This is a repository copy of *Illuminated Caxtons and the Trade in Printed Books*.

Article:

Illuminated Caxtons and the Trade in Printed Books

In a recent survey of English illumination in incunabula, I discussed the prevalence with which illuminators could be identified as decorators of both manuscripts and early printed books.[1] This practice (comprising the application of gold and pigments rather than the coloured ink of the 'rubricator' or 'flourisher') offered yet further evidence for continuities in the book trade after the advent of printing.[2] One individual, however, was a misfit in my theme of 'medieval' artists in 'modern' books, being an apparent specialist in the illumination of incunabula. It seemed significant that in an appended handlist of only 36 illuminated incunabula that eight should be the work of a single artist, particularly in view of the

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[1] Holly James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of English and Continental Incunabula in England, c. 1455–1500', in *Production and Provenance: Copy-Specific Features of Incunabula,* ed. by J. Goldfinch, S. Tokunaga and T. Kato (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming) (hereafter *Production and Provenance*).

[2] While continuity is widely accepted as an important feature in the form, appearance and (to a great extent) materials of books in the transition of manuscript to print, this is not necessarily the case for markets and readership. See the recent chapters by Julia Boffey ('From Manuscript to Print: Continuity and Change', pp. 13–26) and Alexandra Gillespie ('Bookbinding and Early Printing in England', pp. 75–94) in *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain, 1476–1558*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014) (hereafter *Companion*). The influential counter-view is Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For further discussion of the ways in which the new and established technologies came into contact, see Curt F. Bühler, *The Fifteenth-Century Book* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960); N. F. Blake, 'Manuscript to Print', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) (hereafter *BPPB*), pp. 403–32; *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520*, ed. by Sandra Hindman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and *Caxton's Trace: Studies in the History of English Printing*, ed. by William Kuskin (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

association with William Caxton. This artist, whom I referred to as the 'Incunables limner',
was responsible for the illumination added to five copies of Caxton's edition of Jacobus de
Voragine's *Golden Legend*,[3] and to three Continental imprints from Strasbourg and Parma.[4]
Since then, I have identified the artist in a further two Continental books printed in different
locations: Basel and Verona.[5] It is my purpose here to explore what case can be made for the
significant possibility that imported books decorated by the Incunables limner were products
of Caxton's overseas trade; related to this will be my suggestion that the artist's ability to
specialise in the illumination of printed books resulted from his regular employment by

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[3] Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum* (Westminster: William Caxton, [between 20 Nov. 1483 and
Mar. 1484]; ISTC ij00148000): (1) Cambridge, University Library, Inc.2.J.1.1[3511]; (2) Chantilly, Musée
Condé, XXI-(1)-C-006; (3) Hereford, Cathedral Library, K. 5. 6; (4) Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Inc 350; and
(5) Washington, Library of Congress, Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Incun. X.J185 copy 1 (see James-
Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula', appendix, nos. 7, 12, 17, 25, 26).

With special thanks to Takako Kato and Satoko Tokunaga, to whom I owe my knowledge of four of these five
copies (Cambridge aside), and for sharing their forthcoming publications with me: Takako Kato, 'Perfecting and
Completing Caxton's *Golden Legend*: Stratigraphy of Non-Homogeneous Codices', in *Production and
Provenance*; see also 'Copy Descriptions' in the introduction to the forthcoming Early English Text Society
edition of Caxton's *Golden Legend* edited by John Scahill, Mayumi Taguchi, and Satoko Tokunaga.

[4] The imported books are: Bristol, Public Library, EPB 26/SR 134, Pliny the elder, *Historia naturalis* (Parma:
Andreas Portilia, 1481; ISTC ip00793000); Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, EP.B.1, Vincentius
Bellovacensis, *Speculum morale* (Strassburg: Johann Mentelin, 1476; ISTC iv00288000); and Cambridge,
Pembroke College, C.4, Guillelmus Duranti, *Rationale divinorum officiorum* ([Strassburg: Printer of the 1483
Jordanus de Quedlinburg (Georg Husner), not after 1483]: ISTC id00427000). See James-Maddocks,
'Illuminators of…Incunabula', appendix, nos. 1, 2, 5.

[5] Oxford, Lincoln College, K. 8. 10 SR C. 1, Flavius Blondus, *Roma instaurata* (Verona: Boninus de Boninis,
de Ragusia, 1481-82; ISTC ib00702000); and Winchester Cathedral Library, Cupboard 41, Johannes de
Bromyard, *Summa praedicantium* ([Basel: Johann Amerbach, not after 1484]; ISTC ij00260000).

William Caxton. The period discussed, c. 1476–c. 1484, is defined by the dates of the six imprints, and at least nine of the ten books were probably illuminated after 1481.

