hale 194 at ff. 98, 131, 153^v, 168^v; and artist D in MS Hargrave 274 at ff. 274, 339^v (Scott *Later*, 2:236). Of these, MS Hale 194, f. 34 departs from the standard more extensively in depicting the king seated upon a canopied throne, grasping a document as he consults with a cluster of tonsured advisors (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 21, pl. 31).

More striking departures from the standard are found in Goldman Library, MssG +St11 no. 1, and in MS Hargrave 274. The major initials in the Yale manuscript were created by three artists: A producing ff. 55, 139; B producing ff. 198, 235^v, 261; and C producing f. 358. All are historiated with monarchs, yet only the last artist used the king-and-court scene—artists A and B portray the king kneeling at a *prie-dieu* amidst a cluster of one to five courtiers (Scott *Mirrore*, 46n8)—, and this final initial, while “clearly influenced by the standardized model”, nevertheless depicts Edward IV bearing a sword rather than a sceptre (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 28, pl. 6).²⁵

²⁴ As we have seen, the notion of a ‘shop’ consisting of multiple artisans is problematic. The master and apprentices explanation thus seems more sound.

²⁵ The atypical iconography of the Yale statutes probably derives from the “very specific set of concerns” underlying the manuscript’s production (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 28); for further discussion, *vide*: McGerr.

Uniquely, f. 204^v of MS Hargrave 274 depicts Henry VI with an open book in his lap and surrounded by kneeling attendants, as angels descend from the heavens bearing a sceptre and crown (Scott *Mirrore*, pl.9; Scott *Later*, fig. 480), “doubtless a reflection of the contemporary campaign to have him canonized” (BL Cat.). This image constitutes the only known representation of heavenly messengers in a statute book miniature (Scott “Late”), and Scott cites it as an example of the “distortion” which manuscript patronage could impose upon standardized pictorial iconography or traditional cycles of illustration (“Caveat”, 32–46 at 32).²⁶ Moreover, the image “provides a fascinating glimpse of a cult belief superimposed, undoubtedly by the patron, on a pedestrian subject” (*ibid.*, 33). Appearing in a codex produced nearly two decades after Henry VI’s demise, the illustration is “almost certainly the product of the owner’s devotion” to the late king’s cult which surged in popularity during Richard III’s reign (1483–85), (*ibid.*, 34; *cf.* McGerr *Lancastrian*, 60–1). According to Scott’s reasoning, “It is unlikely that a professional illuminator who had made the scene many times would suddenly take it upon himself to change the iconography: the effect must be attributed to directions from the patron” (*ibid.*, 34). Unfortunately, while arms do appear in the borders at start of each reign (ff. 50, 118^v, 162, 204^v, 274, 328^v, 339^v), the precise identity of this book’s patron continues to be disputed.²⁷

²⁶ In addition to distortion, Scott lists two other ways in which patronage could impact pictorial conventions in medieval manuscripts: displacement and expansion–contraction (“Caveat”, 23–32, 47–49).

²⁷ The British Library catalogue ascribes these arms to John Gyll of Buckland, Herts. (*ca.* 1430–99). McGerr identifies them only as “Gille/Gylle” (*Lancastrian*, 33) in keeping with the label, ‘Gille’, appearing within at least one of the borders. Scott deems the arms ‘unknown’ (*Later*, 2:347); Baker previously agreed with Scott’s assessment (“Books”, 422*n*38), but recently altered his position, ascribing them to a later John Gille (d. 15 Mar 1546), and asserting that they are “not contemporaneous with the statutes” (*Men*, 1:751–2 at 752).

Precise correspondence between copies in medieval art tends to be quite rare. This is particularly the case in book illumination, where continual emergence of small discrepancies is normative, with exact facsimiles “requir[ing] special explanation” (Alexander “Facsimiles”, 61). Minor variations in the historiated initials of standardized statute collections are thus to be expected. In the case of standardized *Nova Statuta*, it is the degree of correspondence which is remarkable—especially when we consider the numbers involved. Covering multi-reign spans, with a major initial at the inception of each reign in the strict standard model books, and at the start of at least a few reigns in the or quasi- or partially standardized copies (such as MS Richardson 40), this group of eighteen manuscripts and one fragment provides in excess of one hundred decorated initials, only a small proportion of which deviate from the standard king-and-court scene.

Table 1 : Contents of standard model Nova Statuta manuscripts

Manuscript	IX	TC	VS	NS	MP	TS
Cambridge, MA, Harvard Law Lib., MS 29–30	●			1E3–8E4	●	
Cambridge, MA, Houghton, MS Richardson 40		●	●	1E3–8E4		
Holkham, Holkham Hall, MS 232	AW		●	1E3–11H7	●	
Kew, TNA, MS E 164/11	●			1E4–11H7		
London, BL, MS Additional 15728		●		1E3–4H7		
London, BL, MS Cotton Nero C. 1	●			1E3–1R3	●	●
London, BL, MS Hargrave 274		●		1E3–3H7		
London, BL, MS Lansdowne 522		●		1E3–8E4	●	●
London, ITL, MS Petyt 505	AW			1E3–29H6		
London, LIL, MS Hale 71	AW			1E3–3H7		
London, LIL, MS Hale 183	AX	●		1E3–19H7		
London, LIL, MS Hale 194	AW			1E3–29H6		
London, LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007	AW			1E3–11H8		
New Haven, Yale, Goldman Lib., MssG +St11.1	AW			1E3–1R3	●	●
Oxford, BodL, MS Hatton 10 *	●		●	1E3–11H7	●	●
Oxford, St. John's College, MS 257	AW			1E3–11H7		
Philadelphia, Free Lib., MS LC 14.9(5)	?	?		1E3–8E4	●	●
Philadelphia, Free Lib., MS LC 14.10	AW			1E3–3H7		
Fragment: single fol. of 1 Henry VII				1H7		

IX = Index (AW : Accusations–Wurstedes , AX : Ass' de no dis'–Xrīen Court , ● : unknown)

TC = Table of capitula to the statutes

VS = *Vetera Statuta*

NS = *Nova Statuta*

MP = *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*

TS = *Tractatus de Senescalsia Angliæ*

* Chicago, Newberry Lib., MS 32.1, consisting only of tracts, was likely part of MS Hatton 10 (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 22)

Table 2 : Standard model Statuta manuscripts copied in whole or in part by the Nova Statuta scribe

Manuscript	Supported by	Contested by
Cambridge, MA, Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. III	Ker; Parkes	
Holkham, Holkham Hall, MS 232	Parkes	
Kew, TNA, MS E 164/11	Ker; Parkes	
London, BL, MS Cotton Nero C. I	Parkes	
London, BL, MS Hargrave 274	Parkes; Scott	
London, ITL, MS Petyt 505	Ker; Parkes	Scott; McGerr
London, LIL, MS Hale 71	Robinson	
London, LIL, MS Hale 183	McGerr	
London, LIL, MS Hale 194	Ker; Parkes	Robinson
London, LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007	Ker; Parkes	
New Haven, Yale, Goldman Lib., MSSG +St11.1	Parkes; Scott; McGerr	
Oxford, BodL, MS Hatton 10	Ker; Parkes	
Oxford, St. John's College, MS 257	Parkes; Robinson	
Philadelphia, Free Lib., MS LC 14.9(5)	Parkes; Scott	
Fragment: single fol. of 1 Henry VII	Ker; Scott	

Table 3 : Recurring artists of historiated initials in standard model Nova Statuta

Manuscript	1	2*	3	4	5†	6	7	ot‡
Cambridge, MA, Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. III							●	1
Holkham, Holkham Hall, MS 232					●			2
Kew, TNA, MS E 164/11					●			
London, BL, MS Cotton Nero C. I						●	●	1
London, BL, MS Hargrave 274				●	●			
London, LIL, MS Hale 183								§
London, LIL, MS Hale 194	●		●					
London, LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007	●	●	●	●				
New Haven, Yale, Goldman Lib., MSSG +St11.1	●							2
Oxford, BodL, MS Hatton 10					●		●	
Oxford, St. John's College, MS 257						●	●	
Philadelphia, Free Lib., MS LC 14.9(5)							●	1
Fragment: single fol. of 1 Henry VII					●			

* Despite contributing to only one statute book, Artist 2 has been included due to his close association with artists 1 and 3. The trio produced very similar work, and Artists 2 and 3 seem to be apprentices to Artist 1 (Scott *Later*, 2:346).

† Artist no. 5, dubbed the 'Placentius Master' by Kathleen Scott, seems to have been particularly sought-after and contributed to numerous extant manuscripts in various genera (*Later*, 2:347).

‡ This column indicates the number of other illustrators producing major initials in a given codex.

§ MS Hale 183 features standard king-and-court initials throughout; however, whether the illustrator responsible for them worked on other statute books is not clear (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 48).

|| Artist no. 6's contribution to MS Hatton 10 occurs in the lower border of f. 43, rather than in an initial.

Table 4 : Recurring border artists in standard model Nova Statuta manuscripts

Manuscript	1*	2	3	ot†
Cambridge, MA, Harvard Law Lib., MS 29–30	○			Y‡
Cambridge, MA, Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. III			●	Y‡
Holkham, Holkham Hall, MS 232	●			2
Kew, TNA, MS E 164/11		●		
London, BL, MS Cotton Nero C. I	●			
London, BL, MS Hargrave 274		●		
London, LIL, MS Hale 71	○			
London, LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007	●		●	2
New Haven, Yale, Goldman Lib., MssG +St11.1	●			6
Oxford, BodL, MS Hatton 10	●		●	1
Oxford, St. John's College, MS 257				6
Philadelphia, Free Lib., MS LC 14.9(5)	●			
Philadelphia, Free Lib., MS LC 14.10	○			1+

* The 'Bodley Border Artist'. Manuscripts marked ● contain borders by this limner. Those marked ○ include borders that are "close in style" to those of the Bodley Artist; they may or may not be from his hand and constitute "questionable attributions to his œuvre" (Scott *Mirrore*, 67–8n8 at 67).

† This column indicates the number of other limners contributing to borders in a given codex.

‡ These manuscripts contain borders by one or more additional limners; their precise numbers are unclear.

CHAPTER 2

While the original provenance has been established for a fairly high proportion of late fifteenth century standardized *Nova Statuta*, the question of MS Richardson 40's medieval ownership has remained unanswered despite the inclusion of arms in all three volumes of the manuscript: Azure a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent.²⁸ Hitherto, these arms have remained “unidentified” (de Ricci, 2:1854; Baker *Early*, 39). As I will show, internal and external evidence strongly suggest that they belonged to Philip Mede (d. 1476), merchant, twice MP, and thrice Mayor of Bristol, or possibly to his son, Richard (d. 1491). Surviving records show that Philip became a highly prominent and wealthy member of Bristol's civic magistracy, and would certainly have possessed the means and motivation to purchase an ostentatious law book. This chapter will focus upon presentation of internal and external evidence supporting these claims, including the contexts in which Mede senior, who was likely not a lawyer, may have made use of a codex like MS Richardson 40, along with a detailed discussion of Bristol's legal, civic, and social milieux

ON ARMS AND AUDIENCES

In total, at least eleven members of the standard model group include arms—or, in the case of BL, MS Additional 15728, and that of LIL, MS Hale 183, an empty shield for later inclusion of arms—nine of which have been identified by scholars (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 33). The evidence suggests that artisans producing these books may have directed their product towards two primary audiences.

²⁸ I have elected to respect current praxis of England's College of Arms, according to which blazons are to be unpunctuated, with capitalized tinctures and charges (Woodcock and Robinson, 74).

The first of these appears to have been non-legal practitioners of elevated socio-economic status with a marked interest in the common law.

Standardized *Nova Statuta* within this first group are LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007, originally the property of John Neville KG, Earl of Northumberland, 1st Marquess of Montague, and younger brother of Warwick the Kingmaker (*ibid.*, 31–34; *ODNB*); Holkham Hall, MS 232 which bears arms associated with Lord High Treasurer Walter Blount KG (*ca.* 1416–1474), 1st Baron Mountjoy (*cf.* Baker *Men*, 1:888–89); and Yale, Goldman Library, MssG +st11 no. 1. Some folia in the latter codex boast the arms of Margaret of Anjou, queen consort of Henry VI (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 31, 33, pl. 1–3+5–6). Rosemarie McGerr very persuasively argues that Margaret commissioned the manuscript for her only son, Edward of Westminster, Prince of Wales (*ODNB*), prior to his 1471 death at the Battle of Tewkesbury (*Lancastrian*; “Statute”).

The second, larger audience was composed of individuals with a significant degree of involvement with the law in a professional or quasi-professional capacity.²⁹ One example is Sergeant-at-law and Middle Temple benchers William Calow J (CP) (d. Jul. 1487), who probably owned BL, MS Cotton Nero C. I (Baker “Books”, 416, 422; Ives, 456; Seipp, xv). Other statute books in this group are BodL, MS Hatton 10, apparently commissioned by Sergeant-at-law and Inner Templar Thomas Pygot (d. 1520) (Baker “Books”, 422n86); and Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5), which bears the arms of Sir Richard Molyneux (1396–1439) and his wife, Jane Haydock, and likely belonged to their son, Gray’s Inn benchers Thomas Molyneux (d. 1493), Attorney General to Edward IV (Baker *Men*, 2:1106). Institutional patronage is possibly reflected in LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007 which features the arms of the City of London throughout (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 31–34, pl. 37).

²⁹ In this period, the legal professions still remained somewhat fluid, and not every individual engaged in the practice of law was a professional lawyer (*i.e.*, *legis peritus*) (Baker *Men*, 1:12–17).

As with other medieval manuscripts, provenance identification for statute books tends to be a complex and unavoidably speculative enterprise. BL, MS Lansdowne 522 may contain the arms of John Elyrington (Baker *Men*, 1:632); both the British Library catalogue and Kathleen Scott (*Mirrore*, 67) deem the volume's arms "unidentified". The later borders of LIL, MS Hale 71 display the arms of Sir Gregory Adore (d. 1504), of Brantham, Suffolk (Baker "Books", 42), who rose from very "humble circumstances" to become an Inner Templar and Sergeant-at-Law (Ives, 105, 379, 452). The volume's earlier borders, however, depict the arms of Keye; the identity of this individual is unknown (Scott *Mirrore*, 67n8). As discussed above, the precise owner of the Gille/Gylle arms in BL, MS Hargrave 274 remains contentious.³⁰

By the late 1400s, "[c]oats of arms had become a major visual sign of identity, social rank, and legal rights for members of the nobility, as well as merchants, landholders, and chartered groups such as cities, colleges, and ... guilds" (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 41–42). Display soon became so widespread that Henry V began to regulate their usage in 1417 (Wagner, 59–64). Inclusion of arms in statute books was common by the opening of the 1400s, and appears to have become standard practice by the fourth quarter of the century. Extant manuscripts suggest that depiction of arms in statute books—as in numerous other codicological genres—was widely accepted by mid-century.

Yet placement remained somewhat inconsistent (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 32, 43). LIL, MS Hale 71 situates arms within an initial on at least one folio (f. 67^r) (Scott "Caveat", 54n14), and Goldman, MSSG +St11 no. 1 has arms inside a quatrefoil on f. 55^r (*ibid.*, 21, 53n8). By the 1470s, however, embedding an owner's arms in the lower border of statute books seems to have become

³⁰ Holkham Hall, MS 232 bears different arms in every border (Scott *Mirrore*, 48); whether any of them have been identified was not clear at the time of writing.

highly normative insofar as producers were actively accommodating the practice by leaving space for the purpose (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 33). BL, MS Additional 15728;³¹ BL, MS Hargrave 274 (BL Cat.); LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007 (Ker, 1:19); TNA, MS E164/11 (Scott *Dated*, 110); BodL, MS Hatton 10; Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5) (Free Lib.); and the three volumes of Houghton, MS Richardson 40 all embed arms within the lower border.

The provenance of the remaining standardized statute books is more ambiguous. Three bear royal arms: TNA, MS E164/11 (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 32, 34–35, pl. 34); Oxford, St. John’s College, MS 257 (Scott *Mirrore*, 68n1); and an extant fragment of a standard model *Nova Statuta* consisting of the opening folio of the statutes of Henry VII (Scott *Mirrore*, 66n1). Potential implications of the appearance of royal arms in these books will be discussed in chapter three.

Owners of standardized *Nova Statuta* occasionally had arms added post-production. In a few cases, these were painted in atop existing decoration which was partially obscured in the process (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 33). Evidence of the practice abounds in the Yale statutes (ff. 55^r, 139^r, 198^r, 261^r, 358^r), where the arms of Richard Elyot J (CP), father of humanist scholar, Sir Thomas Elyot (*ODNB*), have been added over the existing royal arms on some folia (*ibid.*, pl. 1–3, 5–6). Other examples are BL, MS Cotton Nero, C. I; and BL, MS Lansdowne 522 (Scott “Caveat”, 53n7). Not all post-production additions effaced existing depictions, however. LIL, MS Hale 183, and BL, MS Additional 15728 both leave empty space for subsequent augmentation by an armigerous owner (McGerr *Lancastrian*, 33)—further evidence of the speculative nature of standard model statute book production. In like fashion, the arms in Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5) appear to be painted by “a

³¹ The Edward IV initial at f. 222^v can be viewed via BL Images Online at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/lqohlkd>

less skilful artist” (Baker *Legal*, no. 168), suggesting that they could have been added post-production.

The arms appearing in MS Richardson 40 are blazoned: Azure a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent. Researchers have remained silent regarding their ascription, or described them as “unidentified” (Baker *Legal*, 1:39 no. 116). As we shall see below, Sir John Hamilton Baker has recently noted a similarity between these arms and those displayed upon an extant medieval tomb, though his tentative ascription is not without problems (*Men*, 2:1080). Fortunately, MS Richardson 40’s producers have left a clue for the benefit of benighted researchers: embedded in the lower border of vol. II, f. 1^r, immediately adjacent to the arms in question, is a single, scarcely discernible lexeme: ‘*mede*’ (*q.v.*, fig. 1, *infra*). Rendered within the border, in gold shell paint in a minuscule fifteenth century hand, it seems to be either an explanatory gloss, or a discrete instruction to an artisan clarifying the arms to be added in the nearby shield. As its size, placement, medium, and hand suggest addition by a professional during production, the second explanation seems more probable.

Written instructions to limners in medieval manuscripts are not unheard of, and appear in a variety of forms in volumes with both complete and incomplete decorative programmes (Scott “Limning”; Hardman; Lawton). The majority of cases involve tiny guide letters inserted to mark placement of decorative initials—see, for example, Cambridge University Library, MS Dd. 8. 19 at f. 8^v (Orr and Driver, 121)—or other elements of the text, such as those used to mark placement of marginal capitula numbers in MS Richardson 40. More verbose directions also occur, both in Latin and in vernaculars, and range from relatively terse subject descriptions—for instance, the note ‘Doctor’ beside an initial historiated with St. Jerome in ‘the Big Bible’, at f. 221^v (Scott *Later*,

2:106); and ‘Cryst befor pylate’ at f. 29^r in Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.893, known as the ‘Beauchamp’ or ‘Warwick Hours and Psalter’ (London, 1430–45; hereafter ‘Warwick Hours’) (Orr and Driver, 112)—, to extensive, detailed directives—such as those in James le Palmer’s encyclopedia *Omne Bonum* (BL, MS Royal 6. E. VI–VII; London, ca. 1360–75) (Sandler), or the lengthy French instructions provided by the early humanist Jean Lebègue (1368–1457)³² in his manuscript translation of Sallust (BodL, MS D’Orville 141) (Hedeman; Alexander *Medieval*, 57–59).

Such annotations tended to be situated within the space allotted for a decoration, with the result that many were subsequently concealed by the miniaturist’s work (Orr and Driver, 121). Yet the upper, lower, and lateral margins were also common locales, perhaps due to an expectation that they would be trimmed away during the course of binding (Sandler, 551). The topmost margins of the Warwick Hours, for instance, feature directions to the limner which are partially (*e.g.*, f. 41^r) or entirely (*e.g.*, ff. 12^r, 17^r, 26^r) excised on certain folia (Orr and Driver, 121n44). In some codices, such instructions might be better understood as guidelines, for the evidence suggests that illustrators periodically ignored or partially deviated from them, as in Paris, BnF, Latin 968, f. 115^v where the limner has depicted a single figure instead of the pair stipulated in the instructions (Alexander *Medieval*, 71, *cf.* 113; Sandler “Notes”).³³

As indicated above, it appears that a medieval hand, likely that of a stationer or of an illustrator, inserted the lexeme *mede* adjacent to these arms, possibly after (*i.e.* as a gloss), but more

³² *Vide* Lebègue’s entry in *ARLIMA*: <http://www.arlima.net/no/192>

³³ Additional discussion of instruction to limners can be found in Friedman “*Monstres*”; Camille *Master*; and Alexander *Medieval*, especially ch. 3: “Programmes and Instructions for Illuminators” (52–71).

likely prior to or during the course of (*i.e.* as instruction) the image's completion. Indeed, several iterations of these arms are ascribed to different Mead(e)/Mede families during the medieval and subsequent eras. Canvassing known fifteenth century Mead(e)/Medes reveals one particularly promising candidate for the original patron of MS Richardson 40: Philip Mede of Bristol, or his eldest son, Richard.³⁴

THE MEDE FAMILY OF BRISTOL

The rise of the Bristol Medes appears to have commenced with Philip's father, Thomas. A merchant, Thomas sat as a juror on an Inquisition Post Mortem in 1428, and received commissions to collect taxes in Bristol and its environs in 1429, 1430, and 1436 (*CFR 1422–30*, 296, 333; *CFR 1430–37*, 287). By 1439, he was Bailiff of Bristol (Wells-Furby, 2:844 (E1/1/52 [SC 592])), becoming Sheriff of the same in 1452 (*CFR 1452–61*, 13). Although dwelling in Bristol, he possessed a second residence, dubbed 'Mede's Place', in the parish of Wraxall, Som. (Bryce, 357), and his 1455 will listed bequests of well over £16.10s. in monies;³⁵ plus four pipes of woad;³⁶ "two

³⁴ The spelling 'Mede' will be used for the Bristol-based family throughout since it appears with surprising consistency in the extant medieval documentation associated with Philip.

