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# Introduction

JOHN BARNARD

The cultural impact of printing and the trade in books was out of all proportion to its economic significance. The importation of white and brown paper for writing, printing and packaging probably generated more profit for its wholesalers than the total output of printed texts did for printers, booksellers, mercuries, bookbinders and related trades, put together. Yet although the British book trade in 1557 was unavoidably insular and parochial when compared with that on the Continent,[1] it offered native writers a closed market which meant that a higher proportion of works in the vernacular were published than was the case abroad. Paradoxically, Britain's off-shore position, which made it for the most part culturally dependent on the Continent for learned writing of all kinds, privileged the development of its own independent traditions within the 'four kingdoms'. Printing dramatically accelerated the flow of information in the vernacular, and increasingly did so across class, cultural and national boundaries in the English-speaking world. It played a vital role in a world in which oral, visual, manuscript and printed texts all existed side by side, interacting with one another. Print did not replace manuscript circulation or production:[2] as is the case today, the new technology supplemented earlier ones, partially or largely replacing them for some functions, reinforcing them for others.

Retrospectively, the history of the book in Britain from 1557 to 1695 looks like a triumphalist progress in which a dominant Protestant vernacular culture, and an emergent canon of English literature, were steadily created and successfully displaced an earlier Latinate and Catholic world looking towards Europe, a process which began in England and then expanded to Scotland, Wales and

I am very much indebted to Maureen Bell for her advice, criticism and help in the writing of this chapter. David McKitterick and Ian Willison made invaluable comments and suggestions, and Ian Gadd suggested improvements at the last minute.

1 See Hoftijzer, below.

2 See Love, Chan and Beal, below: Brennan, below, demonstrates the importance of manuscript texts for travel books.



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Ireland, and, later, the new American colonies. By the late seventeenth century, the resolution of the Stuarts' struggles with anti-monarchical, republican and dissenting traditions through the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, together with the subsequent final lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695, enabled English culture and literature, increasingly presenting itself as a 'British' polity after the Act of Union in 1707, to develop its colonial markets, leading to the eventual worldwide dominance of the English language. As this volume makes clear, such an outcome could not have been forecast in 1557, nor was it foreseen by those active in the printing and dissemination of Catholic Counter-Reformation texts, by the Royalist opposition of the 1640s and 1650s, by radical and non-conformist writers for the press, or by the readers and writers of texts in Wales, Ireland, Scotland (for many of whom the output of the London press represented a profound cultural and linguistic threat)[3] or, later, those in the American colonies.[4] In each of these countries the trade and book culture developed very differently. These were years of economic uncertainty[5] and of political contestation, whose eventual outcome was uncertain, and they were punctuated by recurrent crises – Elizabeth's Protestant succession, the Armada, the execution of Charles I, the Commonwealth and Protectorate, the Dutch Wars and the Exclusion Crisis.

Despite the belief of writers from Lord Bacon to Elizabeth Eisenstein,[6] the printing press was not, on its own, an agent of change. Throughout the period covered by this volume print, politics and religion were inextricably linked to one another. There was an ongoing battle between differing religious beliefs and between various sects and institutions, all opportunistically making the best use they could of the book trade, both in print and manuscript, sometimes learning propaganda techniques from one another, sometimes modifying opponents' texts either to refute them or to sanitize them for a different Christian audience, and sometimes inventing new genres (like the Marprelate tracts or Quaker witnessings).[7] The circulation, legal or clandestine, of texts in print or manuscript offered different openings for Protestants prior to Mary's death and for Catholics thereafter, as well as for Brownists, Familists, Quakers, Ranters, Levellers and the dissenting clergy.

The continuing attempts throughout the period to control the output of the London presses and the circulation of manuscripts and of unlicensed, pirated or subversive books or pamphlets, whether through licensing, the Stationers' Company, the Star Chamber, Parliamentary acts or, after the Restoration,

3 See Jones, Welch and Bevan, below. 4 See Amory, below.
5 See Raven, below. 6 Eisenstein 1979, but see Johns 1998 and below.
7 See Collinson, Hunt and Walsham, and Green and Peters, below.