The 'Incunables limner' and parallels with Caxton's rubrication and binding

The conjunction of five copies of a Caxton imprint and five copies of different Continental imprints is a grouping made on the basis that all ten appear to have been decorated by the same artist. The customary design employed by this particular illuminator (or 'limner') was that of a gold initial on a compartmented ground of rose and blue with, respectively, silver and white highlighting; the accompanying borderwork was simple but effective, comprising gently undulating green-lobed feathering with barbed quatrefoil (Fig. 1) and/or barbed roses (Fig. 2) balanced by a repeated single leaf motif. The leaf form with smooth margins (Figs 1–5) presumably served as an unfussy means of filling large spaces at regular intervals along the vine, an apparently thoughtful design for dealing with the chief feature of print: quantity. Even where minor elaboration of the leaf occurs—crenated margins with a twist or upturned tip, or a trifoliate shape (Figs 6–10)—the distribution is uniform. In the extra space afforded by the three-quarter borders of Bristol Public Library's copy of Pliny, for example, we see only duplicates of the crenated leaf and the barbed-flower. This 'infill' strategy contrasts with the variegated gold and colour motifs typically evident within single campaigns of work by contemporary manuscript illuminators.[6]

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[6] Indeed, labour-saving tactics (such as limiting the overall selection of coloured motifs and/or using one type per border) were evident in two of the three case-studies where I could directly compare an artist's choices in both manuscript and print forms: James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula' (esp. note 23 for similar practices in Germany and Italy). Parallel 'abbreviations' of the bookbinding process are noted in Gillespie, 'Bookbinding and Early Printing', pp. 90, 92.

For a glossary of terms used in the description of illumination, see Kathleen L. Scott, *Dated & Datable English Manuscript Borders c. 1395–1499* (London: Bibliographical Society/British Library, 2002).

There is a sixth copy of Caxton's *Golden Legend*, now in the British Library, with an illuminated initial executed to the same design used in the five copies by the Incunables limner (Fig. 3). The many variations in details of execution would seem to suggest two colleagues working in imitation of a pattern set by one or the other of them.[7] It is likely that both artists worked simultaneously, as a better means of supplying demand, although this is not certain. Part of the edition was printed in two settings, and the two issues were probably completed between November 1483 and March 1484.[8] Whether or not they worked side-by-side, the output of both artists is an important demonstration of the attempt to standardise illumination from one copy to the next. There is an obvious parallel to be drawn with another aspect of the decoration of Caxton's editions: rubrication. A consistency in the style of red and blue ink initials and paragraph marks was first noticed by William Blades, and the

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[7] James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula', appendix, no. 18 (London, British Library, IB 55081 [C.11.d.8]). Despite the attempt to maintain a consistent design, notice the difference (Fig. 3) in the shape of the initial ground, and in its quadripartite division for colouring. Notice also the greater density of feathering with overlapping strands that terminate in smaller rounded lobes. There is further variation in the leaf venation pattern, and in the form of the barbs on the flowers.

[8] *Catalogue of books printed in the XVth century now in the British Library, pt. XI: England*, ed. by L. Hellinga ('t Goy-Houten, 2007), p. 149 (hereafter BMC XI). See p. 144 for the internal evidence indicating that the second issue followed 'after only a short interval of time'. Nothing should be inferred about chronology of labour from the fact that the Incunables Limner worked on copies of the first setting while the assistant's copy is 'mixed' (a conflation of first and second setting leaves): the champ initial is situated on fol. a1r in all copies – within a quire that was printed only in the first setting – and we cannot know whether a 'mixed' copy is a Caxton creation or a later assemblage.

Resetting is discussed in Paul Needham, 'Copy-Specifics in the Printing Shop', in *Early Printed Books as Material Objects: Proceedings of the Conference Organised by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Munich, 19-21 August 2009*, ed. by Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed (The Hague: Walter De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 9–20 (pp. 18–19).

possibility that they were 'provided by the printing house' was recently lent considerable support by Takako Kato's discovery of red initials as off-sets in many copies of Caxton's *Golden Legend* where no rubrication was entered on the facing page.[9] Furthermore, Kato's identification of distinct patterns of rubrication within the *Golden Legend* complements Satoko Tokunaga's findings for Caxton's earlier books, namely that numerous rubricators were a consistent presence both within and across editions.[10] The idea of a small *team* of rubricators, consistent enough in their production of Rhenish-style initials to have led to the idea of 'Caxton's own standard rubrication', is now mirrored by the two illuminators who worked to an identical design.[11]

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[9] William Blades, *The Biography and Typography of William Caxton*, 2 vols (London: J. Lilly, 1861–63), II, p. liii, observed that Caxton 'certainly employed, so late as 1485, the services of a Scriver, or rubrisher, to insert the initial letters'. The possibility of 'in house' rubrication, first proposed by Blades, is also suggested by A. S. G. Edwards ('Decorated Caxtons', in *Incunabula: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Printed Books Presented to Lotte Hellinga*, ed. by Martin Davies [London: The British Library, 1999], pp. 493–506 (p. 493); Boffey, 'From Manuscript to Print', p. 18; and Satoko Tokunaga, 'Rubrication in Caxton's Early English Books, c. 1476–1478', in *Incunabula on the Move: The Production, Circulation and Collection of Early Printed Books*, ed. by Ed Potten and Satoko Tokunaga, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 15.1 (2012), 59–78 (p. 70); the quotation is taken from Lotte Hellinga, in *Gothic: Art for England 1400–1547*, ed. by Richard Marks and Paul Williamson, with the assistance of Eleanor Townsend (London: V&A Publications, 2003), pp. 346–47 (p. 347)). See also BMC XI, pp. 28–29. For the off-sets, likely created when unfolded sheets were accidentally laid on top, see Kato, 'Perfecting and Completing'.

