

IMMATERIAL TEXTS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Daniel Wakelin introduces and reinterprets the misunderstood and overlooked craft practices, cultural conventions and literary attitudes involved in making some of the most important manuscripts in late medieval English literature. In doing so he overturns how we view the role of scribes, showing how they ignored or concealed irregular and damaged parchment; ruled pages from habit and convention more than necessity; decorated the division of the text into pages or worried that it would harm reading; abandoned annotations to poetry, focusing on the poem itself; and copied English poems meticulously, in reverence for an abstract idea of the text. Scribes' interest in immaterial ideas and texts suggests their subtle thinking as craftspeople, in ways that contrast and extend current interpretations of late medieval literary culture, 'material texts' and the power of materials. For students, researchers and librarians, this book offers revelatory perspectives on the activities of late medieval scribes.

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IMMATERIAL TEXTS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Making English Literary Manuscripts, 1400–1500

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Mind would rather ignore Matter altogether.
—Henry Adams, Mont Saint Michel and Chartres

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Acknowledgements

In some ways, this book emerged from curating the exhibition *Designing English: Graphics on the Medieval Page*, at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in the winter of 2017–18, and writing the accompanying book *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018). Curating that exhibition was hugely rewarding but it left me with questions. The display focused on manuscripts and objects where form fitted function or meaning in vivid ways; on quirky books that would catch the visitor's eye; and on the appearance and materials of books more than their words, little legible under glass. This reflected the format of an exhibition and the ways that I had been teaching courses on 'material texts'. But I was left wondering: Do all elements of the book complement the text this neatly? What could one say about the 'boring' books that were not exhibited? And what about the use of books less for looking at than reading? *Immaterial Texts* explores some of those questions that the exhibition provoked.

As a result, I owe a huge amount to colleagues at the Bodleian, notably Martin Kauffmann, Madeline Slaven and Sallyanne Gilchrist, who made that exhibition possible. I am also grateful to their colleagues in special collections who continue to make the Bodleian a great place to work. I must also thank many other librarians who granted me access to manuscripts, especially those who work with small space or resources, as at Alnwick, Coventry, Gloucester, Lichfield, Lincoln and the College of Physicians. I owed a lot, too, especially during the chaos of 2020 and 2021, to the hard work and vision of librarians who have digitized manuscripts. And the generous offer of a fellowship at the Huntington Library provided the perfect opportunity to finish the research. I am enormously grateful to the Huntington Library for support over many years.

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Abbreviations, Quotations and References

The epigraph comes from Henry Adams, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, ed. Raymond Carney (1904; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), 342. It refers to the thirteenth century but seems to fit fifteenth-century scribes.

Quotations are usually from the manuscripts under discussion – the material texts. In quotations from manuscripts, the spelling, including letters **ȝ**, **i/j**, **þ** and **u/v**, and punctuation are not modernized. However, word-divisions are modernized, and abbreviations are expanded silently. The ambiguous strokes on words ending **gh**, **ll**, **m**, **n** and **th** are usually not expanded as though abbreviations; they are ignored as otiose. However, I do usually expand a curl on final **r** as an abbreviation of <e>. The exceptions are a few quotations in Chapter 6, where the manuscripts' word-divisions, abbreviations and ambiguous strokes are marked and discussed briefly. (There abbreviations are expanded in italics and ambiguous strokes are marked with a tilde (~) after the letter they accompany.)

Even when quotations come from manuscripts, the notes usually also give page, book and/or line numbers from a modern edition, for cross-reference.

The notes and bibliography use the following abbreviations:

AND	<i>The Anglo-Norman Dictionary</i> , ed. William Rothwell et al., www.anglo-norman.net/
Beinecke	New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Library
BL	London, British Library
BodL	Oxford, Bodleian Library
Bowers	John M. Bowers, ed., <i>The Canterbury Tales: Fifteenth-Century Continuations and Additions</i> (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), cited by page and line numbers
ChRev.	<i>Chaucer Review</i>