³⁵ The will also stipulates 10s. to "each order of mendicant friars"; Bristol had Augustinian canons regular—Victorines (est. 1140), Augustinian canonesses (est. *ca.* 1173), Augustinians (1313), Franciscans (1250), Carmelites (1267), and Dominicans (1227). If all are included in the calculation, the total rises to £30.17s.2d. In addition to the foregoing, Thomas left bequests to five different churches, four churchmen, and Bristol's almshouses. The only lay persons mentioned are his wife, Margaret; his daughter, Joan (Roger) Ryngeston; his handmaid, Agnes (who received five marks); and Philip.

³⁶ A pipe was a large container, "[t]ypically equal to two hogsheads or 63 wine gallons (105 imperial gallons, approx. 477 litres), but varying with the substance" (*OED*, s.v. "pipe, *n.*² 2"). Woad is "a blue dye-stuff prepared from the leaves of *Isatis tinctoria*" (*OED*, s.v. "woad, *n.*¹ 1").

whole woollen cloths, my best goblet with a cover, made of silver and gilded, and my best brass bowl”—the last three items constituting part of his bequest to Philip (TNA, PROB 11/4/41, dated 02 Apr 1455).

Thomas’ accomplishments apparently laid the groundwork for Philip’s comparatively rapid rise through the ranks of Bristol’s civic elite (*q.v. infra*). Philip’s year of birth is unknown, but he seems to have reached the age of majority by 1439, date of the first of his many known acquisitions of property. While a dearth of extant records undermines attempts to obtain a complete picture of his finances, he clearly flourished. His Inquisition Post Mortem reveals substantial estates throughout southwest England (TNA, C 140/55/23); and he was of sufficient means to loan large sums of money to the king, as he did in 1459 (*HP*, 583), as well as to act as a backer of the disastrous Sturmy expedition (Jenks; Fleming *Time*, 98).³⁷ Ultimately, he married and had at least three children with his wife, Isabella: Richard (d. bef. 15 June 1491), Isabel (*ca.* 1444–29 May 1514), and John (d. 1494).

Whilst John was educated at Oxford and became a cleric,³⁸ both Richard and Isabel lived secular lives. Richard Mede first married Elizabeth, daughter of his father’s close associate John Sharpe and John’s wife, also named Elizabeth. The Sharpes were also members of Bristol’s

³⁷ This 1457–8 expedition to the Aegean, led by Bristol merchant and mayor Robert Sturmy, aimed to establish direct links with the Ottoman Empire and to break the Italian monopoly of Mediterranean trade. Although initially successful, the fleet was attacked by Genoese on the return voyage, with two of its three ships, and many crew members—including Sturmy—were lost.

³⁸ M.A. (St. Edmund Hall, Oxon.); Rector of Wraxall, Som.; warden of St. Mary Redcliffe Church; and later Prior of St. John the Baptist, Bristol (Bath and Wells *Beckington*, 296 no. 1102, 499 no. 1708; *idem Fox*, 92; *idem Stillington*, 10–11 no. 61; BRO, P/St.MR/5163/270). “Pluralism and non-residency were routinely permitted for clerics” for sundry reasons (Hicks *Political*, 76).

mercantile aristocracy. John Sharpe the elder, who was among the town's electors on four occasions, had served as Sheriff, Mayor (1415–16, 1432–3, 1439–40, 1450–51), and MP (1429–30, 1432, 1442) of Bristol (*HP*, 758). His son, John the younger, thrice elector, was MP (1447, 1449, 1449–50, and 1461–2) of Bristol (*HP*, 758), and sat on at least one commission of inquiry (*CPR 1452–61*, 225). Following the death of Elizabeth, Richard married Anne Pauncefoot or Pauncefort (*ca.* 1470–21 Oct 1512).³⁹ Anne's parents were Margaret—daughter of Sir Thomas Swynford and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Beauchamp—and Sir Thomas Pauncefoot (*ca.* 1410–*ca.* 1475), of Haresfield, Gloucs.,⁴⁰ Attorney Exchequer of Pleas by 1440, and MP for Gloucester (1447, 1449) (*Baker Men*, 1:208; *HP*, 668).⁴¹

Perhaps the family's most significant social *coup*, however, was the 1465 marriage of Philip's daughter, Isabel, to Maurice Berkeley (1435–Sep. 1506), younger brother of William, 12th Lord and 2nd Baron Berkeley, and subsequently 13th Lord and 3rd Baron (*de jure*) Berkeley in his own right

³⁹ Anne's sister, Joan or Jane, married George Beaumont, esq. (d. 1531); their eldest son, Sir John (*ca.* 1495–aft. 05 Mar. 1558) became Master of the Rolls, and his eldest son, Inner Templar Francis Beaumont J (CP) was the father of the dramatist of the same name (*HoC*, 4:25–7; *HPO*; *ODNB*).

⁴⁰ Thomas was the son of Alice, daughter of Sir Andrew Herle, and Sir John Pauncefort (1368–*ca.* 1445), of Crickhowell Castle, Brecon, and of Haresfield, Gloucs. (*HP*, 668). Pauncefort was Sheriff of Gloucester in 1422–3, 1426, and 1434, and of Herefordshire in 1437; and an MP (Gloucs.) in 1413 and 1421 (*HoC*, 4:25–7). He amassed substantial estates to which Anne was coheir (*Burke Landed*, 360; *idem Commons*, 2:75; *Bradney*, 4.1:130).

⁴¹ After Richard's death, Anne wed Bristol's Comptroller, Arthur Kemys, gent. (*ca.* 1452–1541) (*Baker Men*, 2:962; *Bradney*, 4.1:130). His was a legal family. A Middle Templar (*MTR*, 10), Arthur was retained by St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol; his brother, John, a member of Clifford's Inn, was active in the courts (*Baker Men*, 2:962); their father, Middle Templar Roger Kemys (d. 1485), of Siston, Gloucs., was the "man of lawe" retained by St. Ewen's, Bristol, from 1465 (*Ives*, 304). In 1515, Anne still held Richard's Bradstrete tenement for Kemys sold it in that year (*Leech*, 1:xxi, 32).

(Wells-Furby, 1:490 (A2/42/12 [SR 150])).⁴² Isabel Mede's marriage undoubtedly opened important socio-political doors for her father, and it benefitted the Berkeleys, as well. Despite the assumptions of some earlier writers,⁴³ in late medieval Britain, "[e]ven the greatest of aristocratic houses ... did not allow social snobbery to impede their chances of material gain" (Pugh "Magnates", 87). Even with the status-based tensions and anxieties of the period, the mercantile aristocracy gained "accept[ance] then as readily as now in county society" (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 79). For instance, by the 1470s, members of both of the noble families involved in the Talbot–Berkeley inheritance dispute⁴⁴ had wed daughters of Bristol's merchant aristocracy. This state of affairs demonstrates,

how socially significant the Bristol elite had become, in that the wealthiest among them were on occasion deemed to produce suitable matches for the local magnates. Whatever

⁴² Several Maurice Berkeleys were active in this era, and care must be taken to avoid conflating them. Isabel Mede's husband is not Sir Maurice Berkeley of Beverstone, Gloucs., knighted at Tewkesbury, and later Knight of the Body (Myers *Household*, 263n5); nor is he Sir Maurice Berkeley of Uley, Worcs. and Stoke Gifford, Gloucs. Maurice of Uley married Ellen, daughter of William Mountford, and died in 1464; his son, Maurice of Beverstone, married Anne, daughter of Lord Delawarre, and died in 1474 (Burke *General*, 45; *CFR* 14761–71, 127; *CFR* 1471–85, 21; Hammond *Battle*, 2; Hampton *Memorials*, 71 item 102, 201 item 336; Sutton and Hammond, eds. *Coronation*, 311).

⁴³ Berkeley steward and antiquarian John Smyth (1567–1640) (*ODNB*), citing an unspecified "old MS. [*sic.*] in Berkeley castle", asserted that William, Lord Berkeley disinherited his brother because the latter's marriage to the daughter of an alderman, was beneath the family's dignity—a claim reflexively repeated by a surprising number of historians (e.g. Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, 141).

⁴⁴ For details of this protracted and enormously complicated dispute, *vide*: Sinclair.

other attractions [these women] possessed, their fathers' liquid wealth must have been among them (Fleming *Time*, 229; *cf.* Hanawalt).⁴⁵

Regrettably, while Philip's known issue survived into adulthood, as did that of Isabel and Maurice, Richard was not so fortunate: with all of his children preceding him to the grave, his estates devolved to his sister, his second wife, and other intimates. The failure of a direct male line was quite a common occurrence in England, arising among a "striking[ly] ... high proportion" of late medieval mercantile and gentry families, largely due to epidemic-related child mortality (Thrupp, 200–1). Of successful mid- to late-fifteenth century merchants, between 28.0% ($n = 24$; 1468–97) and 38.7% ($n = 31$; 1438–67) left no direct male line heir (*ibid.*, 200). Bubonic plague struck repeatedly throughout the 1400s, and 1471–74 brought "a dangerous disease known as the 'styché'", along with an outbreak of *le fflyx*; both were new to England (*ibid.*, 201).⁴⁶ Based upon

⁴⁵ Despite the claims of Smyth and his successors, the evidence shows that fraternal enmity did not arise until over two decades after the Mede–Berkeley nuptials when, from February 1486, William commenced alienating his inheritance "in good earnest ... includ[ing] the lordship of Berkeley itself" (Wells-Furby, 1:xlix). It is this alienation which seems to be the true root of the quarrel between the brothers, not Maurice's marriage. Peter Fleming posits that Maurice likely confronted William regarding the ongoing alienation of family estates, resulting in a serious "altercation"; the spring 1476 death of William's children—Thomas (age 6), made Knight of the Bath the year before, and Katherine (age 2)—may have embittered William, as well (Fleming and Wood, 96). Regardless, so fierce was his animosity that his will lists generous bequests to even his cook, but not so much as a prayer for his brother (*ibid.*, 96–103; *cf.* Wells-Furby, 1:356 (A1/56/18 [GC 4358])). Maurice fought the alienations in court with great success, earning the epithet "Maurice the Lawier" (Smyth).

⁴⁶ The pre-existing 'bloody flux' was dysentery. Contemporary accounts distinguish it from the newly-emergent, but similarly-named, affliction (Shrewsbury, 148).

contemporary descriptions, *stychē*⁴⁷ was likely a streptococcal lobar pneumonia or other acute lung infection complicated by pleuritis, whereas *fflyx* was probably cholera (Shrewsbury, 147–8). There is thus a high probability that the offspring of Richard Mede—like those of William Berkeley, and so many other children of the pre-vaccination, pre-antibiotic era—were carried off by disease.⁴⁸ Regardless of the cause, however, it is the case that Philip Mede’s direct male line failed in his offspring’s generation.

THE ‘MEDE’ ARMS

Variants of Mead(e)/Mede arms—*viz.*, ... a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent—are attested with field Azure, Gules, or Sable (Roper, 6). Burke ascribes the Gules field variant to Philip Mede of Bristol, yet cites as a supporting reference the brass on the Mede tomb in St. Mary Redcliffe (*General*, 675). The brass in question, however, is uncoloured and lacks hatching or tricking;⁴⁹ thus Burke’s choice of tincture would seem to be groundless supposition. Henry Grazebrook attributes the Azure variant of the arms to the Parson family (1:92), yet Were, who specialized in the heraldry of Bristol and Gloucester, contends that Grazebrook errs—specifically, in “blazoning the trefoils as ‘slipped’ since that is the coat of Meade” (“Heraldry”, 276)—an

⁴⁷ “a sharp, localized pain” (*MED*, *s.v.* “stich(e”, *n.*). From OE *stice* ‘point, thrust’, it had narrowed to denote “acute spasmodic ... intercostal” pain by *ca.* 1000 (*OED*, “stitch, *n.*1”, I.2.a).

⁴⁸ Daughters might receive their inheritance as a dowry; in such cases, they are not always mentioned in wills. Adult sons, by contrast, are “rarely overlooked”. Even if they had received their portion, they were usually named in the line of succession to real property, or gifted an heirloom (Thrupp, 198–99 at 199). Sons’ sons tended to be remembered in like fashion (*ibid.*). Had they existed, we would expect the wills to reference them.

⁴⁹ *NB*: English heralds have “always” tricked, rather than hatched, arms (Woodcock and Robinson, 52).

identification which coincides with that made by Edmund Farrer, who also ascribes the Azure variant to Meade (2:390).⁵⁰

In his additions and corrections to Burke, Alfred Morant fails to extend our knowledge of these arms into the medieval or early renaissance eras (Humphery-Smith, 110). Arthur Fox-Davies—to whom Morant’s editor and augments, Cecil Humphery-Smith, refers the reader (*ibid.*, 206, 227)—not only provides no pre-eighteenth century information, but asserts that the field of the arms of the Earls of Clanwilliam, who bear the surname Meade, is Gules (2:1338), a conclusion supported by *Debrett’s Peerage* (93–4), and partially by Burke who asserts that the Gules variant was conferred upon Sir John Meade, ancestor of the Earls of Clanwilliam, in Ulster in 1626 while also ascribing the Azure variant to the same Earls (*General*, 675). Skey similarly reports that the arms of the Earl of Clanwilliam are registered in the Herald’s Office in Ireland as Gules a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils Argent (*sic.*, with Trefoils unslipped) (38). The Clanwilliam Meades will be revisited, *infra.*, after examination of a more recent examination of these arms.

In his entry for Richard Mead (*sic.*), Baker notes the similarity of the arms in MS Richardson 40 to those on the Mede brass in St. Mary Redcliffe, but perseveres in describing the arms in the manuscript as “unidentified” (*Men*, 2:1080; *cf.* Baker *Legal*, 1:116), apparently due to discomfort regarding the discrepancy between the tincture of the field in the codex versus that given in the sources he cites: London, College of Arms, MS M8A, and the 1575 Visitation of Cambridge (*Men*, 2:1080). According to Baker, both of the latter sources blazon these arms with a field Gules, and the College of Arms manuscript ascribes them to one Nicholas Mead of Gloucester (*ibid.*).

⁵⁰ Elsewhere, Were ascribes the Gules variation to Mead (“Heraldic”, 87). As we shall see, given the unregulated nature of medieval arms, together with the wide geographical distribution of the surname Mead(e)/Mede, such inconsistency is only to be expected.

Complete blazons of newly-granted patents of arms have only been recorded consistently since 1673 (Woodcock and Robinson, 35, 146). Some earlier information is available from the surveys known as Heraldic Visitations which commenced in 1530 with the joint aims of tracking the genealogy of armigerous families and regulating the use of arms (*ibid.*, 140, 145). Collection of information during the Visitations was conducted via interviews with those living at the time of the Visitation, along with any extant supporting documentation. By their nature, the Visitations cover only “medieval arms of families *who did not fail in the male line*” (*ibid.*, 146, emphasis added). As we have seen, the Bristol Medes failed in the direct male line during the final decade of the 1400s. The Visitation of Cambridge to which Baker refers was undertaken in 1575, and subsequently enlarged in 1619—approximately a century after Philip’s direct male line had been extinguished. Thus, the arms listed in the 1575 Visitation of Cambridge cited by Baker—*Gules a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent*—cannot have been originally assumed by, and passed down from, Philip or Richard Mede of Bristol.

As noted *supra*, Baker’s other source is London, College of Arms, MS M8A, f. 37^v (*Men*, 2:1080). Alas, College of Arms, MS M8A does not exist. The College’s L and M series—consisting of heraldic treatises, armorials, ceremonials, pedigrees, tournament score cheques, and other assorted genera—“is overwhelmingly a collection of the working manuscripts of Tudor heralds” (Campbell and Steer, 1:1–9 at 1), most volumes in the series being contemporary with the Visitations (*ibid.*, 1–6). MS M8 is a ceremonial, *temp.* Henry VIII, “almost certainly” copied by Clarenceux King of Arms Thomas Hawley (d. 1557). It contains, at ff. 27^v–56^v, a copy of an ordinance on the ceremonial duties of household officers and servants of *temp.* Henry VII upon which the surrounding

manuscript expands (*ibid.*, 123–29).⁵¹ The specific folio cited by Baker, 37^v, provides the tail end of “a description of the horse-trappers of the coursers in the procession bringing the body of Henry V into England from France”, and the opening of the section of the ceremonial outlining “the sitting of all dukes, earls, and barons” (*ibid.*, 124). No depictions nor blazons of arms appear on this folio.

The sole M series manuscript ending in *A* is MS M5A, a seventeenth century armorial containing the arms of towns and religious houses, along with “Scots arms” (Campbell and Steer, 105). The cataloguing system employed by the College of Arms can be somewhat opaque, with manuscripts of different series bound together in single codices whilst retaining distinct shelf numbers (*ibid.*, 15); for instance, MS M4 and MS M17 are bound within MS L18 yet preserve their own M series numeration (*ibid.*, 80, 104). It may be that this has engendered confusion, and Baker’s copyeditor has overlooked a slip of the pen for MS L8A, a late fifteenth–early sixteenth century text which, with MS L6, is bound in with MS L5*bis* (*ibid.*, 24–37).⁵² Within the L8A section of this volume, f. 37^v features Thomas Wriothesley’s early sixteenth century “memoranda on the offices of constable and marshal, and ordinances to be kept in time of war” (*ibid.*, 34); ff. 24–33, however, provide “names of noblemen and gentlemen of cos. Kent, Wilts., Glos., and Hants., with some blazons of arms” (*ibid.*, 34), suggesting that this may be the manuscript Baker intended to cite.

⁵¹ The text of the original treatise was published in Grose and Astle, 296–341; a nearly identical treatise of household ordinances can be found in Lort, *et al.*, 109–33.

⁵² Not to be confused with College of Arms, MS L5.

Regrettably, Somerset Herald of Arms in Ordinary⁵³ David Vines White confirms that the arms in question appear in neither manuscript, nor can they be found so ascribed in the *Dictionary of British Arms* (personal communication). Baker's reference thus remains a mystery. The absence of a record of any Tudor- or Elizabethan-era grant should not surprise us since, regardless of tincture, the Mede arms "are so simple that one would expect them to be medieval and not created by a grant of arms but to have been self-assumed", the usual way of acquiring arms in the medieval era (*ibid.*). While the Azure variant of the arms is *now* associated with the Clanwilliam Meades, the earliest record of the family bearing these arms is an Ulster King of Arms pedigree dating from the 1790s (*ibid.*), or possibly Skey's source cited *supra*. Further, the family itself, descended from seventeenth century Irish barrister Sir John Meade (knighted 1678), only rose to prominence at the end of the 1600s in Ireland (Hart, 71; Shaw, 2:258; *Debrett's*, 93–4). Even if the *mede* annotation in MS Richardson 40 is disregarded, there is no evidence that the ancestors of the Clanwilliam Meades bore these arms with an Azure field during the medieval era.

The relationship, if any, between Baker's Nicholas Mead of Gloucester (Baker *Men*, 2:1080), and Philip Mede of Bristol and of Wraxall, Som., is unclear. It may be that he is identical with Sir Nicholas Mead, chaplain of Newlonde, Gloucs., named in various documents from 1393 through 1429 (Gloucs. Archives, D2957/214/6 (1393); D1677/GG/192 (1429)). Conversely, he could be

⁵³ England's College of Arms is a hierarchical corporate body comprised of thirteen officers: three Kings of Arms: Garter (instituted 1415), Clarenceux (first referenced 1334), and Norroy and Ulster (first referenced 1276); six Heralds: Chester, Lancaster, Richmond, Somerset, Windsor, and York; and four "Pursuivants or junior Heralds". Heralds were part of the Household from the 1200s, but the College's charter of incorporation was first granted in 1484; it remains the only "part of the English Establishment which has never been reformed by Parliament" (Woodcock and Robinson, 139–40).

descended from or otherwise related to the Walter Mead who witnessed several property transactions in Bristol in 1429 and 1435 (BRO, MS P/St.MR/5163/225; MS P/St.MR/5163/227; MS 5163/146), or the Bristol weaver, John Mede, named in a local quitclaim in 1492 (BRO, MS 5163/181). Inability to clarify the manuscript Baker intended to cite leaves us without a date or context for his claim. Regardless, Nicholas Mead of Gloucester cannot be a lawful, direct male-line descendent of Philip Mede, for the dates of the documents naming him suggest that he was slightly older than Philip. Moreover, the name Nicholas does not appear in the extant wills of Philip or of his known relatives, including his father.