[10] Tokunaga, 'Rubrication', pp. 59–78. One distinctive style that occurs in three copies of the *Golden Legend*, for example, was apparent as early as the 1478 edition of Chaucer's translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (p. 70). See further Kato, 'Perfecting and Completing', esp. appendices 2–4.

[11] Geoffroy de La Tour-Landry, *Book of the Knight of the Tower*, ed. by M. Y. Offord, Early English Text Society, Supplementary Series, 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. xiv.

The evidence for Caxton's regular employment of at least one illuminator finds intriguing parallels with Howard M. Nixon's important account of 'a Caxton bindery', so-called for its use of a combination of tools frequently associated with Caxton and de Worde's imprints.[12] The proximity of the bindery to Caxton's printing house in the precinct of Westminster Abbey was confirmed by the identification of the same bindings on manuscripts written by William Ebesham, a fellow tenant of the abbey.[13] Nixon's tentative suggestion 'that the bindery might well have been under Caxton and de Worde's roof' was based on the quantity of waste from their presses.[14] For my purposes, however, it is Nixon's listing of books imported from the Continent that is especially illuminating. In grouping 36 bindings from this workshop, Nixon revealed that many featured on books printed in nine different locations from Ghent in the north to Venice in the south.[15] It is indirect evidence for Caxton's early engagement in the retail of Continental books at Westminster, and one similarly implied by the numerous early collocations of foreign incunabula with Caxton Sammelband.[16] *Direct*

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[12] Howard M. Nixon, 'William Caxton and Bookbinding', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, 11 (1976–77), 92–113 (p. 92).

[13] A. I. Doyle, 'The Work of a Late Fifteenth-Century English Scribe, William Ebesham', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 39 (1956–57), 298–325.

[14] Nixon, 'Caxton and Bookbinding', p. 105.

[15] For further additions to Nixon's list, see his *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding* (London: Scolar Press, 1978), p. 14, and Mirjam M. Foot, 'English decorated bookbindings', in *BPPB*, pp. 65–86 (p. 74).

[16] For Nicolas Barker's view that Johann Veldener—Caxton's Cologne-collaborator and first punchcutter—was his 'early source of import', see: 'The Importation of books into England 1460–1526', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Buchwesens im konfessionellen Zeitalter*, ed. by Herbert G. Göpfert et al., *Wolfenbüttler Schriften zur Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 11 (1985), 251–66 (p. 255).

On Sammelband, see A. S. G. Edwards, 'Continental Influences on London Printing and Reading in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', in *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Julia Boffey

evidence that Caxton freighted books in bulk is not evident until late in his career. The record of the duty paid by natives of England at the port of London—the Subsidy—survives in one roll for the entire period relevant to Caxton's career in Westminster.[17] In the Michaelmas year 1487–88, Caxton imported at least 261 books across two shipments, in addition to a chest of uncounted books. In the exemplary study of the context of these Exchequer archives, Paul Needham warns against underestimating Caxton's role as importer based on the vagaries of survival.[18] The conjunction of archival evidence with material indications, namely the appearance of Caxton's bindings on books produced abroad during the decade leading up to 1487, strongly implies that importation was a regular aspect of the merchant's activities.

Nixon's identification of the Caxton bindery's work on books printed in Basel and Strasbourg, among many other places, provides a framework for understanding the activities of the Incunables limner. The coincidences of origin extend even to the printing houses involved: texts printed by Johann Amerbach and by Georg Husner were subsequently either bound by the Caxton bindery or illuminated by the Incunables limner, by craftsmen associated with Caxton's own imprints (Figs 5, 8).[19] Given the limner's work on five copies

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and Pamela King (London: University of London, 1995), pp. 229–56 (p. 254), citing Paul Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner* (Washington, D. C.: Library of Congress, 1986), Appendix B, nos. 1, 27, 32, 33.

[17] N. J. M. Kerling, 'Caxton and the Trade in Printed Books', *The Book Collector*, 4 (1955), 190–99 (p. 197), noting that Caxton also exported 140 books in French. For an extensive and recently-compiled bibliography regarding the English trade in Continental printed books see Vincent Gillespie's 'Introduction', in *Companion*, pp. 1–9 (p. 2 n. 4).

[18] Paul Needham, 'The customs rolls as documents for the printed-book trade in England', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III, 1400–1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) (hereafter *CHBB III*), pp. 148–63 (pp. 154–55).