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through Sir Roger L'Estrange's appointment as Surveyor of the Press, were only intermittently successful. Censorship, far from being pervasive or by the 1630s virtually totalitarian in its repressiveness,[8] was essentially *ad hoc*, inconsistent, opportunistic and usually ineffective.[9] Members of the book trade, pursuing profit, colluded with one another in the evasion of authority. Company officials impounded books in order to sell them on themselves,[10] while other tradesmen published printed pamphlets anonymously, using shared printing and swift distribution networks to cover their tracks.[11] At the same time authors used indirection, allusions, parallels and fables in legitimately published works. There was no doubt a degree of self-censorship, but these practices meant that despite regulation and harassment by the various authorities, the expression of political and religious belief in drama, literature, sermons and other forms was relatively free.

Print was intimately involved in the development of new reading publics, for instance, the mass market in 'little books'[12] and books written for, and increasingly by, women.[13] In the same years a number of impressive works of scholarship were produced like Sir Henry Savile's Chrysostom, printed at Eton,[14] works which were nearly always uncommercial and therefore dependent on subsidy of one kind or another.[15] The same ability to reach both newly literate and educated readers is equally evident in the imaginative use made of illustrations to support or extend verbal texts, or to stand in their own right as images. Copperplate engraving, developed in the Low Countries and Germany in the mid-fifteenth century, had reached England by 1545, but only became common in the seventeenth century.[16] Engraved title pages were used to attract buyers to cheap books through portraits of the author in works of practical divinity, but engraved plates are a characteristic feature of many of the most ambitious seventeenth-century books. Field's Bible, emblem books, scientific and music books,[17] and works by antiquarians all made extensive use of the rolling press, and offered a livelihood to engravers and to artists like Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–77). The printing of plates and their sale was a separate trade from printing in England. Maps were increasingly manufactured

8 The standard view particularly among literary historians, most influentially Patterson 1984 and 1993. See also Hill 1985.
9 See Hamburger 1984–5 and McKenzie 1988, 'Censorship' and below, pp. 560–1, 566–7, 765–7. See also Lambert 1992b, Clare 1990, Clegg 1997 and 2001 and Wheale 1999, pp. 13, 170–8.
10 Hetet 1985, pp. 43–59.
11 McKenzie 1976a, pp. 22–32. For a detailed bibliographical examination of one such case, Marvell's *Mr Smirke* (1676), see Lynch 2000.
12 See Simmons and Hunter, below.
13 See Bell, below.
14 Eight vols. (Eton, 1610) (*STC* 14629–29a).
15 See Barker, Parry, McKitterick, below.
16 See Hind 1952–64, Griffiths 1998 and O'Connell 1999.
17 See Bell, ch. 31, Chan and Johns, below.



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at home and though they might be included in printed books they were also sold separately.[18] Atlases, which required heavy investment and a substantial market, were initially dominated by the Dutch trade, but by the end of the seventeenth century, although it was commercially risky (as the case of Moses Pitt shows only too clearly[19]) London publishers were prepared to challenge Continental pre-eminence in this field.[20] At the other end of the market, Peter Stent, active from 1642 to 1665, set up a successful business selling a wide range of prints, including maps, portraits both historical and contemporary, and topical images, which were directed not at the connoisseur but at a new middling public.[21]

By 1557 the London trade in printed books was well established. Most of the important vernacular genres – law books, primers, Psalms, sermons, school books, ballads and almanacs – were by then clearly identified. This achievement had earlier required legislation discriminating in favour of native-born members of the London trade to break foreigners' initial domination of the book trade, backed up by the further protection offered by royal patents. In theory at least, these were granted to protect individuals who made substantial investments in ventures of national importance which could only realize a profit over a period of years. Hence patents were awarded for large books like the statutes and law books or the Bible, or shorter works which had to be printed and distributed in very large numbers, all categories of books which required substantial initial capital investment in paper and manufacture.[22] The sale of patents was, of course, also a valuable source of income for the Crown, but it was to impact in unforeseen ways upon the development of the trade.