Fortunately, the Gules-field version of the Mede arms in the Visitation and in the mysterious reference to Nicholas Mead of Gloucester may still be reconciled to one another, and to the Azure-field iteration. One hypothesis is that the Gules variant was self-assumed by, and passed down from, Philip's father, Thomas (I), himself a prosperous, upwardly mobile merchant. Philip apparently had several brothers,⁵⁴ perhaps less politically and pecuniarily successful than him, at least one of whom—Thomas (II) (d. 1504 (TNA, PROB 11/14/201))—migrated to Essex and Somerset (where Burke places these arms) during Philip's lifetime. Judging by extant records, neither brother was involved with law or governance; whether either could have afforded a *de luxe* law book such as MS Richardson 40 is unknown. Still, the 1575 Visitation of Cambridge provides a pedigree for Thomas (III) Meade of county Somerset, son of John, son of Thomas (I), blazoning Thomas (III)' arms as Gules a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent (Clay, ed., 41). Thus the Gules

⁵⁴ He also had a sister, Joan, who wed Roger Rynghston; their son, the merchant Philip Ringeston (*ca.* 1455–1507) (TNA, PROB 11/15/614), followed in his maternal uncle's footsteps, becoming Mayor (1488/9) and Constable (1494/5) of the Bristol Staple, as well as Bailiff (1485), Sheriff (1493/4), MP (1497), and then twice Mayor (1498, 1506) of the town (*HP*, 717; *CFR 1485–1509*, 203).

version of the Mede arms can be ascribed to Philip Mede's extended family, albeit only from 1575. It may be that the Somerset Medes adopted the Gules variant during the sixteenth century. Even if the family had born them during the fifteenth century, the ascription of the Azure iteration to Philip is reasonable so long as he altered the tincture of the field in the arms for his own purposes. It could also be the case that the original field was Azure, and the Somerset Medes altered the tincture. Yet, as we shall see, modification by Philip seems more plausible. Is this conjecture viable?

"Arms are a form of property" which were granted to persons of every social status, and to women, from the outset (Woodcock and Robinson, 51, 36). While formal grants of arms emerged with the establishment of the College of Arms in 1484, during Philip Mede's lifetime, and for numerous decades thereafter, most arms were self-assumed, and bearers did not hesitate to alter them "at will" (*ibid.*, 4). "[V]ery similar charges, or even duplication of charges" are a common occurrence in early English rolls of arms (*ibid.*, 3), with the resultant confusion giving rise to disputes in the Court of Chivalry, such as the famous *Scrope v. Grosvenor* case of 1385–90.

Surviving fifteenth and sixteenth century records of grants of arms to "men of note" provide "strong evidence of social mobility in England. They support the traditional theory that the upper layers of English society were easily accessible to self-made men, as compared to lesser mobility in the rest of Europe" (Woodcock and Robinson, 49). Nonetheless, self-assumption of arms remained the rule into the period of the Visitations, even after grants of arms became a somewhat regular occurrence (*ibid.*, 4). Appropriating pre-existing arms—whether from a separate branch of one's family, or from another family entirely—, and then modifying some aspect of them was thus far from unorthodox in fifteenth century England, and self-adoption or self-adaptation would not be at

all unusual for a socially ambitious, upwardly mobile merchant with a desire to distinguish his line—such as Philip Mede.

Alteration of a tincture could be used, albeit less commonly, to differentiate the arms of a younger brother from those of the elder, or from their father, without obscuring the origin. For instance, the Nevilles of Hornby, Lancashire, being descended from a late thirteenth century younger son, adopted the arms Argent a Saltire Gules, a reversal of the senior line's Gules a Saltire Argent. Unfortunately, this approach carried the potential to generate confusion if the modified arms were already in use—indeed, “Neville of Hornby and Fitzgerald are indistinguishable” (Woodcock and Robinson, 66).⁵⁵ Nonetheless, such a situation could also account for the tincture of the field in the MS Richardson 40 arms, whilst reconciling it with the variant attested by Philip's brother's descendant in Somerset: during the course of his social climbing, Philip might have elected to set apart his own line by modifying the ancestral arms.

A third explanation is allegiance. “[H]eraldry has always been a mark of livery”, and medieval magnates clad servants and followers alike in heraldic colours (*ibid.*, 183). In some cases, the choice of tinctures in arms may reflect livery colours: Purpure and Azure for the House of York, Vert and Argent for Tudor. Somerset Herald Thomas Woodcock and Fitzalan Pursuivant of Arms Extraordinary John Martin Robinson specifically note that late medieval persons “whose arms contain Azure and Argent may have had a link with the House of Lancaster” (*ibid.*, 53).

⁵⁵ Fortunately, difference soon came to be conveyed via minor additions: in England, small symbols known as cadency marks (apparently the creation, *ca.* 1500, of Garter Herald John Writhe); in Scotland, labels and bordures (*NB*: in England, the bordure is an honour granted for some merit) (Woodcock and Robinson, 66, 68).

Philip Mede was a known Lancastrian partisan. Among his other offices, he sat as an MP for Bristol in the parliaments of 1459 and 1460–1 (*Return*, 352, 355).⁵⁶ The parliament of 1459—the first in three and a half years, and soon to be infamous as the *Parliamentum Diabolicum* (‘Parliament of Devils’)—opened on 20 November in the chapter house of St. Mary’s Priory, Coventry, the heart of the “Lancastrian power-base” (*PROME*; cf. Keen, 349–50). Called and controlled by Henry VI’s queen consort, Margaret of Anjou, at the inception of a particularly virulent stage of the Wars of the Roses, it was dominated by the drafting and passing of a bill of attainder against prominent Yorkists for high treason.⁵⁷ Those condemned included the Duke of York, Richard Plantagenet, and his sons Edward Earl of March, and Edmund Earl of Rutland; their Neville allies Richard Earl of Salisbury, and his son Richard Earl of Warwick; and twenty-two others (*PROME*). Having gone into voluntary exile in Calais and Ireland following their October defeat at the Battle of Ludford Bridge, none of those accused were present. The bill passed without hindrance (Bellamy, 197): the attainted Yorkists were condemned to death, “all their possessions

⁵⁶ Joining Mede in representing Bristol was his close associate and age mate John Shipward the elder (*ca.* 1405–73), nine times elector, and former Sheriff (1429), Bailiff (1439–40), and Mayor (1444–5, 1455–6, 1463–4, 1469–70) of Bristol who had also represented the town in the 1453–4 parliament (*HP*, 465). The pair had business dealings and sat on commissions together. Other local men at the 1459 through 1461 parliaments were lawyer Thomas Yonge, armiger, and Thomas Brigge, armiger (both co. Gloucs.); and Nicholaus Hert and Willielmus Brokwad (Gloucester borough) (*Return*, 355).

⁵⁷ The drafters were the king’s attorney, William Nottingham, and his serjeants-at-law Richard Choke, Thomas Lyttleton, and Thomas Billing (Bellamy, 197). Choke, of Somerset and Bristol, married Joan, daughter of William Pavy of Bristol (*ODNB*), and would certainly have known Mede and Shipward; Nottingham, of Gloucester (*HP*, 642–3), may also have encountered them prior to the parliament.

were forfeited and their heirs barred from inheritance forever” (*PROME*; cf. Keen, 349–50; Bellamy, 197–205). Mede and Shipward were likely home by Christmas.⁵⁸

Within nine months, however, “the political situation in England had ... been transformed”: three weeks after the defeat of the Lancastrians, and capture of the king, at the Battle of Northampton (10 Jul. 1460), parliament was called again (*PROME*). Opening on 07 October 1460, its first order of business was the Coventry session which was declared no parliament, and all its acts annulled; “[a]lmost all the rest of the roll is concerned with York’s claim to the throne and its consequences” (*ibid.*).⁵⁹ Ultimately, the session saw York named heir to the throne. Late November brought prorogation until 28 January—by which date the Yorkist army had been “decisively defeated” at Wakefield. Hence, on 03 February, the newly reassembled parliament was again prorogued until 04 May. The third session, however, never sat: in the interim, the Earl of March had seized the throne as Edward IV (*ibid.*), holding it until the autumn of 1470, when Henry VI “was briefly restored” (Fleming *Time*, 215).

⁵⁸ The Chancellor dissolved parliament on 20 December (*PROME*). Overland travel was common in all seasons, and the decrepitude of late medieval English roads is often exaggerated (Langdon and Claridge; Hindle). Although off the Roman road network, Coventry sat “at the junction of two important overland routes”; “wine imported at Bristol was sent overland” thither (Edwards, 442, 103; cf. Edwards and Hindle, 129), suggesting the road was reasonable. Coventry–Worcester–Gloucester–Bristol (*ibid.*, 105), a journey of roughly 164 km (102 mi), seems a likely route for Mede’s party. In ideal conditions, a rider might cover 90 km (56 mi) per day (Mortimer, 460) or more (Chaplais, 23), but 35–50 km (*ca.* 20–30 mi) seems more reasonable in this instance (Ohler, 97; Hill, 108).

⁵⁹ A few minor matters also found their way onto the agenda, including wool exports (*PROME*)—potentially a concern for Mede and Shipward.

On the first of May 1471, Bristol provided “substantial assistance ... money, supplies, artillery, and men” to Margaret of Anjou’s army, sending an official contingent to the Battle of Tewkesbury from which the Yorkists emerged victorious (Fleming and Wood, 89). Eight days after thus regaining the throne, on 12 May, Edward IV issued to Bristol a letter under privy seal, granting the town a pardon; such leniency “was granted at the behest of Clarence” (*ibid.*) who had defected and directly interceded on their behalf (Hicks *Warwick*, 136; *LRB*, 2:130–2; *cf.* *GRB*, 3:95). The same document exempted several members of the civic élite—Bristol councillors William Spencer, John Shipward, Robert Straunge, and John Cogan, as well as the family of Bristol’s late Recorder, Nicholas Hervey⁶⁰—from the pardon due to their rôle in spearheading Bristol’s Lancastrian faction (Fleming and Wood, 89–90). The arrest of these “principall sturrers of rebellion ayenst vs” was ordered, and the Mayor, Thomas Kempson, and Sheriff, John Shipward the younger, were directed to inform the Crown of any additional suspects (Fleming, 215–6 at 215). The afore named councillors *cum* Lancastrian rebels appeared before king and royal council in November, “together with Philip Mede, not named in Edward’s letter but presumably informed against subsequently” (*ibid.*, 216n857). Within a year, all had purchased pardons for £100 payable at the next Purification or levied on their goods in Bristol (*CCR 1468–76*, n. 843; *CPR 1467–77*, 274; Fleming *Time*, 216; Fleming and Wood, 90).⁶¹

Thus, while it may have been the case that Philip Mede’s family had long borne the Azure tinctured arms appearing in Houghton, MS Richardson 40, it is also entirely possible that he self-

⁶⁰ Hervey was among those slain at the Battle of Tewkesbury. His successor in the position was John Twynyho, a retainer of Clarence until the latter’s execution (Fleming and Wood, 90).

⁶¹ William Canynges also sought and obtained a pardon after Tewkesbury, and was amerced £2000. Ricart claims that Canynges’ holy orders were motivated by pressure from the king (Fleming *Time*, 216; Ricart, 44).

assumed the Azure variant, or adapted a preexisting Gules variant, perhaps in keeping with his Lancastrian sympathies.

EXPENSE

Another factor to consider in evaluating the provenance of a manuscript such as Richardson 40 is cost. In medieval England, “literacy was widespread [and] books were not uncommon household items” (Cavanaugh, 19; *q.v.*, chapter 3, *infra*). Correspondingly, the cost of books was highly variable, ranging from a few pence—such as the “six ‘Englisch bokys’ valued together at 10*d.*” owned by a mid-fifteenth century mason (*ibid.*, 11)—up to dozens of pounds—such as William de Montacute’s £66.13*s.*6*d.* *Historia Scholastica* (*ibid.*, 13). The decoration and size of MS Richardson 40, in conjunction with the known ownership patterns of standard model *Nova Statuta*, strongly suggest that it constituted a luxury good, and was priced accordingly. Could a merchant and commoner afford such a sumptuous volume?

It is significant that, of extant fifteenth century English manuscripts, those “of the finest quality are not associated with royalty”—likely a manifestation of the Crown’s reduced solvency as a result of “shrinking revenue from [Crown] land, the demand for service, and the financial burden of war and government” (Scott *Later*, 1:30). In contrast to their Continental counterparts, the late medieval English monarchy only began to commission or sponsor production of lavish books on a regular basis with the greater peace and economic stability of Edward IV’s reign (*ibid.*; Alexander “Royal Patrons”, 160–62).⁶² While the aristocracy certainly remained active consumers of manuscripts, the audience for *de luxe* volumes diversified considerably during our period with the

⁶² Although the evidence is not entirely clear, Henry IV may constitute an exception (Scott *Later*, 1:68*n*47).

market rapidly coming to incorporate “royal, noble, and gentle patronage, with professional (administrative, legal, and medical) men overlapping the ‘gentle’ category, [along with] merchants” (Scott *Later*, 1:29). Indeed, mercantile “demand for books was one of the chief factors conditioning [their] supply” (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 160).

Moreover, high-end, illustrated books were increasingly purchased as corporate property, such as the volumes commissioned by the aldermancy of London and of Bristol (Scott *Later*, nos. 132, 134). At least three merchant guilds of the period “instigated and maintained finely pictured record-books” (*ibid.*, 1:29, 1:67n39), and a number of *de luxe* volumes are known to have been owned by (*ibid.*, nos. 109, 136), or produced through the direct patronage of (*ibid.*, nos. 33, 127) individual merchants (*ibid.*, 1:29). Clearly, the mercantile civic élite were significant consumers of up-market manuscripts.

In large part, this may be due to England’s shifting economics during the period. One income tax analysis for the year 1436 reveals a conspicuously broad and stratified distribution of wealth: “fifty-one lay peers with an average income of £768 per annum, 183 greater knights with an average of £208 per annum, 750 lesser knights [averaging] £60, 1200 esquires [averaging] £24, and a further 5000 men with incomes varying between £5 and £20” (Keen, 260). Such “solid men of middle rank” as the latter categories (*ibid.*) were becoming a significant audience for luxury goods—including lavish manuscripts with elaborate ornamentation and “prominent coats of arms” (Scott *Later*, 1:29, citing Gray “Incomes”). Did Philip or Richard Mede fall into this group?

THE FINANCIAL STANDING OF THE BRISTOL MEDES

Philip Mede held substantial real estate in Bristol and its environs, as well as further afield, and continued to expand his holdings throughout his life. His earliest known property acquisition came

in 1439 when William Selewode of Bristol, gent., granted to the young merchant a messuage with a solar and cellar, plus another pair of “cellars under the house adjoining in Smalstrete, extending from said street to Guildhall behind for 13*s.4d.*” (BRO, 26166/184); the two lots were situated on the east side of the street, next to the House of Bath Priory, and backing on the Guildhall (Leech, 1:xvi, 157–8), and Mede may have used them to conduct business and to store cargo. By 1457 he was undertaking more costly investments. In that year, on the Morrow of St. John Baptist (25 June), at Rolveston, Parish of Banewell, Som., “a messuage, ten acres of land, 70 acres of pasture, and ten acres of meadow” were quitclaimed to Mede for £40 sterling (GB *Pedes*, 123).⁶³ In Swinford, Leics., in June 1472, Elizabeth Sharpe—probably Richard’s mother-in-law—quitclaimed to Philip and Richard jointly a messuage, fifty acres of land, twenty acres of meadow, and forty acres of pasture in exchange for 40 marks of silver (TNA, CP 25/1/126/78, no. 23).

Joint holding of a property, or of an interest therein, was a common practice in the period, and Philip was involved in several such arrangements. On 12 February 1450, he was among those enfeoffed by Nicholas Hille of an annual rent of 6*s.8d.* from tenements in St. Thomas Street opposite St. Thomas Church (BRO, P/St.T/D/138). Six years later, Philip was jointly enfeoffed of a cluster of three tenements, four shops, a waste plot, a chamber of the St. Thomas Street chapel, and rents totalling at least £2.1*s.6d.* per annum (BRO, P/St.T/D/1, 01 Dec. 1456; *cf.* BRO, P/St.T/D/137, 25 Mar. 1457). In 1469, he and several others were enfeoffed of five tenements in St. Thomas Lane

⁶³ This transaction survives as a feet of fines, a type of conveyancing deed usually initiated through an action (specifically, a Plea of Covenant) in the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster. By the 1400s, the dispute ostensibly spurring such actions was usually a fiction: in this pre-land-registry era, the procedure was used to generate a legal record of freehold which would be difficult to challenge as it had the form of a judicial decision. For a highly accessible overview, *vide*: TNA “Land”.

with annual rents of 4*s.* (BRO, P/St.T/D/3, 20 Apr. 1469). Nine years previously, in Bristol's Guildhall, a labyrinthine series of quitclaims and counter-quitclaims, feoffments and refeoffments culminated with Thomas Yonge and Isabella his wife (daughter and heir of John Burton, late merchant of Bristol) acknowledging a dozen messuages, three gardens, and two acres of land in Bristol to be Philip Mede's by right, in return for which Mede, Nicholas Pyttes (vicar of the church of St. Mary Redcliffe), and John Wykam paid Yonge and his wife £100 (BRO, P/St.MR/5163/260, 08 Jul. 1460).⁶⁴

For a sense of the economic scope of this flurry of transactions, a mere quartet of the numerous properties involved in the series of exchanges with Thomas Yonge—all messuages with shops and appurtenances in Redcliffe Street—produced annual rents of £6 (BRO, P/St.T/D/68, 20 Dec. 1478). Further, at its midpoint, on 12 November 1456, the Yonge affair was simplified by reducing the number of persons involved through an agreement whereby “certain rents and profits which have been a cause of discord between them should be equally divided among ... two parties”, to wit, (1) Thomas Fissh of Bristol, gent., son and heir of William Fisshe; and (2) Philip Mede, Nicholas Pittes, John Wykeham, and Thomas Asshe. The first moiety consisted of six tenements, two gardens, and a half share in a close; the second, four shops, two tenements, and the other half share in the close. Each yielded £9.6*s.*8*d.* per annum (BRO, P/St.T/D/311; *cf.* BRO, P/St.T/D/312).

Philip Mede also enfeoffed others, in turn. In 1457, his kinsman, Robert Ricard (later Recorder of Bristol), was enfeoffed by him of ‘Scappesplace’, a tenement in Bedminster (BRO, AC/D/15/18; *cf.* BRO, AC/D/15/19a-b) apparently handed down from Philip's grandfather, Thomas, who had acquired it for ten marks in December 1364 (BRO, AC/D/15/7). In the early spring of 1461 he

⁶⁴ The matter in question commenced in 1455 (BRO, 5163/157 and 5163/158 (18 Mar 1455)), and can be traced though at least a dozen extant documents.

enfeoffed Thomas Everard “of one acre of arable land in the field of Assheton’ near the manor of Richard Choke gent., ... called Combe Acre” (BRO, AC/D/1/75). On 20 October 1467, he leased to his daughter, Isabel, and her husband and their issue, “the holding in Feylond in the parish of Wroxsale called Medeisplace; for a term of 20 years, rent 45s.8d. a year” (BCM, A/2/88/2 [GC4345]). In the autumn of 1474, this was augmented with a grant of multiple “holdings and burgages in Thornbury ... with reversion to Philip’s right heirs” (BCM, A/2/43/16 [SC631]).⁶⁵

Archival records demonstrate, however, that Philip Mede was primarily a merchant. Both he and his father, Thomas, bequeathed pipes of woad; in the fifteenth century, this “most important of all dyestuffs” was typically imported from Toulouse, and valued both as a blue dye and as a base for other hues (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 216; Munro “Scarlet”, 279). The bequests—in tandem with the family’s situation in Bristol, long a major centre of England’s textile industries—could suggest involvement in Bristol’s cloth trade. A license of 23 March 1452 authorized Philip Mede and Robert Ricard to ship to Aquitaine “[c]entum pannos integros sine grano et ducentas duodenas de pannis laneis strictis” (a hundred whole cloths without grain and 200 dozen narrow woollen cloth),⁶⁶ for

⁶⁵ Following the death of Richard without issue, Isabel Mede would inherit lands in Gloucester, Bedminster, Wraxall, Ashton, and Tickenham, Somerset (Wells-Furby, 1:xlvi). Richard seems to have inherited many of these properties from Philip.