[19] The Caxton binder's stamps appear on a 1481 vocabulary of Johannes Reuchlin printed in Basel by Amerbach (British Library, IB 37262A), and this is contemporary with the illuminator's decoration of Bromyard's

of the *Golden Legend*, the possibility must be considered that the artist's source for a regular supply of Continental books was William Caxton himself. With a single individual responsible for ten of 38 known incunabula illuminated in England (26%), the simplest explanation for this remarkable activity is the artist's proximity to a bookseller who both printed and imported books for retail. There is some evidence, in fact, for a comparable arrangement in Oxford in the early 1480s. Manuscripts decorated by the 'Fitzjames limner' situate the artist unequivocally in Oxford, both through patronage and through collaboration with an identifiable Catte Street illuminator.[20] His illumination of a copy of Theodoric Rood's edition of William Lyndewood's *Constitutiones provinciales* (Oxford, 1483–84), surviving in a contemporary Oxford binding, was almost certainly something more than one-off opportunity: the Fitzjames limner also added partial borders to two copies of Nicholas Jenson's Bible (Venice, 1476).[21] The emerging evidence would seem to indicate a regular

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preaching handbook from the same press (see note 5). The artist's decoration of Georg Husner's edition of Durandus pre-dated its donation to Pembroke Hall in 1485 while the bindery's stamps feature so far on two Husner imprints, the 1503 edition of Comestor's *Historia scholastica* and a 1504 vocabulary of Reuchlin (Cambridge, University Library, Sel.3.89 and Rel.C.50.1). What may be implied here is a longstanding contact with a printer in Strasbourg, initiated by Caxton and continued by his assistant and successor, Wynkyn de Worde. The bindings are listed in Nixon, 'Caxton and Bookbinding', pp. 94–5, nos. 8, 23, 24 (no. 8, 'private collection', is the same copy sold in 1983 to the British Library, which was subsequently counted as an addition to Nixon's list in Foot, p. 74).

[20] The third case-study in James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula'. The Fitzjames limner's collaborator on Catte Street, John Bray, is considered (in relation to another border artist) in Holly James-Maddocks, 'The Peripatetic Activity of Thomas Tresswell, London Stationer (*fl. c*. 1440–1470)', in *Manuscripts in the Making: Art & Science*, volume 1, ed. by Stella Panayotova and Paola Ricciardi (London; Turnhout: Harvey Miller; Brepols, 2017), pp. 111–25 (pp. 112–14).

[21] James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula', appendix, nos. 8, 9, 21: Cambridge, University Library, Inc.3.B.3.2[1361] and Inc.3.B.3.2[1362], *Biblia latina* (Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 1476; ISTC ib00547000), and

arrangement with the local supplier of printed books, presumably either Rood or Rood's sometime business partner, Thomas Hunt. Like the Fitzjames limner, the Incunables limner illuminated more than one copy of the same imprint and the implication is that the retailers of both texts considered the speculative addition of pigment and gold to be to their advantage.[22] Unlike the Fitzjames limner, however, I have not been able to identify work by the Incunables limner in *any* English-illuminated manuscript to date, despite having surveyed in excess of 3,000 items for the period from c. 1380 to c. 1520. This negative manuscript evidence, in contrast to his 26% share of all known illuminated incunabula, is the basis for my suggestion that it was Caxton's *imported* books that enabled this artist to specialise in illuminating printed books.

A London Mercer with a Westminster Bookshop

During and leading up to the period when Caxton employed the Incunables limner in 1483–1484, the artist also decorated one copy each of Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum morale* (Strasbourg, 1476), Pliny's *Natural History* (Parma, 1481), Flavio Biondo's *Roma instaurata* (Verona, 1481-82), William Durandus' *Rationale divinorum officiorum* (Strasbourg, not after 1483), and John Bromyard's *Summa praedicantium* (Basel, not after 1484) (Figs 4–5, 7–11). Following the pattern established by Nixon for the bindery, it is easily feasible that all five of these volumes were imported by Caxton and reserved for illumination. Like the printer's own books, any volumes that he imported could either have been moved wholesale to other London and provincial booksellers or retailed within his shop adjoining the chapter house of

London, British Library, IC.55322, Guilielmus Lyndewode, *Constitutiones provinciales ecclesiae Anglicanae* ([Oxford: Theodoricus Rood, about 1483-1484]; ISTC il00413000).

[22] *Cf.* Edwards: 'What is clear is that if such illumination was part of Caxton's original publishing plan there is no evidence that it met with any consumer enthusiasm' ('Decorated Caxtons', p. 505). There is much support for this view: see note 55.

Westminster Abbey.[23] While the binders served Caxton both in his capacity as wholesaler

and retailer, the illuminators were more likely to have prepared copies for retail, adding

illumination both speculatively and at the request of customers.[24] What is certain is that the

stock handled by *all* craftsmen was far more likely to bear a Continental imprint than a

domestic one. In my recent survey of English illumination in Cambridge and Glasgow

collections (where, crucially, it was possible to analyse all illuminated imprints in a

systematic way), I found that 14 of the 18 books illuminated in England had been printed

abroad (78%). This proportion is closely reflected in the much larger census of bindings

conducted by Scott Husby, whose recently published database indicates that 83% of early

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[23] The shop was positioned on the route from the south door of the church to the palace: Howard M. Nixon,

'Caxton, His Contemporaries, and Successors in the Book Trade from Westminster Documents', *The Library*,

5th ser., 31 (1976), 305–26 (p. 310). In addition, the stall rented by Caxton in the Abbey's precinct during the

parliament of 1489 may have been a more regular rental than surviving records suggest: Anne F. Sutton,

'William Caxton, King's Printer c.1480–85: A Plea for History and Chronology in a Merchant's Career', in *The

Medieval Merchant: Proceedings of the 2012 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Caroline M. Barron and Anne F.