Some of the audiences for books were remarkably conservative. Thomas Tusser's *A hundreth goode pointes of husbandrie*, first published as a twenty-six page quarto in 1557, enlarged to *Five hundreth points* and 192 pages in 1573,[23] has a history of continuous publication until 1672 and, less frequently, thereafter.[24] It was still a quarto, it still contained Tusser's original dedication to Lord Paget with its opening acrostic, and it was still printed in black letter rather than roman type. (By the late seventeenth century roman type had mostly displaced black letter except in texts like the Tusser aimed at a more 'popular' audience and in some specialist areas like law, though there was a continuing demand for psalters and primers in small formats in both 'white' and 'black

18 Worms, below. 19 Harris 1985. 20 Worms, below.
21 Globe 1985. 22 See Raven, below. 23 *STC* 24372, 24375.
24 Wing T3369: the Stationers' Company still had it for sale *c.* 1695 (Blagden 1960, p. 187). However, the book sold only twenty-six copies in 1676/7 (Barnard 1994, pp. 24, 33). There was a new edition, *Tusser redivivus*, in 1710, reprinted in 1744.



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letter', and black-letter folio editions of the Book of Common Prayer were still in demand.[25]) Similarly, yearly almanacs and prognostications, first published at least as early as 1493, were an important staple for the book trade throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and thereafter.[26] Thus, John Dade produced a yearly almanac from at least 1589 until 1615, after which William Dade's name replaced his, and publication then continued until 1701[27] – an early example of an eponymous brand name. But while the substance and content of Tusser's and Dade's two books remained unchanged, the ownership of their copy changed significantly. In 1557 Tusser's work had appeared under the imprint of Richard Tottell, while the early editions of Dade's almanac were published by Richard Watkins and James Roberts, who had purchased a royal patent in 1571 for the exclusive right to print all almanacs.[28] Both Tottell and Watkins were printer-booksellers. By the end of the seventeenth century both these books had long been the property of the Stationers' Company, the result of a long-term policy to gain control of the trade's profitable staple products, short works in English in small formats with guaranteed repeat editions. The tension between an individual's or a patentee's rights and those of the Company, implicit in the change of ownership of both titles, is crucial to an understanding of the financial structuring of the trade.

The trade at large had two main roles. First, it imported, legally or illegally, books from the Continent. The legal imports were primarily in Latin and languages other than English, and were either cheap editions of the classics for educational needs or more expensive books for the educated and professional classes. Even more than most other sections of a trade which Britain had to learn from the Continent, the Latin trade was, along with that of London's paper merchants, one which had long been dominated by foreigners with the connections and the necessary credit with overseas production centres.[29] However, some native businessmen were already active in importing books by the mid-sixteenth century and gradually made their way into the trade, until by 1700 they were in the majority.[30] Theirs was a wholesale trade, and the London port books (the customs records) give a remarkably detailed analysis of the individuals and families involved. Although the evidence is scanty, their main business throughout the period was in large numbers of small format editions of the classics and smaller numbers of learned books in larger formats.[31] The kinds of

25 See Blagden 1960, p. 187, Wing B3679 (1687) and Barnard 1999a, p. 369.
26 Bosanquet 1917; Blagden 1958b; Capp 1979.
27 *STC*, Wing, *BLC*. 28 Bosanquet 1917, p. 42.
29 For the preceding period, see Christianson, Needham and King in Hellinga and Trapp 1999.
30 See Roberts, below, pp. 160–72. For paper imports, see below, Bidwell ch. 28.
31 Roberts, below. For imports and exports in the eighteenth century see Barber 1976.



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more expensive books imported can be inferred from inventories, the library lists of individuals and libraries, and from the printed catalogues of books brought from overseas which begin with that of Henry Fetherstone (Featherstone) in 1628[32] and continue intermittently until the end of the century. It is clear from these different sources that books were imported from all over Europe.[33] But even by the end of the seventeenth century books in English or printed in Britain could provide only a limited proportion of those needed by a serious reader.[34] Congreve's library, much more strongly biased towards English literature than most, depended on Continental printing for 40 per cent of its titles.[35] Locke's library is probably more typical – of his three and a half thousand books fewer than half were printed in Britain (and most of those, 1,637, in London) and only 39 per cent were in English, a proportion marginally higher than the number of titles in Latin (37 per cent), with titles in French making up the third significant language. (Of the Latin titles barely more than a hundred (3 per cent) were London printed.)[36] Even more striking is the case of the self-educated dissenting radical, Samuel Jeake (1623–90) of Rye: about a sixth of the books in his library of over two thousand titles were produced on the Continent, though only sixty of those were printed after 1640, and about a quarter of his library was in languages other than English, mostly Latin.[37] Apart from books brought back by individuals from their travels abroad, the larger proportion of these overseas books had been imported by the London trade (usually unbound, to create work for English craftsmen) and then distributed through their shops in London, their stalls at fairs, or through provincial retailers to the country as a whole. Only Scotland's manufacturing and retail book trade had a history in large part independent of London.[38]

