

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88979-7 - The Production of Books in England 1350–1500
Edited By Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin
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THE PRODUCTION OF BOOKS IN
ENGLAND 1350–1500

Between roughly 1350 and 1500, the English vernacular became established as a language of literary, bureaucratic, devotional and controversial writing; metropolitan artisans formed guilds for the production and sale of books for the first time; and Gutenberg's, and eventually Caxton's, printed books reached their first English consumers. This book gathers the best new work on manuscript books in England made during this crucial but neglected period. Its authors survey existing research, gather intensive new evidence and develop new approaches to key topics. The chapters cover the material conditions and economy of the book trade; amateur production both lay and religious; the effects of censorship; and the impact on English book production of manuscripts and artisans from elsewhere in the British Isles and Europe. A wide-ranging and innovative series of essays, this volume is a major contribution to the history of the book in medieval England.

ALEXANDRA GILLESPIE is Associate Professor of English and Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *Print Culture and the Medieval Author* (2006) and editor of a special issue of *Huntington Library Quarterly* on *Tudor Literature in Manuscript and Print* and, with Ian Gadd, of *John Stow (1525–1625) and the Making of the English Past* (2004).

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Foreword

DEREK PEARSALL

References in the Introduction to the present volume make it clear that it is viewed to some extent as a successor to an earlier collection of essays on the same subject, *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, edited by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall. This book had its inception in a series of conferences in York in 1981, 1983 and 1985. The first was called ‘Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England: The Literary Implications of Manuscript Study’, the conference papers being published under that title in 1983; the second was set up to discuss and prepare for the forthcoming book on book production; the third was on the editing of fifteenth-century texts, and the volume that followed was called *Manuscripts and Texts: Editorial Problems in Later Middle English Literature* (1987). The inspiration for the first conference was the presence at York of an outstanding group of graduate students working under my supervision on topics to do with later medieval manuscripts. For many of them, the impulse to work on manuscripts came from Elizabeth Salter, who died in 1980 but whose work in later years was much directed towards manuscript studies and whose example was irresistible. My own interest in manuscript studies was always and is still in their use for the literary scholar, not just as sources for editing texts, but also for their evidence of the complex nature of authorial revision, including ‘rolling revision’, and for the important part they played in shaping, even creating, authors’ purposes. Inevitably, much of this work on manuscripts drew towards ‘reception’ as an essential part of our understanding of texts – how texts were transmitted by their scribes or commented on by readers, and how they gave rise to complex networks of patrons, buyers and owners. When the *Book Production* volume came out in 1989, the influence of that first conference was still strong, and some of its participants were contributors; seven of the fifteen essays were on texts or reception, while three of the four essays on production were content-dominated. Jeremy Griffiths was a codicologist more than a literary scholar, and it was he who supervised the essays on paper, decoration and binding, and most of the work on production.

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Foreword

The change that has taken place over twenty years is striking: the ‘History of the Book’ has taken over. Here the first seven chapters of thirteen progress from the beginning (‘Materials’) to the end (‘Binding’) of the production process. There are then three on larger aspects of production and two at the end on English books outside England and on the continent. The essay on ‘Censorship’ corresponds to the earlier Hudson essay on lollardy. The major difference from the 1989 collection – and it is fairly obvious – is that in that book the emphasis was on the contents of manuscripts, whether literary or not, and who owned and read them. In this book, the main emphasis is on the methods, circumstances and economy of production. The distinction that Partridge makes between the purposes of Parkes in his work on *ordinatio* and the purposes of his own chapter in this volume sums up admirably the different emphasis between the two books. Where Parkes treats page design as ‘an intellectual project’, Partridge says, here more attention is paid to it as ‘a pragmatic challenge and a commercial expectation’. It is a deliberate difference of approach which produces a wholly different kind of book. Just as there is nothing in this book to compare with the marvellous work of Harris and Meale on books and owners, so there was nothing there to compare with the work here, typically, of Mooney, Kwakkel and Pouzet. The splendid essays of these scholars on the evidence of scribes working on several manuscripts and on the organization and economics of production are an index to the great change that has taken place in the approach to the subject, which in turn is part of a larger historical process, in which the individual text, whether ‘literary’ or not, must find its place in a complex network of historical circumstances and processes.

Other characteristics of the new work in this volume are the quality and intense, minute precision of the detail, some of it made possible by new methodologies and technologies, such as those for identifying scribes and dialects by on-line access to manuscripts and by the appearance of new scholarly tools such as the *Index of Middle English Prose* (IMEP), whose handlists make it possible for Connolly to present an unrivalled survey of representative collections of religious and utilitarian compilations of all kinds. Also, to contrast with the readiness to move away from text-based study and standard texts, there is a deliberate attempt to press hard at the edges of the subject and leave better-known material to look after itself. This is something made possible by the existence of the earlier book, which can be trusted to ‘take care’, so to speak, of important genre-based work on music books, on anthologies and compilations, on religious works, and on medical and scientific books. In this respect, the new book can best be seen not as a ‘successor’ to the earlier one but, as the editors remark in the Introduction, as a complement to it. It is, further, in its own right a magnificent, wide-ranging, innovative and often distinguished series of essays on the English scene.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank all the contributors, but especially Derek Pearsall for very early and continued encouragement of this volume. Linne Mooney also generously allowed them to discuss the rationale behind the volume in a ‘round table’ with Professor Pearsall at the conference ‘Making the Medieval Manuscript’ held at the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York in July 2005. They are grateful for excellent feedback, both sceptical and enthusiastic, from people present on that occasion (including many people who have turned out to be contributors) which informed the planning of this volume. Finally, thanks to Ian Doyle and the other, anonymous reader from Cambridge University Press for their very useful suggestions, and to Linda Bree and Maartje Scheltens for patient advice and assistance.