Sutton (Donington: Shaun Tyas: 2014), pp. 259–83 (p. 281). For the members of Parliament who owned Caxton

editions, see Margaret Lane Ford, 'Private ownership of printed books', in *CHBB III, 1400–1557*, pp. 205–28

(p. 217).

[24] On speculation: The small spray initials at the opening of six copies of the *Golden Legend* (five by the

Incunables Limner), or at the opening of two copies of Jenson's *Biblia latina* (both Fitzjames Limner), may

indeed be examples of speculative illumination. Similarly, Tokunaga's examination of rubrication in books

printed by Caxton between 1476 and 1478 revealed consistent patterns across different editions leading her to

suggest that this additional decorative task was organised pre-buyer ('Rubrication', p. 62).

On retail: Both Anne F. Sutton and A. S. G. Edwards make the point that it made little business sense dealing

with other printers' books unless one were capitalising on the retail sale of those books: see Sutton, 'Merchants',

in *Companion*, pp. 127–33 (p. 127); and Edwards, 'Continental Influences', p. 231.

English bindings survive on books *imported* to England.[25] Collectively these studies predict that future identification of work by the Incunables limner (and Caxton bindery) will centre upon foreign books rather than Caxton's own editions.[26] Given the significant possibility that Continental volumes decorated by this artist were products of Caxton's overseas trade, the customers identified as their earliest owners should now be considered a potential source of information for Caxton's wider book-selling strategies.

The market supplied by the five Continental books is indicated by their content (Latin texts of the law, classics, humanism, and theology), subjects that clearly reflect university interests. Remarkably, it is possible to establish early English purchasers for three of the imported volumes, one of whom gave instructions for his coat of arms to be incorporated within the original programme of illumination.[27] The biographies of these men—Thomas Wright (*fl.* 1465–1488), Richard Mayhew (d. 1516), and Edmund Audley (d. 1524)—place them within the chief class of book owners: 'the university-educated and university educators, that is to say, the secular and regular clergy, including theologians, and other professionals such as lawyers and doctors'.[28] In what follows, I will consider what can be learned about Caxton's relation to a network of craftsmen and customers given the distinct possibility that he was

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[25] Of the 118 early English bindings found in American library collections, 98 are on books printed on the Continent: see 'Bookbindings on Incunables: The Scott Husby Database at Princeton University Library' <https://husby.princeton.edu/> [accessed 14 January 2019].

[26] Nixon's list, like the one attached to my previous survey of English illumination, is dominated by books printed in England (Nixon, 'Caxton and Bookbinding', pp. 94–96). It is crucial to understand that the bias in English imprints is not representative. It reflects a manageable search strategy for locating early English binding and illumination by surveying *only English imprints* within a given collection. The remedy exists in further copy-specific cataloguing of UK collections, discussed below (p. x).

[27] James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula', appendix, no. 1 (Richard Mayhew).

[28] Ford, 'Private Ownership', p. 205.

responsible for the import and retail of the volumes in question. Of the three books with known early owners, the Pembroke College copy of Durandus' *Rationale* (Strasbourg, not after 1483) demonstrates the swiftest journey from Georg Husner's press to its English purchaser (Fig. 5). It was donated to Pembroke Hall in 1485 by Thomas Wright, a fellow and, in 1474, its treasurer (*fl.* 1465–1488).[29] The donation date indicates that it was illuminated and bound in England within a short period after it was printed in Strasbourg, making it very likely that Wright was the first owner of this particular copy. Standard texts of canon law, such as this one, were taught formally at the universities and necessitated a vast import industry.[30] The university law faculty was the largest of the higher faculties, combining both civil and canon law, and its requirement that each student had access to the text perhaps inspired Wright's donation to Pembroke Hall.[31] In a famous printed copy of an earlier edition of this text, purchased by James Goldwell in Hamburg in 1465 and eventually donated to All Souls College, he stipulated that his *Rationale* was to be kept in the Choir for the use of those studying.[32] It was the combination of 'need and means' that made the universities market so

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[29] *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge*, ed. by Peter D. Clarke with an introduction by Roger Lovatt, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 10 (London: The British Library, 2002), pp. 386 (UC 43.72), 436 (UC 47.164), 750. A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to AD 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 653–54.

[30] A notable exception is William Lyndewood's *Constitutiones provinciales*; see R. H. Helmholz, 'The Canon Law', in *CHBB III*, pp. 387–98 (pp. 388–89, and 390).

[31] Ford, 'Private Ownership', p. 220.