⁶⁶ Whole cloth (*pannus integrus*) = broadcloth, 24 × 2 yards “when fully shrunk”; narrow cloth (*pannus strictus*) = ‘straits’ of 1 × (usually) 12 yards (Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, 336). ‘Grain’ (*granum*) was red dye, used in Britain as early as the 1230s (*eadem Medieval*, 220), and made from the desiccated ova of *Kermococcus vermilio* (Munro “Medieval”, 214), a name derived from its other medieval appellation, *kermes*. By Mede’s lifetime, it was “undoubtedly the most costly dyestuff in ... Europe”, and English wools—“then the world’s best”—dyed in ‘full grain’ were “indisputably the most costly and luxurious textiles manufactured in western Europe, rivalled only by some imported Asian silks” (*idem* “Scarlet”, 477, 479). The license’s *sine grano* clause is likely a manifestation of economic protectionism.

liberating one Nicholas Parken, “their relation and friend”, who was being held captive in Aquitaine for a ransom of 450 marks (Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, 99–100 *item* 106). Aquitaine had been among Bristol’s primary markets, and an important source of wine and woad, but had recently fallen to the French, rendering trade thither illegal without special license (*ibid.*, 211ff.). That the pair paid the ransom via cloth, instead of cash or other viable commodities—such as pewter, exports of which were second only to textiles in the mid-1400s (Homer, 73), or England’s ample supplies of tin, “esteemed throughout Europe as the purest available” (Given-Wilson *Illustrated*, 54)—might bolster the hypothesis that the family had roots in the textile trades.

Yet Mede did not restrict his trade to textiles. For instance, on 26 May 1461, he imported from Spain, via the *Marie* of Spain, seven tons of iron (customs valuation: £17.10s.), with a further ten tons of iron, via the *Marye* of Guipuscoa, Spain, following on 16 September (Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, 209–18 at 212, 217).⁶⁷ Although iron ore deposits were mined and worked throughout medieval England, the native ore’s “quality ... was variable, and certain high-quality products—such as decorative iron and military hardware—were made with purer ore imported from Spain and, to a lesser extent, Sweden” (Given-Wilson *Illustrated*, 54). Determining the overall scale of this trade is challenging. Nonetheless, 3000 tons per annum was not unusual during the 1400s (*ibid.*).⁶⁸ England’s ceaseless military expeditions rendered ferrous ores a wise investment during the mid-fifteenth century. Diversification in his imports, along with savvy real estate investments, seems to have ensured Philip’s fiscal stability during ‘The Great Slump’ of 1440–80, a period of serious

⁶⁷ Some merchants owned vessels, but this cargo was imported via a ship freighted with multiple merchants’ goods. A common strategy, it reduced financial risks by mitigating the impact of wrecks or piracy, and distributed the expense of purchasing a safe-conduct (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 90–92).

⁶⁸ For a more detailed picture, *vide*: Childs.

“economic recession ... and consequent royal impoverishment” complicated by escalating domestic unrest and overseas conflict (Hicks *Political*, 1).

In addition, in 1441, 1445, and 1454 (Ricart, 39, 41; *CFR 1452–61*, 115), Philip was appointed Sheriff of Bristol, and, in 1447, 1449, 1460, and 1467 he was among the town’s parliamentary electors (*HP*, 583). Both positions provide a sense of his baseline wealth as early as the 1440s. The county franchise was restricted to 40s. freeholders (Hicks *Political*, 75)—a rule to which Bristol, unlike most other urban centres of equivalent legal status,⁶⁹ adhered from 1432 (Thomson *Transformation*, 281–2). Similarly, from 1371, the landed qualification for the shrievalty was fixed at £20 per annum from land, and subsequently augmented with a residency requirement (Gorski, 68–9). Thus, Philip’s annual income from international trade supplemented, or was supplemented by, at least £20 from real property. His appointment as Sheriff also marked the inception of a significant politico-legal career, a topic to which we will return very shortly.

While Richard’s life is less well documented than his father’s, he seems to have been financially successful. He also became involved in property, albeit apparently to a lesser degree than Philip. His will bequeaths lands, tenements, rents, and fiefs in Bristol and its environs, including its suburbs; along with other real estate in Bedminster, Feyland, Wraxall, and Middle Tickenham in co. Somerset—some inherited from his father, others from his in-laws.⁷⁰ The Bristol grant from his in-laws was transacted on 08 March 1460, when Richard and his wife, Elizabeth, obtained of Elizabeth’s paternal grandfather, merchant and former Bristol mayor John Sharpe, “four

⁶⁹ The urban franchise was only formally defined in 1832 (Thomson *Transformation*, 281–2).

⁷⁰ Also among Richard’s properties were, *inter alia*, three tenements with gardens on Seynt Thomas strete, Redcliffe Parish; lands, tenements, and pastures within Bristol and in its suburbs; and gardens outside Lafford Gate, in the hundred of Baston, Gloucs., most inherited from Philip Mede (TNA, PROB 11/10/549).

tenements in Oldecornestrete, with four shops in front and cellars below; ... a tenement in Bradstrete; ... a tenement in Seynt Mary Poorte Street, called le Cardynall' is Hatte; [and] a tenement, with a shop and cellar, in Merschestrete” (BRO, P.AS/D/BS/A/3,4,5; *GRB*, 3:170–72, summary of f. 259).⁷¹ The tenement on the west side of Bradstrete (Broad Street) nearly abutted his father, Philip's, holdings on Small Street (Leech, 1:xxi, 32).

By 1468 Richard owned, or had purchased, a gold chain worth 20 marks (*CPR 1467–77*, 6). Additionally, the Mede chantry was established by Richard in his will, apparently via a grant of “one messuage and one garden on Redcliffe hill” (TNA, PROB 11/8/619).⁷² In the Chantry Certificates, the property is listed as having a yearly value of £17.12*d.*, of which the incumbent priest was to have a living of £6.6*s.* “to singe in the seid Church & pray for the sowlle of the seid Richard for euer and to kepe onn yerelie Obitte”, while another 13*s.*4*d.* were designated to “give certeyn bredde to the poore for their relieff yerelie for euer” (Maclean, 244). As late as 1548, the Chantry still held the “house and curtilage of [what is now] nos. 8–11 Park Row ... comprising a garden, ... [another] garden, ... ‘le lodge’ ... and a close” (Leech, 2:112). Originally possessed by Richard's father-in-law, John Sharpe, as a component of the Chantry endowment, the property “must have existed as a separate entity by *ca.* 1491”, the year of Richard's death (*ibid.*, citing: TNA, E318/33/1845, and PROB 11/Milles/45).

Amongst the properties recurring in the Mede wills is a messuage and garden “on the hill of Redclyvestrete”. This was the family home, previously owned by Philip, and bequeathed to

⁷¹ The plots on Broad Street were 40–44 feet wide (12.2–13.4 m), and probably approximately six times as deep, “extending ... to the intra-mural lane behind”; plots on other Bristol streets followed a “similar pattern” (Leech, 1:xviii, xxi).

⁷² It was situated between one of Richard's tenements (to the north), and a tenement belonging to St. John the Baptist (to the south), and extended back to a garden owned by Master Nicholas Pitt (*ibid.*).

Richard, who bequeathed it in turn. A number of important medieval merchants resided in Bristol's High Street, then site of a "bustling market". *La crème de la crème*, however, dwelt in Redcliffe Parish—"the fashionable and less congested quarter"—and particularly on Redcliffe Street, medieval Bristol's foremost precinct, and home to the wealthiest of the town's civic élite. Its large houses, designed and appointed "with great attention to comfort and, with the increasing use of glass, to a novel craving for light and air[, were] set among gardens and meadows stretching down to the bank of the river" (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 75). Perhaps the most famous of medieval Bristol's mercantile aristocracy, William Canynges (*ODNB*),⁷³ kept his mansion here,⁷⁴ as did former mayor and prominent cloth merchant John Vyell—and, of course, Philip Mede (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 75). Befitting the home of "one of Bristol's most influential merchants" (Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, no. 106), the Mede residence was of sufficient size to have its own chapel for, on 25 February 1457–8, the Bishop of Bath and Wells granted Philip and Isabel a licence to celebrate "masses and other divine offices ... in the chapel, or oratory, within their dwelling in Bristol" (Bath and Wells *Beckington*, 299 item 1115).

In his will (TNA, PROB 11/6/321 (11 Jan. 1476, proved 26 Mar.); *cf.* Wadley, 157)—witnessed by, *inter alia*, his second son, John—Philip left cash bequests totalling £48.6s., plus one

⁷³ Six times Mayor (1441, 1449, 1456, 1461, 1466), and thrice MP (1439, 1450, 1455), he owned nine ships (totalling roughly 2900 tons) and, over eight years, employed more than 800 men (Worcestre, no. 441; *HP*, 151–2). In 1460–61, he loaned 500 marks to Edward IV (*CPR 1461–71*, 44).

⁷⁴ Canynges' house was 20 × 16 yards (18.3 × 14.6 m) in size, with a tower and a quartet of "fenestras vocatas Bay wyndowes ornatissimo modo cum cameris continet" (windows called Bay windows, highly decorated, like the rooms) (Worcestre, no. 390). Erected *ca.* 1455, it "survived until 1937, when it was demolished for street widening" (Pantin, 232). For a description of this and other houses of medieval Bristol, with floor-plans based upon archaeological excavations, *vide* Pantin, 218–19, 222, 232.

pipe of woad, and “lands, tenements, etc., in the co. of Somerset and in Bristol”. He instructs those left behind to inter his remains at the St. Stephen’s Chapel altar, in the aisle of St. Mary Redcliffe’s north choir. The Mede tombs—one of only three definitively known to belong to Bristol merchants⁷⁵—was a “top of the range” stone monument consisting of a large “double tomb chest under an elaborate canopy”; in the western aperture recline alabaster effigies of Philip and his wife, Isabella, with Philip depicted as a wealthy merchant (Fleming *Time*, 79–80). Even a century earlier, in the late 1300s, such a monument would have cost in excess of £17—“a prohibitively expensive option for all but the wealthiest merchant, and for this reason likely to be the most impressive” (*ibid.*). The alabaster effigies would have been painted to create a “life-like” effect, “allowing them to act as a surrogate for the person being commemorated” (Plumley, 4). In the south aisle of St. Mary Redcliffe, polychromed effigies of Philip’s contemporaries, William Canynges (*ca.* 1399–1474) and his wife, Joan (Burton) (d. 1467) provide an example of the practice. Unfortunately, no pigments appear to survive on the Mede effigies.⁷⁶

Although “clearly designed to contain” additional effigies, the second bay of the Mede tomb remains empty (Fleming *Time*, 79). Instead, we find an engraved monumental brass depicting three kneeling figures—a knight in armour with two women—beneath a demi-figure of Jesus in a nimbus with two banners bearing the inscriptions “*Sancta trinitas unus deus miserere nobis*” (holy trinity, one god, have mercy upon us), and “*Pater de cælis deus miserere nobis*” (god, heavenly father, have

⁷⁵ The others are Walter Frampton’s (d. 1388) in the church of St. John the Baptist (the remodelling of which he largely funded), and William and Joan Canynges’ in St. Mary Redcliffe (Fleming *Time*, 79).

⁷⁶ For photographs of the Mede tomb and brass, the Canynges tomb, and their contexts within St. Mary Redcliffe, *vide*: N.a. “Category:St Mary Redcliffe (interior)” + *s.v.* “Subcategories”. *Wikipedia*. 28 Mar. 2013. Web. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:St_Mary_Redcliffe_\(interior\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:St_Mary_Redcliffe_(interior))

mercy upon us). The knight kneels beside his helmet, and his hair flows over the shoulders of his heraldic tabard: A Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils (Britton, 40; Davis *Monumental*, 69–72). Medieval brasses were sometimes enhanced by flooding the engraved lines with tinted resins or bitumen, or by enamelling, with enamel being favoured for heraldry (Plumley, 5). As with the effigies, however, colouration on the brass (if it existed) has failed to survive the centuries. Fleming identifies the group as Philip’s son, Richard, and his two wives, Elizabeth (Sharpe) and Anne (Pauncefote or Pauncefort)⁷⁷ (*Time*, 79, 80n272); this is consistent with Richard’s will which specifies interment in St. Stephen’s Chapel, Redcliffe, in the tomb at the foot of his parents. Brasses were “considerably” less dear than alabaster monuments: “by 1500, depending on the size and complexity, [they] usually cost between £2 and £10” (*ibid.*, 80). Possible motivations underlying Richard’s selection of this more austere alternative are not clear.

PHILIP MEDE AS POLITICIAN AND MAGISTRATE

As with many of his comrades, Mede’s successes soon saw him named to commissions of inquiry and peace commissions. On 10 March 1449, he was appointed commissioner in a case in which Genoese merchants complained that Bristol pirates had seized their ship, *Le Maria* of Montrigo, Spain (*CPR 1446–52*, 238). Concern for his own pecuniary interests, as well as those of his associates, may have sparked an interest in the era’s ongoing shipping problems, for Mede was quickly immersed in a slew of similar cases. In October 1452, he headed a commission regarding John Wiche’s ship, *la Marie* of Bristol, which had seized *la Carveule*⁷⁸ of Vermewe—a 55 ton

⁷⁷ The heraldic mantle graced with two lions rampant worn by the female depicted *sinister* suggests that this figure represents Anne.

⁷⁸ *la Carveule* denotes a caravel, and may have been a description of the ship, rather than her name.

Spanish vessel carrying £160 worth of wine, iron, and salt—off the Irish coast, only to be counterattacked by a small fleet out of Kinsale. Overcoming *la Marie*, the Irish mariners slew three of her crew, towing *la Carveule* back to Kinsale to be despoiled (*CPR 1452–61*, 60–61; Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, 93–94 item 100).

That same year, acting as “factor and attorney of Peter de Seynt Crike [of] Aquitaine” (*CPR 1452–61*, 118–19; *HP*, 583), Mede commenced an action in Chancery, *Mede v. Adam*, against Thomas Adam of Polruon, master of *la Palmer*, John Huyssh, master of *la Julyan*, *et alia*, who were accused of violating letters patent of safe-conduct by seizing the 200 ton *St Cruce* of Spain, which they towed to Fowey, Cornwall, and despoiled (TNA, C 1/22/14). In response to Mede’s suit, the Crown appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the matter and make restitution (*CPR 1452–61*, *op. cit.*). *St Cruce* must have been recovered by month’s end for, on 02 July, Mede successfully secured another three months safe-conduct for the ship and its crew of sixty to return to Fuenterrabia (Carus-Wilson *Overseas*, 103–4 item 111).

Philip was involved in similar cases in 1455 (*in re* Bernard Jaff of Portugal’s complaint that “pirates in ... *le Trinite* of Dertemuth” despoiled his ship of £400 worth of cargo (*CPR 1452–61*, 225)), in 1458 (*in re* the illegal despoiling of Genoese merchant Balthasar Gentilis’ well-laden carrack, which had been wrecked near Bristol (*ibid.*, 438; *cf.*, Fleming *Time*, 98, 227–228)), and in 1459 (*in re* a complaint regarding the non-delivery of a ship (*CPR 1452–61*, 495)), during which year he was also appointed to a commission tasked with distributing £6000 in compensation for goods pirated by the Genoese at Malta (*ibid.*, 517).

Appointments to further commissions, now focused upon local law and order, were forthcoming in 1460 (*ibid.*, 608), and in 1464 (*CPR 1461–67*, 304). Peace commissions such as these

were “permanent institution[s]”, and only reissued “for the purpose of effecting changes in composition. Each commission remained in force until a new commission was issued, which always impliedly superseded the previous one” (Baker *History*, 267). Any changes required issuing a new commission since modifications via writs of association had been prohibited by the Statute of Cambridge 1388 (12 Ric. II, c. 10) (Baker *History*, 267n102). Analyses of the composition of commissions characteristically “underestimate [their] legally trained element, doubtless because of the difficulty in identifying lawyers” in the period (*ibid.*). While no evidence that Philip had formal training in the law seems to have survived, his frequent appointments, and civic activities, reveal a non-trivial degree of legal literacy, along with an interest in more than mere economic concerns.

CIVIC GOVERNANCE AND THE LAW IN MEDIEVAL BRISTOL

By the fifteenth century, Bristol’s double city wall had become “ornamental rather than useful”: funds dedicated to maintenance and expansion of urban infrastructure—such as the 4*d.* per ton paid, for this purpose, by every master mariner upon landing in Bristol—were directed towards, not fortifications, but the quays and customs house where “life was centred” (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 12). The sea seeped even into the margins of court transcripts,⁷⁹ and, each dawn, the chapel of St. John the Evangelist tolled out a mass for all merchants and mariners from its ærie on the Avon’s ‘Welsh Back’, where goods from England and Wales were received (*ibid.*, 12–13). Heavier seafaring vessels of international traders, like Philip Mede, were landed, unladen, and reloaded at the

⁷⁹ Amidst the “monotonous record of ... claim[s]”, *ca.* 1487–97, a weary clerk of Bristol’s Tolzey Court combatted his ennui by interpolating a verse from a sea shanty. With a “[h]ale and howe”, it proclaims the imminent arrival of “the Pryor of Prikkingham and his Convent” (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 12)—probably a euphemism for a brothel (Walker, ed., 216).

‘Key’, a more commodious quay on the Frome (*ibid.*, 13), their freight squirrelled away in the roomy cellars whittled into Bristol’s limestone fundament.⁸⁰

Nearly all of the town’s numerous royal grants have survived. In 1172, Henry II granted Bristol a charter confirming the town’s rights and duties (*ibid.*). A decade or so later, this was followed by an undated charter granted by John, re-confirming the previous charter (Ricart, 24–25; *BrCh*, 1:8–13; *cf.*, *GRB*, 2:5–6). Its rights and liberties were confirmed again in 36 Hen. III (1252)—with a clarification that the burgesses of the town held their charter directly from the Crown, with no *mesne*, but “per servitium landgabul, quod reddant infra muros” (Ricart, 2; *BrCh*, 1:24–29).⁸¹ Four years thereafter, Henry extended these rights, empowering the burgesses to select their own coroner, and to farm the fees payable to the king (*BrCh*, 1:36–39). When nation-wide customs tolls were first imposed in England (1275), the burgesses of Bristol were exempt (*GRB*, 2:8), and the town’s rights and privileges underwent steady expansion over the ensuing centuries. For instance, Edward III granted Bristol’s mayor “power to take recognizances for the proper security of orphans’ estates” in 1331 (*BrCh*, 1:72–77; *cf.* BRO, MS 04420 (Recognizances for orphans, 1333–1642);

⁸⁰ In addition to over 200 subterranean vaults and cellars documented in 1480 (Worcestre, no. 62, *et passim*), Bristolians exploited their town’s limestone foundation to implement commercial and domestic drains and sewers for directing waste and grey water underground—rather than into the streets, as in other medieval towns—and thence to the tidal rivers and out to sea (Pilkington, xxix). Millerd’s 1673 map notes the absence of “sincks yat come from any houses into ye streets ... all is conveyed vnder ground rendering ye Cittie exceeding sweet & delightsom” (*ibid.*). Clean water for cooking and washing was piped down from the hills via conduits (*White English*, 141). As a result of this elaborate subterranean network, Bristol banned wheeled conveyances lest they “crash through” into the ‘second town’ below (Pilkington, xxix).

⁸¹ That is, “by means of landgabul that they pay within the walls”. *Landgabul*, now usually rendered *land-gable*, was a form of rent due on each house in a town; *mesne* denotes an intermediate, *i.e.* a landlord.

BRO, MS 04421 (Books of wills, 1382–1674)).⁸² Four decades later, on 01 September 1373, he granted Bristol a charter rendering it the second English town with county status (*BrCh*, 1:142–45; *GRB*, 3:14; *EHD4*, 559 (G.361.i)).

These charters were granted in response to petitions that, though adopting a rhetoric of supplication “in the name of the urban community were largely in the interests of discrete ruling groups within Bristol” (Liddy, 190). Even as compared to other late medieval English towns, Bristol’s civic governance was unusually “restrictive [and] ‘oligarchic’” (Fleming *Time*, ch. 09 at 240; *cf.* Rigby). Throughout the fifteenth century, it’s corporation strove with great determination, and an impressive degree of success, “to resist appeals to royal authority and impose obedience to itself” alone (Hicks *Political*, 182). Their successful entrenchment of self-governance seems to be in keeping with the era’s striking increase in “‘legal consciousness’ [which both] shaped people’s values, beliefs and aspirations” generally, and influenced political attitudes (Musson *Medieval*, 1–2 at 1).