Books imported surreptitiously by one means or another included texts such as Catholic works or the Latin versions of Hobbes's works, banned by the authorities,[39] but profit was a more substantial motive than belief. Since paper was cheaper on the Continent and its booksellers and printers had a far larger market, throughout this period books printed abroad cost less, and were usually better printed, than the home product.[40] In consequence, Bibles printed in Holland could undercut those printed in England[41] just as Latin school books

32 Pollard and Ehrman 1965; see also McKitterick and Leedham-Green below, pp. 00–00.
33 See Leedham-Green and McKitterick, below, pp. 323–4. For Scottish imports, see Bevan, below, pp. 689–90, 697 and Kelly 1997.
34 Compare with the preceding period, Ford in Hellinga and Trapp 1999.
35 Based on Hodges 1955, pp. 115–16.
36 Harrison and Laslett 1971, pp. 19–20.
37 Hunter, Mandelbrote, Ovenden and Smith 1999, pp. xxxvii–viii.
38 See Bevan, below.
39 See Collinson, Hunt and Walsham and Green and Peters, below.
40 Further see Hoftijzer, below.
41 See Roberts, below p. 165, McMullin, below, pp. 466–8, and Hoftijzer, below, pp. 739–40.



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printed abroad were superior in quality as well as being cheaper than their English equivalent: it was, inevitably, a trade impossible to police effectively.[42]

The market for books printed in English could not at first reach beyond Britain. Works printed in English or in Law French, languages not used outside these islands, offered the only possible source of income for the entrepreneurial production of books or texts before the establishment of the American colonies.[43] Unlike the Continent, where ambitious publishers like Jenson or Plantin could look to merchant bankers or institutions or the state for financial investment[44] and where Louis XIII under the influence of Richelieu founded the Imprimerie Royale in 1640, such enlightened support was largely lacking in Britain. This made the publication of substantial works of any kind (even the Bible) problematic and explains key features of the publishing practices and financial imperatives peculiar to the London trade throughout this period.[45] Since books in English had no substantial European market, and since books in Latin could always be produced more cheaply on the Continent, the buying public available was strictly limited. As Archbishop Parker told Cecil in 1572, John Day and other printers were 'loth . . . to printe any Lattin booke, because they will not heare be uttered [i.e., published], and for that Bookes printed in Englande be in suspition abroad.'[46] (Despite these commercial difficulties, there is an extensive body of neo-Latin literature published by contemporary writers in Britain up to the year 1640.[47])

In 1582 Christopher Barker, writing as the Queen's Printer since 1577, analysed the state of the London trade, paying particular attention to the monopolies previously granted (for a fee) by the Crown covering particular categories of books. He thought that Henry Bynneman's patent for publishing dictionaries was 'more Dangerous to the Patentee then profitable' which he thought required £10,000 capital 'at the least' (equivalent to over £1,500,000 in today's currency):

> if the printer should print many of the said volumes, he must needes stande betwixt two extremes, that is, if he print competent nombers of each to mayntayne his charges, all England Scotland *and much more* were not able to vtter them; and if he should print but a few of each volume, the prices should be exceading greate, and he in more Daunger to be vndone, then likely to gayne. . . . (my italics)[48]

42 For some examples of their distribution in the provinces, see Barnard and Bell, below, pp. 681–2.
43 See Amory, below. 44 Jardine 1996. 45 See Raven, below.
46 Oastler 1975, p. 19 (citing BL, Lansdowne MS. 15, no. 50).
47 See Binns 1990. Neo-Latin culture was centred in Oxford and Cambridge Universities (Binns 1990, pp. xxiv, 393): publication must frequently have been supported by the author or by patronage.
48 Arber, I, p. 116. For the currency equivalents see Bank of England 2001, p. 9.