[32] Oxford, All Souls College, LR.5.l.1, fol. [i]v; Goldwell's inscription is transcribed in *The University and College Libraries of Oxford*, ed. by Rodney M. Thomson with the assistance of James G. Clark, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 16, 2 vols (London: The British Library, 2015), p. 1301.

particularly buoyant,[33] and this could not have escaped the attention of a merchant-bookseller as astute as Caxton.

Thomas Wright's *Rationale* is the only imported book illuminated by the Incunables limner to retain its original binding, and this was recently identified as the work of the Indulgence binder.[34] The 20 bindings in this group include a two-volume Latin Bible (Cologne, 1480) with quires lined by two indulgences printed by John Lettou, a discovery that for a long time led to the identification of the binder with John Lettou and with London.[35] All of the books were printed abroad—in Venice, Padua, Milan, Louvain, Brussels, Deventer, Nuremberg, Cologne and Strasbourg—with the exception of a copy of Thomas Littleton's *Tenores novelli* (London, c. 1482), printed by Lettou and William de Machlinia. However, with the binding of the Littleton suspected to be a remboîtage, and the discovery of strips of indulgences printed by Lettou *and by Caxton* in bindings by Oxford's Rood and Hunt binder, it is worth reiterating Mirjam Foot's warning that 'such fragments cannot be used as proof either of the place of binding or of the identity of the binder'.[36] Anne Sutton's important argument that Lettou and other alien printers in the City conducted 'jobbing work' for Caxton-as-publisher may also indicate how the ephemera of both presses combined for re-use by various binders; some, like the Indulgence binder, may yet prove to have had a closer association with Caxton

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[33] Ford, 'Private Ownership', p. 205.

[34] Azzurra Elena Andriolo and Suzanne Reynolds, *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Cambridge Colleges, Part Five: Illuminated Incunabula*, 2 vols (London/Turnhout: Harvey Miller/Brepols, 2017–), see volume 2, forthcoming. See also Suzanne Reynolds, 'Tracking Changes: Decoration, Binding, and Annotation in Incunabula imported to England', in *Production and Provenance*.

[35] For a summary of what is known regarding this binder, see Foot, pp. 73, 84 n. 49–53.

[36] *Ibid*., p. 73. See also Edwards: 'The attribution is not compelling, and even the links with London are not as secure as one might wish' ('Continental Influences', p. 253).

than previously thought.[37] The Indulgence binder and Incunables limner worked on Wright's copy of the *Rationale* around 1483, during the same period that the illuminator and his assistant can be connected to six copies of Caxton's *Golden Legend*; it is the *combination* of craftsmen that provides the most convincing lead yet for the Indulgence binder's location: Westminster. Caxton's successor, his foreman Wynkyn de Worde, is thought to have employed independent binders (Dionysius the Dutch binder in Westminster and, later, Nowell Havy in London) at the same time that he employed binders directly (the Caxton bindery and, later, 'Alard, book-binder my servant').[38] It is possible that the Indulgence binder, who was active between c. 1475 and c. 1483, was available to Caxton as an independent craftsman during the printer's first seven years in Westminster, and that the near-exclusive (or possibly exclusive) concentration of the binder's work on imported books is a good indication of exactly when his *ad hoc* services were in high demand. Similarly, it is the Incunables limner's growing oeuvre of volumes from the Continental 'Latin trade' in books that best explains his apparent preoccupation with the decoration of printed books.

The most ornate book of the ten attributed so far to the Incunables limner is the Bristol Public Library copy of Pliny's *Natural History* (Parma, 1481; Figs 9–10). Its two three-quarter borders each incorporate a coat of arms in the centre of the lower margin, within the original programme of illumination, and one displays the arms of Richard Mayhew (fol. a2r), and the other the royal arms of England and France (fol. a3r). The expense of the book itself, and the provision of customised illumination, signals an owner of a significantly higher status and

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[37] Sutton, 'Caxton, King's Printer', pp. 265–66; the 'close inter-relationships' of type, paper, and woodcuts used by Caxton, Lettou and Machlinia are given on p. 269.

[38] Nixon, 'Caxton and Bookbinding', p. 92; see also Gillespie, 'Bookbinding and Early Printing in England', pp. 82–83.

greater affluence than Thomas Wright.[39] Mayhew was appointed president of Magdalen

College, Oxford, by its founder bishop William Waynflete of Winchester, on 23 August

1480.[40] He continued to hold this office after his promotion as bishop of Hereford in 1504,

until mounting indiscipline (including one complaint that Mayhew's servants were emptying

their chamber pots over the library roof) meant that he was obliged to resign in the year

following a visitation of the college in January 1507. Mayhew's interest in printed books is

well attested by the items that survive from his bequest to Magdalen College, most of which

were not specified in the will that he made on 24 March 1516.[41] Although the Bristol Pliny is

only the fourth printed book identified as having once belonged to Mayhew, even such a

small corpus provides valuable evidence for his interest in purchasing illuminated copies. Of

the other three books, printed in either Strasbourg or Venice during the early 1470s,

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[39] The relative expense of purchasing a copy of Pliny's *Natural History* is indicated in John Dorne's Day Book,

a ledger recording the bookseller's sales for 1520: the Pliny (in nine copies) was the most expensive academic

scientific work listed (see Peter Murray Jones, 'Medicine and science', in *CHBB III*, pp. 433–48, (p. 444).