Seemingly appointed for life by the mayor and sheriff, with no election, members of Bristol’s Common Council were “at the mayor’s beck and call”, meeting only at his summons and on an entirely *ad hoc* basis, according to no predetermined schedule (Fleming *Time*, 240). It was “an essentially passive body”, intended to advise and assist the mayoralty. In turn, the councillors selected their bailiffs and sheriffs from among their own number (*ibid.*), choosing the mayor, from a pair of candidates proposed by the outgoing mayor and the sheriff, on 15 September in the Guildhall, and swearing him in on Michaelmas, 29 September (*ibid.*, 232–33, 240). As a deputy of the Crown, the mayor was apparently “expected to rule alone” (*ibid.*, 233). This ethos of fierce

⁸² In this context, *orphan* denoted an “under-age heir to a deceased father, irrespective of whether or not the mother was still alive” (Fleming *Time*, 239). For more information, *vide*: Hanawalt, 18–27.

independence manifested in dealings with perceived external authorities as a matter of course.

Bristol's burgesses had striven towards liberation from royal assessment and taxation as early as the 1330s (Liddy, 68), and also took care to preserve their "free[dom from] overt ecclesiastical control", resulting in an "unusually 'secular'" political culture, "in the sense of being independent of the influence of the institutional Church" (Fleming *Time*, 235).⁸³

Unsurprisingly, the Common Council, mayoralty, and other officers of Bristol's late medieval civic government were overwhelmingly dominated by merchants engaged in overseas trade (Liddy, 12; *cf.* Carus-Wilson; Fleming *Time*). Second only to London from the late medieval era into the early seventeenth century (Pilkington, xiii), the town's financial clout elevated it to one of the island nation's foremost ports. The core of its strength was overseas trade—an industry wherein Bristol's civic authorities maintained a fiercely guarded monopoly until 1522 (*ibid.*, xviii). A staple by 1326, the town was a primary source of royal credit from *temp.* Richard II, a major supplier of ships in royal fleets, a head port for customs collection, and the importer of a quarter of England's wine (Fleming *Time*, 41–46, 101, 113). Mercantile hegemony pervades surviving traces of medieval Bristol's material culture. For instance, the council's *Little Red Book*—a volume recording town ordinances, customs, and liberties commenced by Recorder William de Colford *ca.* 1344, and maintained as a register and "official memoranda book of the Mayor and commonality" until 1574

⁸³ The strikingly secular nature of Bristol's political scene should not be construed as indicative of impiety; indeed, their civic customs and rituals were "infused with religious ... sensibility" and the semiotics of the sacred. Instead, "it reflected where the real political power lay" (Fleming *Time*, 235; *cf.* Sacks "Celebrating").

(Pilkington, xlviii; *cf.* *LRB*, 1:vii–viii, ix)—contains medieval copies of the Laws of Oléron,⁸⁴ and a lengthy and “invaluable tract upon” the Lex Mercatoria (*GRB*, 3:13), suggesting that these texts were frequently consulted by the mayor and Common Council during the course of their duties (Pilkington, xlviii).

Peace commissions were but one component of Philip Mede’s involvement with medieval England’s politico-legal systems. In 1458–9, he ascended to the apogee of Bristol’s civic government, becoming Mayor (Ricart, 41; *CPR 1452–61*, 495), a feat he repeated in 1461–2—during which term he received Edward IV on his royal progress with elaborate and well-acclaimed pageantry (Fleming *Time*, 210–11; Ricart, 43)—, and again in 1468–9 (Ricart, 44; *CPR 1467–77*, 129, 172). Like the shrievalty, the mayoralty presupposed a certain level of income. The *Little Red Book* stipulated that,

ordinatum est et concordatum quod nullus eligetur in officio Aldermanni nisi habuerit mansionem propriam et redditum ... [et] quod nullus eligetur in officio Maioratus nisi prius fuerit Aldermannus, etc. (BRO, MS 04718, ff. 101^v–102, quoted *LRB*, 1:140).⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Based upon an older, Mediterranean maritime code known as the Lex Rhodia, the Laws of Oléron—also called the Judgments of Oléron, or Rôles d’Oléron, and named for the island where they were enacted—were promulgated by Eleanor of Aquitaine, in her capacity as viceregent of England, *ca.* 1160. They constitute northern Europe’s earliest formal admiralty laws. On Lex Rhodia, *vide*: Ashburner; on the Laws of Oléron, *vide*: Middlebrook.

⁸⁵ “it is ordained and agreed that no one be elected to the office of Alderman unless he have his own house and rent ... [and] that no one be elected to the office of Mayor unless he shall have previously been Alderman, etc.” (*LRB*, 1:140)

These civic offices—bailiff, sheriff, mayor—were positions that “only a man of wealth could afford to fill” (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 68). Mede seems to have thrived in them, being repeatedly reelected to local and national office.

The mayoralty required more than simple wealth, however. Quotidian business of the office included settling “industrial disputes between masters and men”, and fulfilling mandates handed down from the Crown. Furthermore, the mayor was heavily involved in drafting and enacting local ordinances—as in 1467 when Mede and several of his fellows enacted their *Actys and Ordinaunce to Establish a Felaweschipp of Merchaunts*, the ostensible aim of which was to ensure “good, sadde, and profittable Rewle, of and uppon fower certeigne marchandize used in Bristowe, that is to saie, meat oyle, woll oyle, yren and waxe” (Cannynges, *et al.*; Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 68, 69; *cf.* Davis *Market*). Indeed, by the mid- to late-fifteenth century, the primary focus of the town’s mayoral duties was the law.

THE COURTS OF MEDIEVAL BRISTOL

Legal tribunals proliferated in medieval Bristol, and court of one kind or another was “constantly” in session (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 69). Among the sundry local tribunals were ecclesiastical courts—which followed canon law, and possessed jurisdiction over clerical discipline and issues impacting the moral welfare of the laity (*e.g.* sexual impropriety, wills and probate, defamation of character, *etc.*)—, and manor courts (‘court baron’)—the lowest courts in medieval England, regulated by local custom, with jurisdiction over manorial legal and administrative issues (*e.g.* changes in tenancy, agricultural praxis, rights and responsibilities of a lord and his tenants, *etc.*).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ On the period’s ecclesiastical courts, *vide*: Brundage; Helmholz. On medieval manor courts, *vide*: Mulholland “Jury”; *eadem* “Trial”; Razi and Smith.

In addition to three Fair Courts or Piepowders,⁸⁷ Bristol's other local courts included Quarter Sessions, the Staple Court, the Tolzey, and the Mayor's Court. Of all local tribunals, it is this last quartet which would have been of primary interest to Mede and his fellows.

Peace commissions (commissions of oyer et terminer), such as those to which Mede had been appointed, generally operated at Quarter Sessions (Baker *History*, 267). They engaged with "a very-extensive list of ... transgressionones et alia malefacta" or non-capital offences⁸⁸ such as trespass and theft, as well as certain aspects of communal life, such as highway maintenance, licensing of ale houses, collection of rates, and administration of poor law (*ibid.*, 271–73). Quarter sessions were not gaol delivery sessions and lacked authority to deliver suspects via proclamation. Their procedure likely followed that of the assizes, with each session lasting several days to a week (*ibid.*, 275). "The quorum was dominated by the legal element", with over half of those sitting being members of Inns of Court (*ibid.*, 268). Nonetheless, prior to 37 Hen. VIII, c. 1 (1545), not even the presiding justice needed to be a man of law (*ibid.*, 275).⁸⁹ Instead, as with the shrievalty, formal qualifications included £20 per annum in land (*ibid.*, 268).

The Staple Court and Tolzey mainly dealt with matters falling under *Lex Mercatoria* including actions of account without written obligation, covenant, debt, and detinue. The Tolzey, occasionally referred to as the Sheriff's Court, sat in the Bristol Guildhall "*secundum legem mercatoriam*" (Baker *History*, 305n129). Intended to be held every day by the Mayor and Sheriff (Baker *History*, 305; Ricart, 84; *GRB*, 3:42), in practice it sat at least thrice per week to hear

⁸⁷ These had been created by, respectively, Edward IV's 1461 Charter, Henry III's 1225 Charter, and a grant to the Prior of St. James by William FitzRobert Earl of Gloucester (d. 1183) (*ibid.*) whose father had founded the Priory in 1129 (*LRB*, 1:108; *GRB*, 3:24; Page, ed., *Gloucester*, 2:74–75)

⁸⁸ Capital offences, chiefly murder and treason, were addressed in assize courts (Baker *History*, 272).

⁸⁹ After this date, he was required to be an utter barrister (Baker *History*, 275).

“quarrels ... between natives and aliens, custom officer and refractory shipowner [with] judgment given sometimes under threat of vengeance from the loser” (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 95, 69). The court was a busy one, hearing in excess of five hundred cases per annum by the late-fifteenth century (Fleming *Time*, 240; *GRB*, 3:38). Technically, the Tolzey was held before the Sheriff;⁹⁰ yet, in this court, the latter officer also functioned as a bailiff for the mayor and commonalty, suggesting that the mayor presided *de facto* (Baker *History*, 305n129).

Created by statute in 1353 (27 Edw. III), the staple system constituted “a partnership in government between the Crown and the officials of the home staples”, such as Bristol (Liddy, 118). In 1362, the Staple Court had its jurisdiction restricted to debt, contracts, covenants, and other pleas pertaining to merchants and the surety of their merchandise (*GRB*, 3:17).⁹¹ Elements of staple jurisdiction thus bore considerable overlap with Bristol’s existing civic structures and customs, including enforcement of Lex Mercatoria—which had been the prerogative of the Tolzey since the 1200s—, and registration of debts. Both were controlled by Bristol’s mayor (Liddy, 118–9).⁹² Following the mid-fourteenth century introduction of the staple, “serious tensions quickly developed between the staple franchises and the urban libert[y] of Bristol ... ruled by the mayor” (*ibid.*, 119), but these seem to have resolved by Philip Mede’s era.

The 1373 Charter had confirmed the Mayor’s jurisdiction over the *curia Bristollie*. Stripping away the royal justices’ civil jurisdiction over Bristol (*GRB*, 3:4–5), it created a new court presided

⁹⁰ Sheriffs “needed to be conversant with the law in order ... to be well-informed jurors”; they were active participants in the local administration of justice, and could even be called upon to bear arms (Skemer “Breton”, 32).

⁹¹ Ever pragmatic, Bristol’s Staple Court accepted only wool or plate as security (*GRB*, 3:24).

⁹² On similarities and differences between statute merchant and statute staple, *vide*: Liddy, 118–20 *et passim*.

over by the mayor and sheriff—Bristol’s first sheriff being duly appointed on 01 October 1373 (*EHD4*, 559 (G.361.ii); Fleming *Time*, 239; *GRB*, 3:15–16). Chiefly, this court, known as the Mayor’s Court, sat as or in lieu of a Hundred Court,⁹³ tantamount to a probate court and registry of deeds for all properties within Bristol (Fleming *Time*, 239–40). Like keepers of the peace, the sheriff and mayor were empowered to investigate felonies, and indict and imprison suspects. As the superior court of law, the Mayor’s Court was empowered to review cases from Bristol’s other tribunals, and to impose procedural reforms (Fleming *Time*, 239–40). By 1449,⁹⁴ its jurisdiction encompassed cases of trespass and deceit, along with those “arising from alleged violation of a statute”, and (like the Tolzey) mercantile law.⁹⁵

Until 1446, the Mayor’s Court fell under the jurisdiction of the High Court of Admiralty. Rendered somewhat “obscure for want of records”, the medieval Admiralty focused upon maritime commercial dealings, such as transmarine contracts, carriage by sea, bills of exchange, torts at sea, piracy, and the sale and ownership of seagoing vessels (Baker *History*, 211). Although fulfilling a

⁹³ Although Bristol did have a pre-existing Hundred Court, it had markedly “declined in importance”; the Mayor’s Court essentially replaced it (*GRB*, 3:15–16, 46–53). In the immediate wake of Bristol’s 1373 Charter, this court and the the Tolzey “were the only two ... courts in Bristol discharging important judicial functions” (*GRB*, 3:55).

⁹⁴ This same year brings the earliest reference to Bristol’s ‘common attorney’ who was directed, *inter alia*, “to process before the mayor on certain feastdays, ‘after the rewle of the Citee of London’”. The precise function of this officer is uncertain, but his position persisted until at least 1627–8; Tucker tentatively proffers that “[h]e might have discharged some of the functions of the London common serjeant (for example, acting as public prosecutor)” (241).

⁹⁵ One technical exception was actions of debt upon written obligation which fell under the jurisdiction of Bristol’s Staple Court; however, the Mayor presided over this court, as well (Fleming *Time*, 239). In their legal duties, Bristol’s Mayor and Sheriff could be advised by the Recorder or, in his absence, the town clerk (Ricart, 85), both of whom were expected to have legal training (Baker *History*, 308).

significant and increasing need for special maritime jurisdiction, it nonetheless tended to stoke resentment in local authorities. This was the case in Bristol which, in 1446, paid £200 to Henry VI “to be freed from vexation by the Admiral’s servants” (*EHD4*, 479; *cf. CPR 1441–46*, 439). By this charter (*BrCh*, 2:122–27), along with another in 1461 (*BrCh*, 2:132–36), “Bristol was exempted from the jurisdiction of the High Admiralty and granted its own Admiralty Court of which the Mayor was Commissioner” (*GWB*, 6; *cf. Fleming Time*, 193, 198, 210). A few other maritime towns possessed local courts of admiralty (or vice-admiralty), but Bristol’s was by far “[t]he most important” (Baker *History*, 210ⁿ¹²). Similarly, Bristol’s Tolzey and Piepowders had originally been royal courts presided over by a Crown-appointed steward—a position typically leased to a prominent Bristolian—with accrued revenues falling to the Crown. The 1461 Charter, however, saw this fee farm lease granted to Bristol’s mayor and Common Council in perpetuity, as well.

Thus, from 1461, the mayor presided over all of Bristol’s courts—including the Mayor’s Court, the Tolzey, and the Staple, and also sat “as a keeper of the peace with crown judges at sessions of gaol delivery ... exercising great power within his jurisdiction. [From 1461,] *the mayor acknowledged only the Crown as his superior*” (*Fleming Time*, 239–40; emphasis added). As revealed by the effort they expended to secure it, Mede and his fellow Aldermen surely recognized the enormous fiscal and socio-political value inherent in the local consolidation of judicial authority under one of their own number. Fifteenth century Bristol, it seems, bore out the canonists’ maxim ‘status, id est magistratus’ (Post “Status”)—and the magistrate in question was the mayor. As a matter of necessity, he would be expected to be very well-versed in the common law and in *lex mercatoria* (Baker *History*, 306). The first of Bristol’s mayors to hold office with these enhanced judicial powers was none other than Philip Mede.

Thus, on the basis of internal and external evidence, the arms reproduced in MS Richardson 40 can be ascribed, with a fair degree of confidence, to an individual with the surname Mede. From an examination of the extant records, it appears that the most viable late fifteenth century candidates for initial commission of the manuscript are Philip Mede, Mayor of Bristol, or perhaps his eldest son, Richard. A considerable degree of legal literacy would have been necessary for Mede senior to have carry out his documented activities on the local, national, and international stages. The evidence suggests that Mede and his family were possessed of sufficient means to afford high-end books, the ability to engage with the written word, and ample justifications to acquire a legal collection.

CHAPTER 3

As we have seen, statute collections, in both *de luxe* and down-market varieties, had been produced since the 1200s; by the “late fifteenth century they appear to have been in virtually ceaseless demand” (Scott *Later*, 1:66n26) among multiple sectors of society. Despite apparent manufacture in large numbers, with close adherence to a specific schema, the known ownership patterns of an especially luxuriant subset of these law books—the standardized *Nova Statuta*—strongly suggest that they bore a cachet of socio-cultural élitism. The inclusion of MS Richardson 40 among these standardized codices is thus significant for what it suggests about the status of the manuscript’s initial owner, and his social and institutional contacts, as well as possible values and motivations underpinning its acquisition. As we have seen, Philip Mede certainly possessed both means and motivation to purchase a luxury legal text, and, as will be discussed below, although he resided in Bristol, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that he was capable of reading a work in Latin and Law French. Yet questions remain: given the dearth of evidence that Mede had formal legal training, even if we presume that he did own MS Richardson 40, how might he have used such a volume?

LITERACY IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Unfortunately, “the extent of literacy among the laity in the Middle Ages must always be a matter for debate” (Parkes “Literacy”, 571), and evaluating the evidence for literacy in medieval England is particularly challenging. Traditional methods for determining literacy rates, such as analysis of signatures, are undermined by widespread use of seals in medieval England (Clanchy, 184, 244–

48), in tandem with the practice of teaching reading and writing as discrete skills (*ibid.*, 88, 97, 183). Further complicating the matter, relatively little of the research into medieval literacy rates has focused upon England of the 1400s, with the result that “[a]n up-to-date, general survey of literacy ... is lacking” for this period (Trapp, 31n.1). Consequently, we largely find ourselves compelled to rely upon inference.

Schooling in England predated the arrival of the Normans (Orme “Bristol”, 9), and expanded throughout the medieval era. By the twelfth century, not only cathedral cities, but also the majority of country towns boasted “public schools offering elementary teaching in how to read and more advanced teaching in Latin grammar”; in the following century, they spread to market towns, as well (*ibid.*, 11). Hence, some access to education was widely available throughout the island during the 1300s and 1400s (Orme “Schoolmasters”, 218) with the latter century in particular bringing a rise in overall numbers (Trapp, 31). Although religious houses could and did run schools (Orme “Bristol”, 11), and parish clergy occasionally took on the odd pupil (*ibid.*; Orme “Schoolmasters”, 218), the fourteenth through fifteenth centuries saw greater pedagogical independence from the Church, with a proliferation of free-standing, private educational institutions led by professional teachers (Orme *Medieval*, 189–95; Trapp, 39), along with the emergence of endowed grammar schools which paid masters a stipend, enabling them to waive fees (Orme “Bristol”, 13). Pupils chiefly learned to read,⁹⁶ write, and speak Latin, occasionally augmented with French; “[a]rithmetic was not a school subject[, but] learnt ‘on the job’ by apprentices and clerks who needed to know it” (*ibid.*, 11).

⁹⁶ For an examination of how medieval people learned to read—reconstructed, in part, from teachers’ notes and glosses in surviving pedagogical texts—, and the ways in which reading materials were used in the classroom, *vide*: Reynolds *Medieval Reading*.

While the precise impact of this pedagogical flowering is uncertain, some clues regarding general population literacy rates can be gleaned from official records and legislation. In 1172, the Concordat of Avranches absolved Henry II of responsibility for the murder of Thomas à Becket, but also compelled the king to cede (with very few exceptions) legal jurisdiction over the clergy. Thereafter, in criminal cases, secular courts were obliged to surrender accused clergy to their ecclesiastical counterparts which exercised greater leniency in trial methods (relying mainly upon compurgation) and in sentencing. Into the eighteenth century, defendants proved their clerical status through a literacy test—specifically, reading a passage from the Bible.⁹⁷ Unsurprisingly, literate laymen soon began to exploit the loophole. An enactment of 1351 (25 Edw. III, c. 4), affirmed this practice, decreeing that any man demonstrating an ability to read met the legal definition of a clerk and was thus entitled to plead *privilegium clericale* or ‘benefit of clergy’. A century and a half later, however, rising literacy rates spurred restriction of the privilege: noting the steady surge of laymen “emboldened” by this legal fiction, 4 Hen. VII, c. 13 (1489) decreed that any laity found to be thus pleading were “on a first conviction, to be branded and debarred from a second plea” (Trapp, 39; *cf.* Alldridge, 370; Baker *History*, 531–40). Parallel with this development, Chancery articulated concerns regarding the dissemination of Wycliff’s doctrines in Latin and in English as early as 1388 (Trapp, 36). The various anti-heretical enactments and proceedings of the last decade of the

⁹⁷ By tradition, Psalm 50 (Vulgate; now 51): *Miserere mei, deus, secundum misericordiam tuam* (Have mercy upon me, o god, according to thine heartfelt mercifulness); the evidence, however, does not show consistent use of a specific text. The lawyer Thomas Kebell noted, *ca.* 1470/5, that the court selected “the passage, and could by discretion assign whatever book they pleased so long as it was legible” (Baker *History*, 532, citing BL, MS Hargrave 87, f. 304), yet BL, MS Harley 4990, f. 159^v (1530s), claims the bishop’s deputy furnished the book (Baker *History*, 532ⁿ13) which, in practice, would constrain the court.

fifteenth century primarily targeted “the *litteratus* in the classical sense”—to wit, the (usually clerical) reader of Latin—, yet “the prohibitions were also ... firmly directed against readers of the vernacular” (*ibid.*, 36–7).

Nonetheless, the fifteenth century did see marked growth both in the production of books, and in the number of schools in England—trends strongly suggesting “an improved general level of literacy” (Trapp, 31, 34). From approximately 1400, the primer was widely available in English (*ibid.*, 36), and “overall growth in the ability to read *and* write English during our period is certain enough” (*ibid.*, 31, emphasis in original)—even more cautious scholars note that the growing middle class had developed a pragmatic yet sophisticated vernacular literacy by the fifteenth century (Parkes “Literacy”, 572).