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Barker was quite right. Bynneman's attempted publication in the early 1580s of Morelius's Latin and Greek dictionary, first published at Paris in 1558, led to financial disaster.[49] The English book trade's cultural relationship with the Continent, despite the publication of a handful of notable scholarly works,[50] was unavoidably provincial. This was as true of the market in the late seventeenth century as it had been in the sixteenth century: in the 1670s Robert Scott, the main importer of French books, 'expected to sell no more than twenty to thirty copies of a new mathematics book from abroad'.[51] These three inherent structural problems – the lack of an external market for books in English, the cost of paper, and the consequently high production costs – ensured that scholarly publication was rarely if ever commercially viable and seriously inhibited efforts to establish a learned press at either Oxford or Cambridge.[52] Nevertheless, by 1662 books published by the London trade were thought sufficiently important for the Licensing Act to require stationers to give copies of their new books to the newly designated copyright libraries.[53]

The profitability of printing was also threatened by the excess of productive capacity among London printers evident throughout this period. Christopher Barker's report on patents and the trade in December 1582 is quite explicit: he believed that instead of twenty-two[54] printing houses in London, '8. or 10. at the most would suffise for all England, yea and Scotland too'.[55] At the same time, the trade seems to have been chronically under-capitalized, creating particular problems for the production of large books. A case in point is the writing, production and distribution of Foxe's 'Book of martyrs' (1563). Foxe's martyrology was thought absolutely central to English Protestantism's sense of itself, so much so that a copy was supposed to be placed in every cathedral and in important public offices.[56] Yet without the patronage of the printer John Day, who held the lucrative patent for ABCs with the primer,

49 *STC* 18101 (1583). See Eccles 1957; Barnard and Bell 1991, pp. 20–5. Richard Hutton, the armourer, the recovery of whose loan led to Bynneman's downfall and whose name appears on the title page of the 1584 edition, credits Bynneman with originating the project in his Latin dedication to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (sig. *ij$^{v}$). Starnes 1954, p. 112, mistakenly believes that Hutton was the book's editor and translator.

50 For example, the Eton edition of Chrysostom mentioned above (p. 3) or Thomas James's 1605 catalogue of the Bodleian. Thomas Vautrollier, John Wolfe, François Bouvier and the Oxford printer, Joseph Barnes, exceptionally had a few books on sale at the Frankfurt book fair in the 1570s and 1580s: see McKitterick 1992, pp. 86, 417, and Schwetschke 1850–77.

51 McKitterick 1992, p. 376, citing John Collins to John Beale, 20 August 1672 (*Correspondence of scientific men of the seventeenth century*, ed. S. J. Rigaud, Oxford, 1841, I, p. 200).

52 See McKitterick, below.

53 Leedham-Green and McKitterick, below, p. 336.

54 Actually twenty-three (see below, p. 13): Barker seems not to have counted his own shop as Queen's Printer.

55 Arber, I, p. 144.

56 Collinson, Hunt and Walsham, below, p. 37.



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Foxe would never have been able to complete the work, while its subsequent publication history strongly suggests that as a commercial venture this essential Protestant text was always problematic.[57] After Day's death the 1596 edition was financed by a group of ten trade partners,[58] and when the stationers gained the rights to Foxe's work in 1620, they experienced serious difficulties in providing a subsequent edition, a problem only solved when no fewer than sixteen men agreed to share the risk of a new three-volume folio edition (1632).[59] The same problems are evident in scholarly publishing. John Minsheu's multilingual dictionary, *Ductor in linguas* (made up of 726 folio pages using Greek, Anglo-Saxon and Hebrew characters as well as roman, black letter and italic) on which he began work in 1599, was given a royal patent in 1611. Minsheu, however, was unable to raise the capital to publish the book until 1617: in doing so he sought the support of the two universities, the Inns of Court, and 'diuers Honorable and Right Worshipfull Personages, Bishops, and others', including merchants and London citizens: even so money ran out in the course of printing and the work was done at different times by two different printers.[60] It was this difficulty which led to the publication of the second edition in 1625 by subscription, the first English example of this practice,[61] one revived in the 1650s and taken up by the trade in the 1670s and 1680s.[62]