[40] The details of Mayhew's life given in this paragraph are from *The University and College Libraries of

Oxford*, pp. 746–47, 1335 (UO 142).

[41] All Oxford, Magdalen College: Arch.B.II.5.1-2, Nicolaus de Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam* ([Strassburg:

Johann Mentelin, not after 1472]; ISTC in00133000); Arch.B.III.3.5, Cyprianus, *Opera* ([Venice]: Vindelinus

de Spira, 1471; ISTC ic01011000); Arch.B.III.5.6, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* ([Strassburg: Printer of

the 1472 Aquinas 'Summa'], 1472; ISTC it00210000). Like the Cyprian and Aquinas, the Pliny is not

referenced in Mayhew's will; presumably, in cases like this, either known wishes made formal bequests

redundant or the items were gifted during the owner's lifetime. The inscription 'Donum Rumoldi Schenckelii

Mechliniensis anno 1629, 12 Aprilis' (fol. a2r) suggests that the Pliny was probably not part of the bequest of

Dr. Tobias Mathew, Archbishop of York (d. 1628), to Bristol Public Library, between 1613 and 1628 (*cf.* Norris

Mathews, *Early Printed Books and Manuscripts in the City Reference Library Bristol* (Bristol: W. Crofton

Hemmons, 1899). It was certainly present in the library by 1853 when it was listed in the 'Catalogue of the

Books in the City Library, 1853' (B7408); with thanks to Dawn Dyer of the Reference Library.

Mayhew's copy of Cyprian (Venice, 1471) was also provided with a full illuminated border at the text opening, but in a style widespread across the Veneto at the time of printing.[42] The Pliny is therefore the only one of Mayhew's surviving printed books to contain customized illumination, an opportunity that arose precisely because it received illumination at the end destination rather than at the source. This was one advantage of importing unfinished copies, of course, in addition to the presumably lower duty paid at customs. The act of personalising the illumination makes it likely that Mayhew was the earliest owner of the book following its arrival in England after 1481. The known activity of the Incunables limner in the early 1480s, and within close enough proximity to Caxton's press to be engaged with multiple copies of the *Golden Legend*, makes plausible a negotiation between Caxton's front-of-house representative and Mayhew's agent. Caxton-as-bookseller could easily have satisfied Mayhew's request for personalised illumination by drawing upon the services of the very same craftsman employed by, or even within, Caxton's printing house.

The copy of Flavio Biondo's *Roma instaurata* (Verona, 1481–82), illuminated with two large spray initials by the Incunables Limner, is yet another candidate for a book imported and retailed by Caxton (Fig. 7). It was part of a gift of 18 books made by Bishop Edmund Audley of Salisbury to Lincoln College, presumably in 1513, and many of the items in Audley's

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[42] Arch.B.III.3.5 (note 41) opens with a gold initial with white vine-scroll on rose and green ground, a full gold/blue-bar border decorated on three sides with: a straight garland of laurel (upper margin); spraywork, acanthus, and gold balls (outer margin); and four doves in blue radiance (lower margin). A space is left blank for a coat of arms in the lower margin (an empty laurel roundel flanked by wings). See Azzurro and Reynolds, p. 67 (cat. no. 29), for a comparative example of illumination from the Veneto, c. 1472; they observe that the combination of 'white vine-scroll and floral spraywork elements, is indebted to Ferrarese illuminators whose style became widespread…into the Veneto in the 1460s and 1470s'.

bequest similarly reflect his humanistic interests.[43] Audley's *ex dono* (flyleaf [*1r]) is not sufficient proof that he was the volume's original purchaser, but the text itself implies the same readership of university-educated clerics—the same market—represented by Mayhew and Wright. Given what is known about the artist's activity to date, it would again appear likely that the book was illuminated in England c.1482–84, shortly after the date of printing in Italy. The most interesting aspect of its decoration is the series of 17 large (6- to 10-line) rubricated initials that follow the opening illuminated initials on fols. a1r and a1v (*cf.* Figs 7, 11–13). Throughout the volume, the basic red and/or blue letterforms have been elaborated with pen-flourishing in black ink, comprising flowers and foliage tinted with green or yellow wash, and long tendrils extending into the margin. The circles that hedge the cushioned-edge of the letterform at regular intervals are a typical feature of pen-flourished initials in the Low Countries. The motifs incorporated within both the initials and marginal extensions include the barbed rose and twisted leaf (identical in design to those used in the Biondo's illuminated initials) as well as the barbed quatrefoil or cinqfoil used within the illuminated borders of the Bristol Pliny (Figs 9–10). The repetition of identical motifs strongly implies that the illuminator and rubricator (or pen-flourisher) were the same person. One small aspect of the illumination itself—the enlarged leaf with smooth margins—may further support the idea of role-amalgamation (Figs 1–5, esp. in its more globular form in Fig. 4). A design common in