In late medieval England, “[l]and was the most important source of wealth [as well as] of power”, and administering that land—whether for oneself, or on behalf of the Crown and greater magnates who delegated both estate stewardship and local and regional governance to the gentry classes—required general literacy for deciphering written instructions and keeping records. A considerable degree of legal literacy was also in order since “title to land was subject to perpetual litigation”. (Keen, 261; *cf.* Liddy). Gentry families such as the Pastons, Stonors, and Plumptons thus held very strong standards of education (*ibid.*). In a very high proportion of cases, this education was pursued through the Inns of Court, where gentlemen’s sons obtained knowledge of the law,

training in French, a measure of cultural polish, and access to social networking opportunities⁹⁸—as Richard Mede, a Middle Templar (Baker *Men*, 2:1080), was surely aware.⁹⁹

Bristol and its environs were not immune to these developments. The earliest reference to a public school in the town dates from the third quarter of the 1100s, and at least two schoolmasters taught grammar there by 1379 (Orme “Bristol”, 10, 24). Five years thereafter, Lady Katherine Berkeley established England’s first endowed grammar school at nearby Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucs (*ibid.*, 12–13). By the 1420s, Bristol boasted a minimum of two choir schools,¹⁰⁰ a pair of grammar masters, and “another schoolhouse that presumably housed a third ... master” (Moran Cruz “Education”, 191); a half century later, it was home to five different grammar schools, plus the aforementioned choir schools (*ibid.*). Numerous freelance masters taught in Bristol throughout the period, as well (Orme “Schoolmasters”, 222). At least one of the town’s grammar schools—that of Master Robert Londe, situated over Newgate, 1419–1462 (Orme *Medieval*, 140; *idem* “Bristol”, 15–16, 19, 24)—followed

⁹⁸ Baker provides excellent overviews in the Introduction to his *Men of Court*, and in *History*, 449–72. Sending sons to be educated at the Inns remained a common practice among the gentry until well into the Early Modern period; *vide*: Wallace and Webb.

⁹⁹ *NB*: Membership does not signify that Richard was a lawyer. The evidence for his link to the Middle Temple is an action brought against him for arrears of dues. These suits were quite common, and constitute an important source for research on the late medieval Inns. Regrettably, such claims could be “brought against former students who left without paying their bills or against gentry who were using the Inns intermittently as (in effect) London clubs” (Baker *Men*, 1:9–12 at 11).

¹⁰⁰ The choir schools, established by wealthier parish churches to maintain high-quality choirs for the Mass, taught Latin, musical notation, and singing; “dozens of such choirs ... involving hundreds of boys” existed across England during the late medieval era. Those endowed under the Chantry Act were dissolved in the early 1540s; the remainder shut down when introduction of the *Book of Common Prayer* abolished Latin services in 1549 (Orme *Medieval*, 323–4).

the same curriculum as that of other leading schools in England, both in range of material and levels of attainment. Clearly Bristol was abreast of current developments in education ... So there was nothing provincial about going to school in Bristol and no inferiority in educational standards there (Orme “Bristol”, 19, 21).

While a literate individual (*litteratus*) in medieval England was, by definition, one who could read Latin (Trapp, 36–7), and knowledge of Latin was increasingly required of lay administrators (Clanchy, 197–201; *cf.* Turner), such “literacy was not the norm” even among social élites (Trapp, 33). The use of Anglo Norman had begun to decline even among the ruling classes by the early 1200s (Kibbee, 4)—a pattern which accelerated during the latter 1300s, parallel with an escalation in French’s prestige. Although Latin has been compared to a medieval “‘internet’ [insofar as it] gave access to knowledge”, until the very end of the fifteenth century, the majority of English “gentlemen ... preferred to read and write in English *and French*”, and familiarity with the latter was assumed amongst members of the gentry classes (Orme “Recreation”, 71, 73, emphasis added). No less a personage than Sir John Cavendish CJ (KB) (d. 14 Jun 1381) (*ODNB*) insisted that his will (dated 05 Apr 1381) be “drawn up in French rather than in Latin, in order, as he explained, that his friends should understand it more readily” (Thrupp, 247).

French remained in use in common law courts and legal texts throughout the fifteenth century.¹⁰¹ Though the 1362 Statute of Pleading (36 Edw. III, c. 15) had decreed that all

¹⁰¹ Regrettably, a discussion of French’s profound influence upon the English judicial lexicon falls beyond the scope of the present study. The literature on the medieval era is extensive; starting points include: Brand “Language”; *idem* “Languages”; Davidson “Discourse”; Kennedy “Prosopography”. On the status of French in medieval England generally, *vide* Kibbee; Davidson *Medievalism*; Kennedy “Changes”.

governmental and legal business was to be conducted in English, the statute itself was, somewhat perversely, in French,¹⁰² and legislation continued to be drafted in that language until the 1480s (Tiersma, 21). On paper, French remained the language of England's courts until 1731, and its use in the common law tradition continues to the present (Thomson and Morgan, 26–28; *cf.* Brand “Languages”).¹⁰³ Thus, the proliferation of French texts (versus Latin) in late fifteenth century *statuta angliae*—including MS Richardson 40—is to be expected.

Preserving or acquiring facility in French was not solely the concern of lawyers, however. It was not unusual for medieval Englishmen to have some facility in more than one language (Clanchy, ch. 6),¹⁰⁴ and, in later medieval England, “French ... increasingly marked either professional and practical or prestigious and literary ends”, becoming less an inherent “marker of social distinction” than an instrumental tool for socio-economic advancement (Davidson *Medievalism*, 70, 107). As evinced by the extensive surviving correspondence, accounts, and other records produced by individuals and guilds, merchants certainly wrote and read English (Trapp, 32). Yet the mercantile class also had an ongoing interest in preserving facility in French: growth in international trade over the course of the 1300s and 1400s generated ongoing need for proficiency in the tongue as it was the “language for business” not only of France, but also of Italy and Flanders

¹⁰² Kibbee argues that, rather than encouragement of English pleading *per se*, the true aim of this enactment was curtailment of the legal “chicanery” facilitated by the increasingly arcane Law French (63–5).

¹⁰³ Tiersma's *Legal Language*, especially chapter two, provides a succinct overview. On the use of French in modern British Parliamentary procedure, *vide*: Bennion.

¹⁰⁴ As Davidson notes, the era's multilingualism “generally escaped comment in the historical record precisely because speakers and writers ... habitually employ language ... in ways which are naturally intelligible to them within their cultural setting” (*Medievalism*, 142–3n26).

(Thomson and Morgan, 28), acting as a mercantile *lingua franca*.¹⁰⁵ In Bristol, an important international port during the period, this was even reflected in civic rituals: despite their Latin titles, the town's *Sacramentum Maioris* (Oath of the Mayor), and *Sacramentum Ballivorum* (Oath of the Bailiffs) were both given in French throughout the fifteenth century (*LRB*, 1:46–47 (ff. 17^v–18)).

Bristol, then, provided ample opportunity to acquire at least the rudiments of Latin. Further, as a merchant, as a landowner, and in his mayoral capacity, Philip Mede would undoubtedly have been capable of grappling with texts in French. His son, Richard, may have possessed at least comparable proficiency in French; he could certainly read Latin for, on 17 July 1464, John Touker, notary public of Wells, recorded that the installation of Master John Mede, M.A., to the church of Wraxall, Som., had been witnessed by, *inter alia*, “Philip Mede, merchant, of Bristol, [and] Richard Mede, literate” (Bath and Wells *Stillington*, 10–11 no. 61).

BOOK OWNERSHIP IN MEDIEVAL BRISTOL

“[M]erchants ... had long formed an important proportion of the country's small lay book-owning public”, and the evidence reveals that Bristol's “hard-headed business men” collected books (Thrupp, 247, 95), with many both donating liturgical and devotional codices to their parish churches, and lending secular literature to their peers (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 95). Bristol merchant William Pavy, MP (1453–4) (*HP*, 669), owned a “good psalter”, a volume of legends of the saints, and “more than one missal” (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 95). John Esterfield (d. 1504), merchant, MP (1485/6, 1487), and Mayor of Bristol (1487, 1494/5) (*HP*, 303), bequeathed four

¹⁰⁵ On the polyglot merchants of fifteenth century London, *vide*: Hsy; on mercantile literacy more generally, *vide*: Richardson.

books in his will (Carus-Wilson *Medieval*, 95). William Coder, mayor and merchant, kept a chest in his house full of “many Latin books ... and others which he had lent to a kinsman” (*ibid.*).

That none of the probate records associated with Philip Mede, or with his children, mention law books need not give us pause. References to books in medieval English wills are rather uncommon, and comparisons of probate records with inventories made during a testator’s lifetime show that silence generally prevailed even among collectors (Cavanaugh, 9). Sir Thomas Urswyck (d. 1479), Recorder of London and Chief Baron of the Exchequer, bequeathed not a single book of any kind—yet an inventory of his house at Dagenham listed six manuscripts in the chapel alone: Chaucer, Mandeville, Froissart, two devotional volumes, and a book of law (Thrupp, 248). Moreover, even in wills making specific reference to books, liturgical or devotional manuscripts, especially those in Latin, are significantly over-represented as compared to vernacular texts and those dealing with secular subjects. The most frequently bequeathed codicological genre seems to have been the breviary; one study counted references to 400 breviaries in surviving wills from fifteenth century York alone (Moran Cruz “Common”, 21–22). Such overrepresentation is conceivably due to the focus of these documents. Devotional volumes fulfilled a dual rôle, commemorating the testator whilst contributing to their spiritual welfare, and that of their community, by disseminating a work of piety. In many cases, these bequests even include a condition that the book “be used in praying” for the testator’s soul (Cavanaugh, 9–10).

Further, literature bequeathed in wills does not necessarily reflect the professional concerns or occupation of the testator. The 08 August 1415 will of Robert Wyntryngam, canon of Lincoln, prebendary of Liddington, and provost of St. Andrew’s Cotterstock (Cotherstoke), bequeaths “all my books of civil and common law” to a nephew; despite Wyntryngam’s calling, and the solemn

nature of the document, no theological, liturgical, nor devotional works are mentioned (*ibid.*, 941).

Similarly, in his will of 20 July 1410 (proved 22 Sep. 1413), lawyer and Speaker of Parliament John Stourton (d. 18 Sep. 1413) specified seven manuscripts: two missals, a portiforium, a psalter, a gradual, a *Legenda Sanctorum*, and a work of physic (“fisico”); he made no reference to books of law or of political philosophy (*ibid.*, 827–28). Canonist and civilian Adam Usk (d. 1430), chronicler, notary public, and advocate in the court of Arches, bequeathed only two codices: “unum librum vocatum Policronica”,¹⁰⁶ and a copy of *Racionale Divinorum* (*ibid.*, 893).¹⁰⁷

ON THE USES OF MANUSCRIPTS

Aside from use as copyists’ exemplars, personal reading material, reference works (especially pertinent for legal manuscripts), and gifts, “medieval books served other more occasional and miscellaneous uses, most of which indicate a valued status in the late medieval English community” (Scott *Later*, 1:32). Among these were the recording of major life events (*e.g.* births, marriages, and deaths), along with (quasi-)legal transactions, and miscellaneous information. In addition, books occasionally served as payments, ransoms, and as security in loans (*ibid.*, 1:33).

Particularly fine manuscripts could be, and often were, left open upon lecterns, reading-stands, or sideboards for display. For instance, in his will (1540), Thomas Crull, grocer and citizen of London, refers to his “matyns boke ... lymned with gold and pictures accustomed to lye upon my counter bord” (Scott *Later*, 1:69n8). Kathleen Scott indicates that other codices—her examples

¹⁰⁶ The manuscript, which contains, *inter alia*, Usk’s own *Chronica*, is now BL, MS Additional 10104.

For the text, *vide*: Given-Wilson, ed. & trans. *Chronicle*; *cf.* Justice *Adam Usk*.

¹⁰⁷ Guillaume Durand’s *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, a treatise on the symbolism of liturgy, church ritual, and ecclesiastical architecture; *vide*: Thibodeau, trans. *Rationale*.

include the Bedford Hours and Psalter (BL, MS Additional 42131), and perhaps the Vernon manuscript (BodL, MS Eng. poet. a. 1)—were likely displayed in similar fashion; thus, even if their use was restricted to one or two persons, some volumes “should probably be thought of as semi-private in function” (*ibid.*, 1:31).

As French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has argued, it is through precisely such elements of material culture—such as architecture, clothing, food, and other possessions—that socio-economic aspirations, cultural values, and interpersonal and institutional relationships are objectified or made physically manifest. This process unfolds within a broader societal context which codifies and systematizes particular forms or types of objects to produce an ostensibly ‘self-evident’ and ‘natural’ social semiotics. The resultant taxonomies of material representation play central rôles in the construction and representation of authority, status, and even personal identity. Since individuals are assessed and understood through their tastes, the subject and their objects are mutually constitutive, and the subject–object barrier ambiguous or even illusory: possessions act as indices of the self, even as the self is moulded by the cultural context in which it is embedded. Property thus proclaims and produces identity, and judgements of ‘taste’ amount to acts of social positioning.

Perhaps the prototypical example of these processes within the medieval English context is sumptuary legislation. From 1337 until their final repeal by James I and VI in 1603, English legislators repeatedly enacted laws regulating clothing, personal ornament, and consumption of food. As numerous researchers have shown, one of the primary concerns underpinning these laws was the ‘problem’ of perceived social disorder arising from the era’s economic and social changes—especially increased social mobility, the breakdown of traditional structures of authority, and the emergence of new class alliances. Since “status had become relatively fluid and based on acquirable

signs”, members of traditionally dominant social groups sought to enforce and render visible a particular social hierarchy via imposition of a taxonomy of material forms (Sponsler, 266). Tellingly, comparison of the 1363 (3 Edw. III), 1463 (3 Edw. IV), and 1483 (22 Edward IV) enactments reveals a growing preoccupation with the upwardly mobile middle strata of society (*ibid.*, 280).

The fundamentally physical focus of codicological analyses thus renders them highly amenable to enrichment by anthropological and sociological theories of material culture, especially those addressing the ways in which luxury objects are consumed and disseminated. With their large format, sumptuous decoration, and authoritative textual content, the late fifteenth century standardized *Nova Statuta* manuscripts constituted ideal volumes for displaying in the ways described above—whether at home, or in a courtroom or other civic venue. The potential inherent in such manuscripts to be deployed as emblems of authority, as well as one component of a broader project of socio-economic positioning, is reflected in their iconography.¹⁰⁸

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF POWER

The choice of enthroned kings for the standard model historiated initials—as opposed to, for instance, depictions of legal practitioners, or scenes of courtrooms or legal education—reflects the era’s growing “emphasis on the iconography of power” with book artisans’ and patrons’ selection and design of miniatures and other illustrations reflecting a heightened preoccupation with social hierarchy (Scott *Later*, 1:61). Among the suite of strategies deployed “to impress with implicit force

¹⁰⁸ On the late medieval recognition of the inherently performative nature of the self, with an emphasis upon the links between civic ritual and the construction and representation of specifically urban, mercantile conceptions of masculinity, *vide*: Fitzgerald; on the non-aristocratic, English, medieval male’s experience and understanding of masculinity more generally, *vide*: Neal.

and status” was the “iconic presentation” of the monarch and their court (*ibid.*). Even apparently arbitrary features of the standard model king-and-court iconography reflect this larger project. The full-frontal orientation, a posture of assertiveness in social interactions (*cf., inter alia*, Schmid Mast, *et al.*),¹⁰⁹ reinforces a sense of dominance and authority, as do the inclusion of orb and sceptre —“attributes of the highest office of the realm”—, the greater relative size of the monarch, and his central positioning upon “a raised, canopied throne, sometimes on a cushion, and ‘armed’ with advisors in subsidiary positions” (Scott *Later*, 1:61). Rather than betraying difficulties with perspective or a dearth of artistic skill, enlargement of one figure relative to others in a miniature was an established artistic convention for conveying power, authority, and “superior status” (*ibid.*).¹¹⁰ Depictions of kings during the fourteenth and earlier fifteenth centuries “had as a rule shown them enthroned, but in a weaker three-quarter view ..., gesturing toward the text like a *nota bene* hand, or granting a privilege”, and often alone (*ibid.*)—attributes similar to those characterizing the first two historiated initials in MS Richardson 40.

Concomitantly, in lieu of the traditional iconography of a guild’s patron saint, the period’s guild books increasingly opened with large-scale depictions of the monarch and royal family—a practice which alluded to the guild’s prestige by implying its capacity “to attract [the patronage of] the highest family in the realm” (Scott *Later*, 1:61). Much like presentation scenes,¹¹¹ this convention conveyed “power ... by association”, evoking the “reflected glory” of preeminent status and authority via symbolic proximity to it (*ibid.*, 1:62). Thus, the inclusion of royal arms in a

¹⁰⁹ On medieval consciousness of the importance of body language, *vide*: Mitchell.

¹¹⁰ Contemporary miniatures of bishops and abbots tend to reflect analogous concerns by depicting more senior churchmen in larger sizes than, or elevated above, others (Scott *Later*, 1:62).

¹¹¹ Miniatures depicting presentation of a book by a donor to a patron.

manuscript—as in TNA, MS E164/11; St. John’s College, MS 257; or the standard model fragment of 1 Henry VII—is not necessarily indicative of royal ownership, a non-armigerous owner (*i.e.* royal arms used as a ‘default’ in absence of an alternative), or heightened modesty and humility: like presentation scenes, displaying the monarch’s arms can also be construed as “indicative of a will to elicit acknowledgment of status and its accompanying power” (*ibid.*, 1:61)—status and power which were foregrounded in Philip Mede’s politico-legal activities on the local and national stages.

CONCLUSION

In his examination of the pragmatic dimension of mayoral power in late medieval Bristol, Peter Fleming commences with the Bristolian law courts, explaining that the greater part of the Mayor’s political power “derived from his position as senior magistrate, as established by the 1373 charter” and consolidated through the mid-fifteenth century amendments (*ibid.*, 239). These details may help mitigate hesitation over positing Philip Mede as the initial patron of MS Richardson 40. Far from merely another wealthy and possibly bibliophilic merchant, by virtue of his position as mayor of Bristol—an office he held in thrice during this period—, Philip Mede was, in practice, a powerful magistrate.

Embedded within a community profoundly attuned to the use of display as a form of cultural capital, Mede also demonstrated a shrewd awareness of the social power and value of high cultural forms as evinced by, for instance, his use or adoption of arms, in tandem with the elaborate family tomb in St. Mary Redcliffe. These symbols conveyed to others, from within and without the community, important information regarding an individual’s biographical and socio-economic status and positioning. Their deployment within churches is telling given their rôles as, in part, “‘theatres of memory’ and prayer factories” (Fleming *Time*, 81). Commemoration, and intercession

on behalf of the dead consumed “[a]n enormous share of the community’s wealth”, time, and energy, resulting in a mushrooming of monuments. As Peter Fleming observes, “[p]arallels with modern advertising are perhaps not entirely inappropriate” (*ibid.*, 82).

Rather than being confined to ecclesiastical and commemorative environments, these semiotic practices manifested throughout multiple dimensions of the medieval English social world including manuscripts. A more secular example of the phenomenon can be found in Ricart’s *Kalendar*¹¹² which contains, at f. 152, an illumination of the Mayor of Bristol’s swearing-in ceremony (Ricart, xiii) that bears striking similarities to extant fifteenth century depictions of England’s superior Courts of Law, *viz.* Chancery, Common Pleas, Exchequer, and King’s Bench (Corner “Observations”). Moreover, like the standard model *Statuta Angliæ* manuscripts, the *Kalendar* features portraits of kings at regular intervals (Ricart, xi). The illustration possibly evokes a sense of how Bristol’s governing élite regarded themselves and the offices they held, as well as the ways in which legal and administrative manuscripts might be deployed in the construction and representation of status and authority (*cf.* Sacks “Celebrating”).

Late medieval Englishmen and women thus appear to have been keenly aware of the social power invested in material forms. Aside from the more pragmatic applications of common law reference works, the very ownership of a legal manuscript—especially an opulent, large format, and thus expensive, copy—signalled intimate familiarity with an authoritative body of knowledge, and access to equally high status institutions and social networks. It is thus unsurprising that, as we have

¹¹² This late fifteenth century volume was produced, from 1478–9, by Robert Ricart under commission by then Mayor William Spencer. One of the earliest town chronicles outside of London, it provides a heavily mythologized history of Bristol—purportedly founded by Brennius, son of Brutus—, along with lists of town officials; descriptions of civic ceremonies, customs, and robes of office; lists of regulations; and details of judicial matters (Fleming “Making”).

seen, known ownership patterns suggest that standard model statute books bore a marked cachet of élitism—despite their relative lack of æsthetic and semiotic uniqueness. Marking membership within a very small and select group, possession of such a codex could play a central rôle in the construction and representation of authority, while also functioning as a signifier for the owner's gentility.

APPENDIX : CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF
HOUGHTON LIBRARY, MS RICHARDSON 40

Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 40. Magna Carta; Nova statuta: manuscript, 1468–1469. England. Sovereign (1461–1470 : Edward IV).