Many of the editorial tasks were made easier by the Herculean labours of Peter Buchanan, Christina da Silva, Michael Raby, Helen Marshall, Richard Nalli-Petta, Katherine Sehl, Devani Singh, Robin Sutherland-Harris, Trevor Abes, Samhita Gupta and especially Gregory Fiorini. Their work was supported by generous grants from Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the University of Toronto, which also provided funds to subsidize photography. Cambridge University Library, Pembroke College, Trinity College and St John’s College in Cambridge, the Beinecke Library in Yale University, the Rosenbach Library and the Huntington Library generously waived fees for reproduction rights for this volume.

The research of several contributors was made possible by travel grants provided by their various universities and university departments and other bodies including SSHRC; the Henry E. Huntington Library; and the Bibliographical Society, London. And their research was made enjoyable by the helpfulness of staff at the many libraries and archives whose manuscripts and rare books lie at the heart of the discussions that follow.

Abbreviations

For full titles, see the Bibliography.

Beinecke	New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Library
BL	London, British Library
ANTS	Anglo-Norman Text Society
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BLR</i>	<i>Bodleian Library Record</i>
BodL	Oxford, Bodleian Library
<i>BRUC</i>	Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge</i>
<i>BRUO</i>	Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford</i>
CBMLC	Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library
<i>CHBB: II</i>	Morgan and Thomson (eds.), <i>The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume II, 1100–1400</i>
<i>CHBB: III</i>	Hellinga and Trapp (eds.), <i>The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume III, 1400–1557</i>
CUL	Cambridge, University Library
<i>DMBL</i>	Watson, <i>Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts ... in the British Library</i>
<i>DMCL</i>	Robinson, <i>Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts ... in Cambridge Libraries</i>
<i>DMLL</i>	Robinson, <i>Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts ... in London Libraries</i>
<i>DMOL</i>	Watson, <i>Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts ... in Oxford Libraries</i>
<i>EEBO</i>	Early English Books Online, http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home
EETS	Early English Text Society
os	original series
ss	supplementary series
es	extra series

List of abbreviations

<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
Ellesmere	HEHL, MS Ellesmere 26.C.9, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>
<i>ELN</i>	<i>English Language Notes</i>
<i>EMS</i>	<i>English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700</i>
G&P	Griffiths and Pearsall (eds.), <i>Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475</i>
GUL	Glasgow, University Library
HEHL	San Marino, CA, Henry E. Huntington Library
Hengwrt	NLW, MS Peniarth 392.D, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>
<i>IPMEP</i>	Lewis, Blake and Edwards, <i>Index of Printed Middle English Prose</i>
<i>IMEP, I–XIX</i>	<i>The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist I–XIX</i>
<i>IMEV</i>	Brown and Robbins, <i>The Index of Middle English Verse</i> ; Cutler and Robbins, <i>Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse</i> ; Boffey and Edwards, <i>A New Index of Middle English Verse</i>
<i>JEBS</i>	<i>Journal of the Early Book Society</i>
JRL	Manchester, John Rylands University Library
<i>JWCI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>LALME</i>	McIntosh, Samuels and Beskin, <i>A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English 1350–1450</i>
<i>Library</i>	<i>The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society</i>
Longleat	Wiltshire, Longleat House
<i>MÆ</i>	<i>Medium Ævum</i>
<i>MED</i>	Lewis (gen. ed.), <i>The Middle English Dictionary</i> , http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/
<i>MLGB</i>	Ker, <i>Medieval Libraries of Great Britain</i>
<i>MLGB Suppl.</i>	Watson, <i>Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: Supplement</i>
<i>MMBL</i>	Ker and Piper, <i>Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries</i>
NA	London, National Archives (formerly PRO)
NLS	Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland
NLW	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales
<i>ODNB</i>	Matthew, Harrison and Goldman (eds.), <i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , www.oxforddnb.com/public/index.html
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , www.oed.com/
Pembroke, Camb.	Cambridge, Pembroke College Library
PML	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library
PRO	Kew, Public Record Office
<i>SAC</i>	<i>Studies in the Age of Chaucer</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Studies in Bibliography</i>

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List of abbreviations

St John’s, Camb.	Cambridge, St John’s College Library
STC	Pollard and Redgrave, <i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Wales</i> (2nd edn)
TCBS	<i>Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society</i>
TCC	Cambridge, Trinity College Library