The two events which define the chronological limits of this volume, the grant of a royal charter to the Stationers' Company in 1557 and the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, are usually seen as definitively marking the dominance of the London book trade throughout this period, initially in England, Wales and Ireland, and then in the emergent American colonies. Both are indeed significant moments, but it is important to recognize that the trade in these years is characterized by change as much as by continuity, with the Company and its members adapting to new circumstances – economic, social, political and (to a lesser extent) technological.[63]

It now seems that the incorporation of the Company by Queen Mary in 1557 should be seen in important part as a normal transition in the life of a City

57 Oastler 1975.
58 *STC* 11226. For the division of the twelve shares among the partners in April 1595, see Greg and Boswell 1930, pp. lxviii, 51, 55.
59 *STC* 11228: further see Jackson 1957, pp. 230–31, 243–4, 434–6, 481, 482.
60 Williams 1948, pp. 755–60: see also *Ductor in linguas* (1617), sig. $\pi 2^r$ (see also $A4^r$).
61 Williams 1948, p. 770, who points out that the first edition of 1617 was not, as is usually claimed (Clapp 1932 and most subsequent writers), the first example of subscription publication.
62 See Green and Peters, below, pp. 78–9, and McKenzie, below, p. 565.
63 For developments in typefounding, see Barker, ch. 29 below; on changing patterns of bookbinding, see Foot, below.



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craft guild[64] rather than, as W. W. Greg influentially claimed,[65] a far-sighted realization on the part of the Crown and the book trade of a mutually beneficial relationship, one which simultaneously served the Crown's interest in press control and the Company's interest in a trade monopoly. A complicity of interests in controlling the trade was certainly apparent to, and exploited by, both sides; but at times of stress (most notably under the restored Stuart monarchy, particularly when James II attempted to pack the Company's senior membership[66]) the potential conflict between the government's political will and the Company's commercial interests could cause friction. What is most striking is the Company's continuity, which after initial difficulties in the early 1640s maintained itself throughout the Interregnum and the reign of Charles II, held together by its mutual interests, notwithstanding the tensions between the printers and booksellers within the Company.[67] Yet despite the attention paid to the trade by successive governments, the Stationers' Company was always one of the poorer City corporations – in 1557 it ranked fifty-sixth out of a total of sixty-three and was still ranked among the poorer Companies in 1692.[68] Even so, the proportion of 'gentlemen' and London citizens choosing to apprentice their sons to the trade grew substantially between the years 1601 and 1700.[69]

The Company's incorporation in 1557 was highly significant in several ways. Control of the English and Welsh book trade was centralized in London (apart from the few rights granted to the two universities), a situation quite unlike that in the Low Countries or Scotland, neither of which had a single regulatory body.[70] As is usually pointed out, the Company's main functions were the registration of its members' rights to publish particular titles (thus securing their perpetual ownership), the admission of apprentices, and the regulation of the trade. To enforce this the Company was given powers of search throughout the country and, crucially, the printing of books was restricted to London (though this was challenged by the two universities in the 1580s and again later), helping to ensure the metropolis's dominance of the national trade until 1695. In addition, the Company's membership was given a legal corporate existence, creating a cohesive group identity for its members.[71] But the single most important change was to give the Company the legal 'power to redefine the trades over which it had jurisdiction':[72] in effect, as Peter Blayney argues, it meant that the Stationers' Company had appropriated the craft of

64 Pollard 1937a, p. 35; Pollard 1937b, p. 236; Lambert 1992b, pp. 13–14; McKenzie 1997, pp. 40–2. The guild may date back to 1403.
65 Greg and Boswell 1930, p. lx.
66 Blagden 1960, p. 171.
67 Blagden 1958c.
68 Gadd 1999, pp. 125–6.
69 Ferdinand 1992.
70 See Bevan, below, p. 687.
71 Gadd 1999.
72 *Ibid.*, p. 37.



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