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Large, three volume *Statuta Angliæ* manuscript (*Magna Carta* to 7–8 Edward IV, with several tracts), with historiated and inhabited initials, and occasional foliate bar borders. Several hands and numerous artists. In Latin and Law French.

CONTENTS

Vol. I :

1. f. i^r. Inscriptions in pencil in a modern hand (*q.v.*, ‘Additions’, *infra*)
2. ff. i^v–iv^v. [Blank; unruled, unlineated].
3. f. 1^r. Ownership inscription of Sir James Dyer J (*q.v.*, ‘Additions’, *infra*).
4. ff. 1^v–2^v. [Blank; unruled, unlineated].
5. f. 3^r. Table of contents listing Magna Carta to 38 Henry VI.
6. f. 3^v. [Blank; unruled, unlineated].
7. ff. 4^r–56^v4. List of capitula of the statutes.
8. ff. 57^r1–59^v26. Magna carta de libertatibus Angliæ. *SR* 1:114.
9. ff. 60^r1–61^r25. Carta de foresta. *SR* 1:120.
10. f. 61^v1–24. Sentencia *lata super cartas* (i.e. Sententia excommunicationis lata in transgressores cartarum). 37 Hen. III. *SR* 1:6–7.
11. ff. 62^r1–71^v12. *Statuta Westmonasterii prima*. 3 Edw. I. *SR* 1:26–39.
12. ff. 71^v24–89^v24. *Statuta Westmonasterii secunda*. 13 Edw. I. *SR* 1:71–95.

13. ff. 90^r1–92^v4. *Statuta Gloucestriae*. 6 Edw. I. *SR* 1:47–50.
14. ff. 92^v14–93^r2. *Explanaciones eorundem*. 6 Edw. I. *SR* 1:50.
15. ff. 93^r13–94^v29. *Statuta Scackary* (*i.e.* *Statuta de Scaccario Regis*). *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 51 Hen. III. *SR* 1:197–8.
16. f. 95^r1–29. *Districiones Scackary*. *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 51 Hen. III. *SR* 1:197b.
17. ff. 95^v1–97^r6. *Statutum Wyntome* (*i.e.* *Statutum Wintoniae*). 13 Edw. I. *SR* 1:96–8.
18. ff. 97^r18–98^r19. *Statutum Exonie*. *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 14 Edw. I. *SR* 1:210–12.
19. ff. 98^r26–99^v28. *Articuli istius statuta* (*i.e.* *Articuli eorundem statutorum Exonie*). *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 14 Edw. I. *SR* 1:210–12.
20. ff. 100^r1–101^v9. *Provisiones de Mertone*. 20 Hen. III. *SR* 1:1–4.
21. ff. 101^v20–106^r15. *Statutum Marleberge*. 52 Hen. III. *SR* 1:19–25.
22. ff. 106^r27–107^r30. *Statute de libertate clamanda* (*i.e.* *Quo Warranto*; Preamble to the Statute of Gloucester, 1278). 30 Edw. I. *SR* 1:45–7.
23. f. 107^v1–21. *Statutum de juratis et assisis*. 21 Edw. I. *SR* 1:113.
24. ff. 107^v27–108^r12. *Statuta de prohibicionibus* (*a.k.a.* *Circumspecte agatis*). 13 Edw. I. *SR* 1:101–2.
25. ff. 108^r24–108^v17. *Statutum de emptoribus terrarum* (*a.k.a.* *Statuta Westmonasterii tercium; Quia emptores*). 18 Edw. I. *SR* 1:106.
26. ff. 108^v26–109^r23. *Statuta de viris religiosis*. 7 Edw. I. *SR* 1:51.
27. ff. 109^r30–109^v19. *Statutum de defencione juris*. 20 Edw. I. *SR* 1:110.
28. ff. 109^v28–110^r4. *Statutum de conspiratoribus*. *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 33 or 11 Edw. I. *SR* 1:216.

29. f. 110^r14–23. *Statutum* de champertie. *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 33 or 11 Edw. I. *SR* 1:145.
30. ff. 110^r32–110^v6. *Statutum* de quo warranto novum. 30 Edw. I. *SR* 1:107.
31. f. 110^v16–27. *Statutum* de proteccionibus. 34 Edw. I. *SR* 1:217.
32. f. 111^r1–12. *Statutum* de anno et die bisextili. 40 Hen. III. *SR* 1:7.
33. ff. 111^r21–111^v3. *Statutua* de homagio et fidelitate (*i.e.* Modus faciendi homagium et fidelitatem). *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 17 Edw. II. *SR* 1:227–28.
34. ff. 111^v11–112^r1. *Statuta* de wardis et releviis. *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 28 Edw. I. *SR* 1:228.
35. f. 112^r10–26. *Dies communes* in banco. 51 Hen. III. *SR* 1:208.
36. ff. 112^r30–112^v11. *Dies communes* de dote. 51 Hen. III. *SR* 1:208.
37. ff. 112^v22–113^r30. *Statutum* de moneta. *SR* 1:219–219a. (219 *semel*)
38. f. 113^v1–23. *Novi articuli eorumdem statutum*. *SR* 1:219–219a. (219 *bis*)
39. ff. 114^r1–115^r8. *Statuta* de finibus *levatis*. 27 Edw. I. *SR* 1:128–30.
40. ff. 115^r20–116^r16. *Statutum* de mercatoribus Actone Burnel. 11 Edw. I. *SR* 1:53–54.
41. ff. 116^r27–117^r19. *Articuli super trailbaston*. *Temp.* Edw. I. Beginning “Leat assan de cens
que per forte & armes & a tort”.
42. ff. 117^r28–117^v9. *Statuta* de sokagio. Beginning “Sokage poet estre destmete en plusours
maners”.
43. ff. 117^v21–118^r5. *Assisa panis et cervisiæ*. 51 Hen. III. *SR* 1:199–200.
44. f. 118^r13–17. *Lucrum pistoris*. 51 Hen. III. *SR* 1:202.
45. ff. 118^r27–118^v10. *Quot modus calumpniandi sunt essonia*. *Temp. incert.* *SR* 1:217–18.
46. ff. 118^v18–119^v19. *Statutum* de coniunctim feoffatis. 34 Edw. I.
47. ff. 119^v28–121^r27. *Prerogative regis*. *Temp. incert.*; trad. cit. as 17 Edw. II. *SR* 1:226–27.

48. ff. 121^v1–124^r15. Tractatus *bastardia*. Tract on bastardy beginning “Notander *per* si *bastardus* se clamans”.

49. ff. 124^r26–136^r4. Fet a saver. Woodbine *Four*, 53–115.

Vol. II :

1. f. i^r. Inscriptions in pencil in a modern hand (*q.v.*, ‘Additions’, *infra*)
2. ff. i^v–iv^v. [Blank; unruled, unlineated].
3. ff. 1^r–4^v9. Statutes of 1 Edw. III (1327). Near the arms embedded in the lower border at f. 1^r is a medieval inscription, ‘mede’, in shell gold (*q.v.*, ‘Borders’ *s.v.* ‘Decoration’, fig. 1, *infra*).
4. ff. 4^v16–5^r14. La patent de la *perambulacion* dez *boundez* de forestez. Edw. III. *CPR*, 1327–1330, 39 *m.* 15.
5. ff. 5^r17–82^r12. Statutes of 2–47 Edw. III (1328–1373).
6. ff. 82^r23–84^r13. Statutes of 1 Ric. II (1377).
7. ff. 84^v–85^r. [Blank; ruled, but unlineated].
8. ff. 85^v1–149^r21. Statutes of 1–21 Ric. II (1377–1397).
9. f. 149^v. [Blank; ruled, but unlineated].
10. ff. i^r–iii^v. [Blank].

Vol. III :

1. f. i^r. Inscriptions in pencil in a modern hand (*q.v.*, ‘Additions’, *infra*)
2. ff. i^v–iv^v. [Blank; unruled, unlineated].
3. ff. 1^r1–38^v11. Statutes of 1–13 Hen. IV (1399–1411).
4. ff. 39^r–39^v. [Blank].
5. ff. 40^r1–69^r13. Statutes of 1–9 Hen. V (1413–1421).

6. f. 69^v. [Blank; ruled, but unlineated].
7. ff. 70^r1–163^r2. Statutes of 1–33 Hen. VI (1422–1455).
8. ff. 163^r?–192^r33. Statutes of 1–7/8 Edw. IV (1461–1467/8).
9. ff. 192^v–193^r. [Blank; ruled and lineated].
10. f. 193^v. [Blank; unruled, unlineated].
11. ff. i^r–iv^v. [Blank].

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

Vetera (vol. I) and *Nova* (vols. II–III) *Statuta* with tracts. England, ca. 1460s–1470s, in three volumes (hereafter vol. I, vol. II, vol. III). “Scraped ... vellum” (Pickwood 1.1); hair side usually scarcely discernible; gilt edges. Extensive water damage in vol. I (*q.v.* ‘Additions’, *infra*). All three volumes written in a (mostly) professional legal anglicana with headers and select words in the text in Textura semi-quadrata, in sepia or black ink, in at least three hands, one of which is that of the ‘*Nova Statuta* scribe’ (*q.v.*, ch. 1 and Table 2, *supra*). Litteræ notabiliores touched in with pale yellow or pale pink. Paraphs alternating blue and red, with pen-work flourishes. Three historiated and 157 inhabited (usually champ) initials, some extending into vinets or demi-vinets; occasional foliate bar borders.

DIMENSIONS

Vol. I : Ff. iv+136+iv; 303–311 × 210–214 mm; f. 58: 303 × 197–203 mm (due to strip torn from fore-edge). A turned-in corner at f. 94 reveals the extent of trimming (fore-edge: 9 mm, bottom: 4 mm). Vol. II : Ff. iv+149+iv; 308–309 × 211–214 mm. Vol. III : Ff. iv+193+iv; 308–311 × 210–214 mm.

WRITING AREA

Vol. I : *Tables*: approx. 204 × 136 mm, 2 col. (68 mm, 72 mm), 28 lines. *Statutes*: approx. 190–200 × 123–129 mm, 28–31 long lines. Vol. II : Approx. 202–204 × 132–139 mm, 34–35 long lines. Vol. III : Approx. 187–194 × 128–133 mm, 34 long lines.

COLLATION

Vol. I : I², II–XVIII⁸; vol. II : I–XVIII⁸, XIX⁵ wants 6, 7, 8; vol. III : I³, II–XXI⁸, XXII⁶ (foliation unclear), XXIII–XXIV⁸, collation of last eleven folia unclear.

FOLIATION

All three volumes feature (i) modern foliation in pencil, at lower binding-side corners, recto only, consisting of small arabic numerals running 1–100, then recommencing at 1; and (ii) early quire-based foliation, in ink, at lower fore-edge corners, recto only, consisting of small arabic numerals running 1–8. The forms of the latter numerals are consistent with a MS production date of *ca.* 1460 (Hill *Development*, 38–41).

QUIRATION AND BINDERS' MARKS

All three volumes have at least four overlapping sets of binders' marks or quiration, in several fifteenth century hands, one in the same ink as the text. Each consists of an alphanumeric or alphabetical code, and are situated at lower, fore-edge margins, recto only; some occur on every folio, others in the first half of each quire only. On many folia they are lost due to trimming. In vol. II, the first folio of the final quire is marked '19', and its final folio is foliated '5'. In vol. III, f. 1 is foliated '6', and the quiration in quire II commences at '20', continuing thus throughout the volume.

The pattern suggests that vol. II and vol. III were originally a single volume, which was split at f. 6 of q. XVIII. The precise date of the split and rearrangement is uncertain.

CATCHWORDS OR CATCHPHRASES

Catchwords or catchphrases appear in the following quires: vol. I: III–IV + VIII–XV + XVII; vol. II: I–XVIII; vol. III: I–XVIII.

In all three volumes, catchphrases (as opposed to catchwords) predominate, with all appearing in lower, binding-side margins. In vol. II and vol. III, many are enclosed in decorative scrolls, boxes, or whimsical animal doodles (*e.g.* vol. II ff. 56^v, 64^v), a practice which Leiden University codicologist Erik Kwakkel has informally observed to be common in continental legal manuscripts (“Elvis”). All are in the same ink and hands as the text or headers, and feature similar highlighting in the same pale pink or yellow found in the text.

BINDING

All three volumes are bound in worn, twentieth century crimson velvet, on millboard; hollow back spine with red, yellow, and green end bands over flat parchment cores. Doublure and sewn endleaves in off-white, double-fold machine woven paper, with velvet joints. Pickwoad suggests “5 recessed supports (?) [*sic.*] with overcast joints”.

PRICKING AND RULING

Prickings occasionally visible in fore-edge margins. Ruling schemata,¹¹³ visible throughout all three volumes, chiefly in vermillion, but varying in colour (*q.v.* Table 5, *infra*).

Vol. I : Although characterized by numerous changes in schema, the initial section (ff. 1–56^v) is consistently ruled in vermillion, with occasional bleed through. *Table of Contents* (ff. 3^r–3^v): [3-211-2/2-0/2-2-2J/J]. *Table of Capitula to the Statutes* (ff. 4^r–56^v): inconsistent ruling, with frequent illegibility due to water damage (*q.v.* “Damage”, *infra*). Visible schemata in this section include: ff. 4^r–5^r: [3-211-1J-3G/2-0/2-2/JJ] or [3-211-1J-3G/2-0/2-2-2J/JJ]; ff. 5^v–9^r: [3-211-22G/2-0/2-2-2J/JJ]; f. 9^v: [2-211/2A1K-0/2-2/J]; f. 10^r: [3-211/2-0/2-2/J]; and f. 33^r: [2-211-2J/2-0/2-2/JJ]. *The Statutes* (ff. 57^r–end) are ruled [2-211/2-0/2-2/J] or [2-211/2-0/2-2/0] throughout.

Vol. II : Firmly ruled in vermillion throughout; schema consistently [2-211/2-0/2-2/0].

Vol. III : Ruling undergoes numerous chromatic shifts which sometimes coincide with changes in schema and/or in hand. Two schemata are apparent: at ff. 1^r–107^v and 170^r–177^v: [2-211/2-0/2-2/0]; and at ff. 164^r–169^v and 178^r–193^v: [1-12/2-0/2-2/H].

¹¹³ Descriptions of ruling schemata in this section employ Muzerelle’s system (“Décrire”; for an excellent English gloss *cf.* Peikola “Mise-en-Page”). Visualizations of the coded descriptions can be generated using Muzerelle’s online tool, *MASTARA*, at [http:// www.palaeographia.org/muzerelle/mastara.htm](http://www.palaeographia.org/muzerelle/mastara.htm)

Table 6: Colour of ruling schemata in vol. III

ff.	colour(s)	hand	sch	notes
1 ^r –107 ^v	vermillion			f. 95 ^r 2: ink changes from sepia to black
108 ^r –115 ^v	violet			all of quire xv
116 ^r –123 ^v	reddish brown			all of quire xvi
124 ^r	violet			
124 ^v	red, brown, purple			
125 ^r –126 ^v	reddish purple			
127 ^r –128 ^v	brown, very thin			ff. 128 ^r –129 ^r : very faint ?plummet lineation
129 ^r –131 ^v	purplish red – purple			thicker ink; better memb. quality
132 ^r –147 ^v	vermillion			two full quires, xviii–xix
148 ^r –163 ^v	purplish red – deep burgundy	148 ^r		very fine lines. less-skilled scribe; headers begin off- centre and slowly migrate left
164 ^r –169 ^v	brown, faint	164 ^r	164 ^r	f. 164 ^r : no ruling; fine, thick memb.
170 ^r –177 ^r	dark red, faint		170 ^r	f. 176 ^v : new limner; f. 170 ^r : start of quire xxiii
177 ^v	red			end of quire xxiii
178 ^r –192 ^r	brown		178 ^r	ff. 178 ^v –193 ^v : same schema as f. 165 ^r
192 ^v –193 ^v	brown			blank, but ruled; ff. 193 ^r –193 ^v : prickings visible
				hand = start of new hand sch = start of new schema

LAYOUT

Vol. I : Ff. 3^r: Table of contents listing *Magna Carta* to 38 Henry VI, in two columns (68, 72 mm), in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished initial letters. Ff. 4^r–56^v: List of capitula of the statutes in a single, subdivided (number, text) column, in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished initial letters. Ff. 57^r–136^r: Statutes in a single column with running headers (the first half of a statute's abbreviated name on one folio, the second half on the facing folio, as 'Westm | Prim'), in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished majuscules. Marginal capitula numbers as roman numerals in

Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished initial letters. Between most statutes are explicits and incipits in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished majuscules, and generous white space (typically four to five lines) on either side.

Vol. II : Ff. 1^r–149^r : Statutes in a single column with running headers (abbreviated form of the monarch's name on one folio, the year of the reign on the facing folio, as 'Ed tercii | Anno xxvi'), in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished majuscules. Marginal capitula numbers as roman numerals in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished initial letters. Between most statutes are explicits and incipits in Textura semi-quadrata with pen-flourished majuscules, and generous white space (typically four to five lines) on either side. Painted line-fillers at ff. 1–10^v, penwork line-fillers at f. 11^r, no line fillers from f. 11^v.

Vol. III : Ff. 1^r–193^r : As vol. II, albeit without line-fillers.

DECORATION

BORDERS

Vol. I :

F. 57^r : Foliate bar border featuring a coat of arms embedded at bottom centre; border depth: 24 mm at binding side, 38 mm at fore-edge, 31 mm at top, 54 mm at bottom. Entwined around and extending from a gold and painted (alternating pink and blue) bar frame interior is a highly symmetrical, curvifoliate border of white-striated acanthus leaves and aroid flowers with rounded spadices; both motifs were very common in English manuscripts by the 1440s (Scott *Dated*, 12, 64; *cf.* Scott "Nova"). The whole is richly rendered in gold and colours—blue, pink, green, saffron, and red-orange—, and shaded and highlighted in self-colour (a practice widespread after *ca.* 1425 (*ibid.*,

13)) and in white, with black outlines (*cf.*, Scott “Group”, XXIII.2). Filling out the border is green-lobed spraywork, of the type current in English borders from *ca.* 1430 (Scott “Mid-Fifteenth”, 172, 183), with terminations in tiny acanthus leaf or gold ball finials. By the 1450s, “density of spraywork” had emerged as “an aesthetic value” (Scott *Dated*, 75), and this is reflected here; nonetheless, all decoration keeps carefully within the fixed space ruled for it (in faded vermillion). The arms, embedded in the border at bottom centre, are near-illegible due to oxidation and scuffing.

Quarterly:

1. Azure a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent (*cf.*, vol. II f. 1^r; vol. III f. 164^r).
2. Gules [charge(s) *incert*] Sable¹¹⁴ Pattée.
3. Azure [charge(s) *incert*].
4. Gules a Chevron Or between Garbs¹¹⁵ Or.

Crest: A Maiden’s Head Proper couped at the shoulders crined Or robed Azure.

Supporters: Dexter: A Stag¹¹⁶ salient Proper. Sinister: A Hound salient Proper gorged Gules.

¹¹⁴ Profoundly oxidized Argent is also possible.

¹¹⁵ Equally plausible is Baker’s identification of these charges as Heads (*Legal*, 39 no. 116)

¹¹⁶ *Pace* Baker, an antelope. Yet, in heraldic praxis, an Antelope is a “monster with the body of an antelope, two horns, a mane, and a long tail” (Woodcock and Robinson, 197); typically, the horns are single-prong with serrated edges (Fearn, 29), or naturalistic (conical) (*Brief Heraldic Guide*, s.v. “Deer”). Those of the supporter under consideration evince prominent, bilateral branching, leading me to classify the beast as a 6–7 point (vol. I f. 57^r) or 8–9 point (vol. II f. 1^r) Cerf, Stag, or Hart.

Vol. II :

F. 1^r : Full, foliate bar border with arms, likely by the same artist as vol. I f. 57^r; border depth: 27 mm at binding side, 42 mm at fore-edge side, 27 mm at top, 60 mm at bottom, the whole carefully confined within the fixed space ruled for it. As in vol. I f. 57^r, emerging from a gold and painted (pink and blue) bar frame are white-striated acanthus leaves and aroid flowers with rounded spadices in gold and colours (blue, pink, green, and a rich saffron yellow), with shading and highlighting in self-colour and white, and outlines in black. Green-lobed sprays and terminations as in vol. I f. 57^r, with the exception of three gold ball finials on the binding-side; two of these boast short, penwork ‘bristles’, while the third has been transformed into a four-lobed ‘daisy-ball’.¹¹⁷ Embedded at centre of the bottom border, are arms, badly oxidized and scuffed, yet still legible: Azure a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent (*cf.*, vol. I f. 57^r, vol. III f. 164^r); crest and supporters as per vol. I f. 57^r. Upon an acanthus leaf located directly superior to and fore-edge-ward of the crest, the lexeme *mede*, in shell gold, in a fifteenth century hand, is barely discernible (*q.v.*, fig. 1).