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Clarke	Mark Clarke, ed., <i>The Crafte of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyng: Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators</i> , EETS os 347 (Oxford University Press, 2016), cited by page and line numbers thus: 80.31–81.4, 123.12–28
<i>Complaint</i>	Thomas Hoccleve, <i>My Compleinte</i> , in Thomas Hoccleve, <i>'My Compleinte' and Other Poems</i> , ed. Roger Ellis (Exeter University Press, 2001), 115–30, cited by line numbers
CUL	Cambridge, University Library
<i>Dialogue</i>	Thomas Hoccleve, <i>A Dialogue</i> , in Thomas Hoccleve, <i>'My Compleinte' and Other Poems</i> , ed. Roger Ellis (Exeter University Press, 2001), 131–59, cited by line numbers
DMLBS	<i>Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources</i> , ed. R. E. Latham et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), www.dmlbs.ox.ac.uk/web/welcome.html
DUL	Durham, University Library
EETS	Early English Text Society
	es extra series
	os original series
	ss supplementary series
<i>Fall</i>	John Lydgate, <i>Fall of Princes</i> , ed. Henry Bergen, EETS es 121–4, 4 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1924–7), cited by book and line numbers thus: VIII.426
GLM	<i>Gazette du livre médiéval</i>
Griffiths, 'Terms'	Jeremy Griffiths, 'Book Production Terms in Nicholas Munshull's <i>Nominale</i> ', in Carol Garrett Fisher and Kathleen L. Scott, eds., <i>Art into Life: Collected Papers from the Kresge Art Museum Medieval Symposia</i> (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995), 49–71
HEHL	San Marino, CA, Henry E. Huntington Library
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
JEBS	<i>Journal of the Early Book Society</i>
JMEMS	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
JRL	Manchester, John Rylands Library

<i>LMES</i>	<i>Late Medieval English Scribes</i> , ed. Linne Mooney, Simon Horobin and Estelle Stubbs, www.medievalscribes.com
Manly-Rickert	John Manly, Edith Rickert et al., eds., <i>The Text of the 'Canterbury Tales'</i> , 8 vols. (University of Chicago Press, 1940)
<i>MED</i>	<i>The Middle English Dictionary</i> , ed. Hans Kurath et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952–), http://ets.umd.umich.edu/m/med/
<i>N&Q</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , ed. John A. Simpson and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989–), http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl
PML	New York, NY, Pierpont Morgan Library
<i>Prick</i>	Ralph Hanna and Sarah Wood, eds., <i>Richard Morris's 'Prick of Conscience': A Corrected Edition</i> , EETS os 342 (Oxford University Press, 2013)
<i>Regiment</i>	Thomas Hoccleve, <i>The Regiment of Princes</i> , ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), cited by line numbers
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
Rosenbach	Philadelphia, PA, Rosenbach Museum and Library
<i>SACH.</i>	<i>Studies in the Age of Chaucer</i>
SJC	Cambridge, St John's College Library
Steinmann	Martin Steinmann, ed., <i>Handschriften im Mittelalter: Eine Quellensammlung</i> (Basel: Schwabe, 2013), cited by extract numbers
<i>Tales</i>	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> , in Larry D. Benson, ed., <i>The Riverside Chaucer</i> (Oxford University Press, 1988), cited by fragment and line numbers thus: I.3806
TCC	Cambridge, Trinity College Library
<i>Thebes</i>	John Lydgate, <i>The Siege of Thebes</i> , ed. Robert R. Edwards (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), cited by line numbers
<i>Troilus</i>	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i> , ed. B. A. Windeatt (London: Longman, 1984), cited by book and line numbers thus: I.515
<i>Troy</i>	John Lydgate, <i>Troy Book</i> , ed. Henry Bergen, EETS es 97, 103, 106, 126, 4 vols. (London: Kegan Paul,

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	Trench, Trübner, 1906–35), cited by book and line numbers thus: I.123
<i>Vocabulaire codicologique</i>	<i>Vocabulaire codicologique</i> , ed. Denis Muzerelle et al., with English translations by A. I. Doyle, http://codicologia.irht.cnrs.fr/ , cited by French lemmata (s.v.)

Chapter 6 uses shortened shelfmarks for some manuscripts discussed in detail:

Beinecke	Beinecke, MS 493
Bodley	BodL, MS Bodley 221
Harley	BL, MS Harley 3943
HM 114	HEHL, MS HM 114
Laud	BodL, MS Laud misc. 735