Ff. 9^r–16^v, 25^r–32^v : Full, sprynget border consisting of fine, scrolling vine-like motifs, in black pen-work, with green-lobed sprays, and painted acanthus leaves (in pink, orange, saffron, green, and blue; shaded and highlighted in self-colour and white, with black outlines) at regular intervals along the medial line. Alternating along both lateral edges are two types of finial: (i) gold taus or ivy leaves, and (ii) daisy-balls. With the exception of a single five-lobed example at lower fore-

¹¹⁷ Pen-work flowers with gold calathidia. These simple finials—reminiscent of *Asteraceae* (*Compositae*) or *Primulaceae*—occur in borders produced in eastern England, “incl[uding] Cambridgeshire, Lincoln, Norfolk, but not Bury St. Edmunds”, from *ca.* 1440 (Scott *Dated*, 62).

edge, the daisy-balls all feature four uncoloured (but *cf.* vol. III f. 164^r, *infra*) lobes or petals.¹¹⁸

Border depth: 25 mm at all sides except the bottom which is 30 mm. This artist is less skilled than those responsible for the other borders in this manuscript.

Vol. III :

F. 164^r : Full, foliate bar border with arms at bottom centre, by a different artist than vol. I f. 57^r and vol. II f. 1^r; border depth: *ca.* 15 mm at binding side, 25–28 mm at fore-edge side, 20 mm at top, 35 mm at bottom. White striated acanthus leaf foliation in gold and colours (blue, pink, green, orange; blue and pink predominate), shaded and highlighted in self-colour and white, with black outlines. Each half of the upper, lower, and fore-edge side borders boasts a different form of coloured motif, a practice which is “usually a sign of quality in a border” (Scott *Dated*, 64): upper border, inner half: acanthus leaf, outer half: heart-shaped leaves; bottom, inner: acanthus leaf, outer: trumpet flowers; fore-edge, upper: curvifoliate leaves, lower: acanthus leaf. On these three sides, the green-lobed sprays terminate in acanthus leaf finials, and in triple-lobed daisy-balls. The lobes are tinted blue or reddish-pink (*cf.* vol. II ff. 9^r–16^v, 25^r–32^v, *supra*), a detail found in English borders from *ca.* 1470 (*ibid.*, 100). Apparently due to spatial constraints, the binding side border is much thinner, and features only a few daisy-balls and two gold motifs: an engrailed tau or trefoil, and a pinecone; both of the latter appear in London borders from at least as early as the mid-1440s (*ibid.*, 64). Compared to the borders at vol. I f. 57^r and vol. II f. 1^r, use of gold is more sparing, and leaves and finials are more widely spaced, creating an ‘airier’ effect. Arms, embedded in border at bottom centre: Azure a Chevron Ermine between three Trefoils slipped Argent (*cf.*, vol. I f. 57^r, vol. II f. 1^r); no crest, no supporters.

¹¹⁸ According to Scott, five or six lobes, often with a green tint, were more usual (*Dated*, 62, 90, 93, 100).

INITIALS—HISTORIATED

Vol. I :

F. 57^r (fig. 3): Historiated initial *H*[enricus]; *height*: seven lines (approx. 58 × 49). Initial painted in blue and pink upon a gold ground; shading and highlights, in self-colour and white, create a rolling acanthus leaf effect. Infill depicts a youthful, ginger-haired Henry III, crowned (atop a murrey hat with white fur brim), bearing a gold sceptre, and clad in a murrey-embroidered gold robe with ermine cowl and cobalt blue lining, over a crimson gown with faint gold tracery. He sits upon a pale pink throne in a room with a brown- or tenné-tiled floor and dark murrey walls overspread with gold filagree rhomboid diapering; such backgrounds of blocked filagree-work remained in use through the 1460s (Scott *Later*, 1:50). The throne and king are set at three-quarter angle towards the king's left (and the text), yet he glances out of frame (away from the text) to his right. With the exception of hands, sceptre, and robe, all outlines are self-colour; modelling of facial features is quite painterly.

Vol. II :

F. 1^r (fig. 4): Historiated initial *E*[dwardus], by the illustrator of the initial at vol. I f. 57^r, or an artist working in a very similar style; *height*: eleven to twelve lines (approx. 80 × 80). The initial is painted in a blue and pink abstract pattern upon a gold ground with shading and highlights in self-colour and white. Infill depicts a youthful Edward III, crowned, holding a gold sceptre, and sitting upon a pink throne in a room identical to that depicted at vol. I f. 57^r. Although the throne is angled like that in vol. I f. 57^r, the king peers out at the viewer. Under his robe (crimson, with drapery modelled in gold), which is lined and cowled in ermine, is a cobalt blue gown with occasional gold

embroidery; his crown is worn atop a brimmed hat in crimson and ermine. All outlines are self-colour.

Vol. III :

F. 164^r (fig. 10): Majuscule initial *E*[dwardus]; *height*: eleven lines (approx. 75 × 69). Produced by a different artist than those at vol. I f. 57^r and vol. II f. 1^r. Situated upon a gold ground, the initial is painted in blue and pink with shading and highlights in self-colour and white forming an abstract pattern. Infill depicts Edward IV, enthroned and crowned, his right hand grasping a gold sceptre, his left held *appaumy* at chest height. Over a charcoal-hued gown, he wears an ermine-trimmed robe in shell gold underpainted in crimson. The throne—its cobalt blue back ornamented with stylized red and white flowers—is capped by a green canopy with red and white fringes, and flanked by secular (*sinister*) and ecclesiastical (*dexter*) advisors (the latter identifiable by their tonsures) clad in cobalt blue, crimson, and viridian robes. Both groups look at the king who, in full frontal position, stares directly out at the viewer. Depth of field is very short, and colouration is exaggerated, the angular figures rendered via a mix of modelling and linear methods—aspects of the harder, flatter style adopted by English artists during the mid- to late-1400s (*cf.* Scott *Later*, 1:43–52).

This initial is an example of the standard king-and-court format found in approximately a dozen other *Nova Statuta* manuscripts produced from *ca.* 1470. The illustrator, known as the ‘Placentius Master’, is identical with Artist A of BL, MS Cotton Nero C. I (Scott *Later*, 2:345), and also produced historiated initials at BodL, MS Hatton 10, f. 336^v; Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5), ff. 46, 104^v, 167, 182, 245; and several other legal compendia (Scott “Nova”; *q.v.*, Table 3, *supra*).

INITIALS—DECORATED

Consistent with other manuscripts in this group (*cf.* Scott *Later*, 1:345), secondary initials were produced by several different artists. In all three volumes, statutes (aside from 1 Edward III, 1 Henry III, and 1 Edward IV) open with champ or sprynget initials in gold and colours (blue, pink, green, orange), typically with black outlines, and shading and highlighting in self-colour and white (*q.v.* fig. 2). Infill motifs are chiefly foliate (acanthus) or floral (round, rose, or aroid), but also include abstract (vol. II f. 31^v, vol. III f. 36^r), geometric (vol. I ff. 108^r, 118^r; vol. II f. 131^v), and anthropomorphic (vol. I f. 110^r; vol. II ff. 95^r, 113^v; vol. III f. 176^v) designs. In total, 157 of these initials occur across the three volumes: 41 in vol. I, 71 in vol. II, and 45 in vol. III; of these, 25 (twelve in vol. I, six in vol. II, seven in vol. III) are champ initials. Most feature green-lobed pen-sprays terminating in (i) gold disk or gold trefoil finials; and/or (ii) painted, full-colour kidney, berry, or pumpkin motifs—the last having been “introduced into England in the 1460s” (Scott “*Nova*”).

Prolongations, occasionally forming partial borders, open from initials at vol. I ff. 97^r, 98^r, 100^r, 101^v; vol. II ff. 55^v, 56^r, 56^v (*bis*), 85^v; and vol. III ff. 1^r, 40^r, 70^r (*cf.* Ker, 1:19). The majority are strap foliate (usually acanthus leaf) extensions; partial vinets form at vol. II ff. 3^r, 4^v, 5^r, 7^v (*bis*); full vinets at vol. II ff. 10^r, 12^v, 14^r, 15^v, 16^v, 26^r, 26^v, 28^r, 29^v, 30^r, 30^v, 31^v, 32^v (*cf.* Scott “Mid-Fifteenth”, 175).

Across all three volumes, decorated initials vary in height from four (*e.g.*, vol. I f. 106^v, vol. II f. 56^r, vol. III f. 176^v) to seven (*e.g.*, vol. I f. 117^r, vol. II f. 46^r, vol. III f. 106^v) or even eight (vol. II f. 5^r) lines (see Table 6, *infra*, for a breakdown). These figures are significant because the cost of a decorated initial was calculated based upon the letter’s height as measured in ‘lineas’ or

‘poyntis’;¹¹⁹ illuminators’ accounts surviving within some manuscripts reveal the attention given to “precision ... both on points of size and colour of the initials” when drawing up a contract, with “careful distinction ... made between”, for instance, decorated initials of five, six, or seven lines (Scott *Mirrore*, 35–36n6). Number and size of initials thus directly correlate with a manuscript’s expense. In some cases, the intended height in lines was difficult to establish definitively due to the initial extending into interlinear space. When such a situation arose, a half value (*i.e.* $x.5$) was assigned.

Table 5: Number of initials per volume by height

height in lines	8.0	7.5	7.0	6.5	6.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.0	M	Mdn	Mo
Volume I	—	—	1	1	10	7	17	—	4	5.3	5.0	5.0
Volume II	1	—	6	2	32	7	20	—	1	5.8	6.0	6.0
Volume III	—	—	1	6	13	8	9	4	2	5.6	5.5	6.0
Total	1	—	8	9	55	22	46	4	7	5.6	5.5	6.0

M = mean Mdn = median Mo = mode

ADDITIONS

PASTE-INS

Upon the interior front board of all three volumes are pasted the same two bookplates:

- i) Ravensworth Castle [arms of the Liddell family—Argent fretty Gules on a Chief three Lions’ Heads cabossed Or—in black and white] (77×60),
- ii) “Ex libris William King Richardson” (77×51).

¹¹⁹ Some illuminators used the term “‘poynt’ for a prick or dot, meaning the fixed distance between prick-marks that were used in ruling lines of text” (Scott *Mirrore*, 36n6).

Vol. I f. i^r also bears two pieces of modern white bond with modern (?mid-twentieth century) typescript; each is taped in or pasted in by a single corner. The author(s) is unknown, but at least one of the items appears to be excerpted from the MS Richardson 40-related correspondence of former Houghton Curator and Librarian W. H. Bond.

Finally, the interior of the rear board of vol. II includes a modern (?twentieth century) card-stock paste-in reading “MS RICHARDSON 40 (2) / THE HOUGHTON LIBRARY / *50M–294”.

INSCRIPTIONS

In each vol., f. i^r features inscriptions in pencil in a modern hand, as follows:

Vol. I :

- i) “MS Richardson 40 (1)”,
- ii) “deqq.”,
- iii) “Vol. I. Magna Carta”,
- iv) “According to R. W. Hunt and Neil Ker, the same hand wrote v III, ff. 164–192 as / Bodley MS. Hatton 10 f. 290, and also Guildhall Lib. Carte Antiquae”.

Vol. II :

- i) “MS Richardson 40 (2)”,
- ii) “Vol II / Edward III – Richard II. / (English statutes — 15th centry [*sic.*])”.

Vol. III :

- i) “MS Richardson 40 (3)”,
- ii) “Vol. III / Henry IV to Edward IV”.

Additionally, vol. I f. 1^r bears the ownership inscription of Sir James Dyer J—“Pertinet Jacobo Dyer / ex dono David Daxson / unius attorn de canco / • 1562 •”—in black ink in a sixteenth century hand.

ANNOTATIONS

Throughout all three volumes, a modern (nineteenth/early twentieth century), cursive hand has pencilled in marginal annotations, including regnal years (*e.g.* vol. I f. 108^r: “18 E 1”), specific dates (*e.g.* vol. I f. 113^v: “2 May Ch 41”), alternate titles (*e.g.* vol. I f. 106^r: “do Quo Warranto”), and/or occasional printed sources (*e.g.* vol. I f. 124^r: “Dudg Ang 56”). These additions appear fairly consistently throughout vols. I–II, but more sporadically in vol. III. Vol. II and vol. III include late medieval marginalia, in dark sepia ink, in a shaky, illegible hand(s), located as follows:

Vol. II :

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. f. 3 ^v . 1 Edw. III (1327), st. 2, c. 7 | 10. f. 63 ^v . (<i>bis</i>) 34 Edw. III (1360–1), c. 1 |
| 2. f. 40 ^r . 25 Edw. III (1351), st. 2, cc. 1–8 | 11. f. 78 ^r . 38 Edw. III (1363), st. 2 |
| 3. f. 41 ^r . 25 Edw. III (1351), c. 2 | 12. f. 88 ^v . (<i>bis</i>) 1 Ric. II (1377), c. 15 |
| 4. f. 41 ^v . 25 Edw. III (1351), c. 8 | 13. f. 106 ^r . 7 Ric. II (1383), c. 3 |
| 5. f. 44 ^r . 25 Edw. III (1351), st. 1 | 14. f. 107 ^v . 7 Ric. II (1383), c. 7 |
| 6. f. 45 ^r . 25 Edw. III (1351), preamble | 15. f. 120 ^r . 12 Ric. II (1388), c. 2 |
| 7. f. 46 ^r . 25 Edw. III (1351), st. 4, c. 4 | 16. f. 122 ^v . 12 Ric. II (1388), c. 11, 12 |
| 8. f. 46 ^v . 27 Edw. III (1353), st. 2, c. 8 | 17. f. 137 ^v . 17 Ric. II (1393), c. 1 |
| 9. f. 59 ^v . 28 Edw. III (1354), c. 12 | 18. f. 138 ^r . 17 Ric. II (1393), c. 6 |

Vol. III :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. f. 3 ^v . 1 Hen. IV (1399), c. 12 | 5. f. 144 ^r . (<i>quater</i>) 23 Hen. VI (1444), c. 11 |
| 2. f. 18 ^v . 4 Hen. IV (1402), c. 20 | 6. f. 144 ^v . (<i>bis</i>) 23 Hen. VI (1444), c. 11 |
| 3. f. 56 ^v . 3 Hen. V (1415), c. 7 | (continued) |
| 4. f. 91 ^r . 8 Hen. VI (1429), c. 14 | |

DAMAGE

Extensive water damage is apparent at vol. I ff. 1–56 with such severe cockling at ff. 30–56—due to “uncontrolled drying after wetting”—that the “creases lock into each other” (Pickwood 1a), rendering some leaves inseparable without further damage (especially ff. 36–41, 43–46, 48–53).

The membrane in this section has a texture reminiscent of newsprint or unsized cardboard. Water-related shrinkage, translucency, and smeared pigments occur at bifolium ff. 35/42, and at ff. 54–55.

According to Pickwood, the pattern of damage suggests that it occurred whilst the codex was disbound (*ibid.*). In vol. I, f. 136 bears a sharp crease, with the verso showing a displaced offset from vol. II f. 1^r. In vol. II, f. 20^r (bottom fore-edge corner) and f. 37^r (top fore-edge corner) show offsets from unknown leaves; while f. 149^v shows offset from vol. III f. 1. In vol. III, offsets appear on f. 21^r, from the same leaf, and on f. 177^r from f. 176^v.

PROVENANCE

- 1400s: “Unidentified C.xv arms” at I f. 57^r, II f. 1^r, and III f. 164^r (Baker *Legal*, 39). Marked ‘*mede*’, they likely belong to Philip Mede of Bristol, Gloucs., and of Somerset, Dors. (will dated

- 11 Jan. 1476, proved 26 Mar. (TNA, PROB 11/6/321)), or to his son, Richard Mede or Meede, gent., of Bristol, Gloucs. (will dated 15 Jun. 1491 (TNA, PROB 11/8/619)).
- 1562: The ownership inscription of Sir James Dyer CJ (CP), of Much Stoughton, Hunts. (will dated 13 Mar. 1582, proved 28 Jun (TNA, PROB 11/64/305)), who obtained the manuscript “ex dono David Daxson”, appears at vol. 1 f. 1^r of ms Richardson 40 (Baker *Legal*, 39; Harvard College Library). Sir John Baker posits that the donor was David Daxon, of Hants., and of Clements Inn (*Men*, 1:580).
 - 1582: Dying childless, Dyer CJ bequeathed all his legal books and manuscripts to two nephews: Richard Farwell (TNA, C 142/767/112), second son of Dyer CJ’s sister Dorothy and her husband, Simon; and James Dyer, fifth son of Dyer CJ’s elder brother, John (Baker *Men*, 1:615–6; *ODNB*; TNA, PROB 11/64/305). Both men were Middle Templars (*MTR*, 1:180; Sturgess, 31, 34).
 - September 1919: Sold at Newcastle-upon-Tyne as Lot 357 (Anderson and Garland) in the estate sale of Arthur Thomas Liddell (d. 1919), 5th Baron Ravensworth (Baker *Legal*, 39).
 - 1937: By this date, the manuscript was in the possession of noted collector Owen D. Young (d. 1962) (Baker *Legal*, 39; de Ricci).
 - Finally, in 1951, William King Richardson bequeathed the set of codices to Harvard College Library (Jackson).

LISTED

- Anderson and Garland *Catalogue*, Sale no. 1250, Lot 357 : very terse entry in the 1920 sale of Lord Ravensworth’s estate.
- Baker *Legal*, 39 no. 116 : description noting coats of arms and provenance, plus bibliography.

- Bond and Faye *Supplement*, 248 : brief description of physical properties and provenance, with a short bibliography.
- De Ricci *Census*, 2:1854 : short description with provenance note.
- Harvard College Library *Illuminated*, 24 no. 78 : succinct description noting different hands, illumination, and provenance.
- Jackson “Richardson”, 329 : passing reference in an overview of William King Richardson’s bequest to Harvard.
- Ker *MMBL*, 1:19 : indicates that MS Richardson 40 III’s “ugly but clear legal anglicana” is similar to that in “Guildhall Cartæ Antiquæ” (*olim*; London, LMA, MS COL/CS/01/007).
- McGerr *Lancastrian*, 21, 26, 27, 164n24 : passing references.
- McGerr “Statute”, 26n45 : observation in passing that only the last of MS Richardson 40’s historiated initials (in vol. III) features the standard king-and-court scene.
- Pächt and Alexander *Illuminated*, 3:100 no. 1168 : in the entry for MS Hatton 10, MS Richardson 40’s illumination is described, with attention also given to differentiating two of its hands.
- Scott “Late”, 103, 104 *items* 3–4 : brief notes on relationship to other similar manuscripts.
- Scott *Later*, 1:74n48; 2:321, 345 : noting similarities with other manuscripts.
- Scott *Mirrore*, 49n2 no. 7 : passing references noting inclusion in a group of similar manuscripts.
- Scott “Nova”, no. 79n2 : cited in the entry for Philadelphia, Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5), as one of a list of manuscripts believed to be illuminated by the same artist.
- Walters Art Gallery and Miner *Illuminated*, no. 159 + pl. LX : description with a note on illumination.

- Wieck *Late*, 96–97 no. 47 : description with focus on text and illumination, the latter drawing upon Scott, as well as upon Pächt and Alexander.

FIGURES



Figure 1 (upper left) : Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. II, f. 1^r, detail of border, annotated (?1460s)

Figure 2 (upper right) : Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. I, f. 117^r, detail: sprynges initial (?1460s)

Figure 3 (lower left) : Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. I, f. 57^r, historiated initial (?1460s)

Figure 4 (lower right) : Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. II, f. 1^r, historiated initial (?1460s)





Figure 5 (upper left) : Huntington Library, MS HM 19920, f. 173^r, historiated initial (s. xiv^{1/4})

Figure 6 (upper right) : BL, MS Hargrave 274, f. 274^r, standardized historiated initial (ca. 1488/9)

Figure 7 (lower left) : BL, MS Royal 18. D. ii, f. 6^r, historiated initial (post-1455); this initial is probably the model for the standardized *Nova Statuta* king-and-court scene



Figure 8 (upper left) : BodL, MS Hatton 10, f. 336^v, standardized historiated initial (ca. 1495/6)



Figure 9 (upper right) : BodL, MS Hatton 10, f. 290^r, standardized historiated initial (ca. 1470–83)

Figure 10 (lower left) : Houghton, MS Richardson 40, vol. III, f. 164^r, standardized historiated initial (ca. 1469/70)

Figure 11 (lower right) : Free Library, MS LC 14.9(5), f. 46^r, standardized historiated initial (ca. 1469/70)



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Newberry Library, MS 32.1

Dublin, Ireland

Trinity College Library, MS 83

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National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 19.2.1

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British Library, MS Additional 42131

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British Library, MS Hargrave 87

British Library, MS Hargrave 274

British Library, MS Harley 4990

British Library, MS Lansdowne 522

British Library, MS Lansdowne 1174

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British Library, MS Royal 18. D. II

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Oxford, UK

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141

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