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[43] The college's lection list for 1543 records this particular copy of the *Roma instaurata* as bound together with two other imprints of texts by Flavio Biondo; Audley's bequest also included a printed copy of Trevet's commentary on Augustine's *De civitate dei*, as well as a manuscript copy of the Greek New Testament: see *The University and College Libraries of Oxford*, pp. 683, 730, 737 (UO 43.36), 1254. This source gives the arrival date of Audley's bequest as 1513, based on a payment made to Thomas Gamston for collecting books from Audley (p. 1254), but elsewhere (p. 683) as 1518 (presumably an error). *Cf.* V. H. H. Green, *The Commonwealth of Lincoln College 1427–1977* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), where the date is given as 1514. With thanks to Sarah Cusk, antiquarian cataloguer, for advice on this point.

Flemish and Netherlandish manuscripts of the period, it features with increasing regularity in manuscripts produced in England during the 1480s and 1490s, and in conjunction with the naturalistic flora and fauna associated with Netherlandish-styles of illumination.[44] Although active in England (?Westminster), the Incunables limner may not have been English but, quite possibly, a foreign artist adept at imitating English border designs.[45]

Given the potential overlap in roles for the Biondo, the rubrication within the other nine volumes illuminated by the Incunables limner could usefully bear further scrutiny. Although not as elaborate as in the Biondo, the penwork decoration in the five copies of the *Golden Legend* and four remaining imported imprints demonstrates a consistency in the Rhenish-style initials, strokes and paraph marks. Indeed, Kato's detailed analysis of the rubrication in surviving copies of Caxton's *Golden Legend* reveals that *all* of the Incunables limner's copies were rubricated by 'Thin_04', while the copy illuminated by the assistant limner was rubricated (in its original form) by 'Round_01' and 'Round_02'.[46] Kato's designations of 'Round', 'Thin', or 'Tall' speak to the three distinctive aspects of the initials, while the minor variations in style within each aspect-category indicate that a minimum of three decorators

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[44] For some examples of the Netherlandish-style context in which this leaf form occurs in English manuscripts, see Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles VI, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), I, plates 454–57, II, pp. 339–41; and *Dated & Datable*, plate XXXVIIb, dated *c*. 1496, and plate XXXVIIIa, dated 1497 (the leaves with smooth margins are near to the gutter): the border 'may indeed be by a foreign artist' (p. 114).

[45] Caxton's press was 'almost entirely dependent on materials, techniques and skills brought in from overseas', an alien workforce that may also have extended to the binders and rubrishers: Lotte Hellinga, 'Printing', in *CHBB III*, pp. 65–108 (p. 68).

[46] Kato, 'Perfecting and Completing'; see appendix 3 for a list of codices in their original forms, as reconstructed by Kato. The relevant section (first setting) of the assistant limner's copy, now in the British Library, is no. vii in Kato's list of reconstructed items. See appendix 2 for images of the three categories of rubrication identified by Kato: 'Round' (four variants); 'Tall' (three variants); and 'Thin' (five variants).

worked on this particular edition. It is certainly possible that some of Caxton's rubricators were able to 'double up' as illuminators when required, a practice for which there seems to be early precedent in a copy of Caxton's first edition of the *Canterbury Tales*.[47] Such a scenario would not be unique to printed books: contemporary manuscripts offer numerous examples for what could be interpreted as 'limner-flourishers', that is, individuals who executed both decorative aspects.[48] A regular association between, or even an amalgamation of, Caxton's rubricators and associated limners, may explain one curiosity: how two books imported from Italy to England (the Pliny and Biondo) came to be provided with Rhenish-style rubrication and, in the case of the Veronese volume, further embellishment in the form of pen-flourishing characteristic of the Low Countries.[49] The anticipated publication of Takako Kato's and

[47] Oxford, Merton College, Sacr. P. 2. 1, where there is notable correspondence between the cartwheels, brushes, and numerous floral forms in the Flemish-style borders and flourished initials ([Westminster, about 1476–77]: ISTC ic00431000).

[48] Based on the frequency with which correlations exist between the same 'border artist' and the same 'flourisher' across multiple books written by different scribes: for one example of this pattern see the case of the Devonshire Chaucer Artist in Holly James-Maddocks, 'The Illuminators of the Hooked-*g* Scribe(s) and the Production of Middle English Literature, c. 1460–c. 1490', *The Chaucer Review*, 51.2 (2016), 151–86 (p. 161 and figs 9a–d). Despite the promising pattern emerging between the Incunables limner and 'Thin_04', it may not always be possible to follow such neat correlations in the context of the printing house: if Caxton had two or more limner-flourishers on site, any delay between the rubrication and subsequent illumination of copies would allow for the possibility that a copy illuminated by one particular limner-flourisher was not necessarily the same copy that he or she originally rubricated. This is complicated by the need to think about what Paul Needham calls 'the distinct elements of rubrication […] Often, and probably typically, they were not supplied all at once, page by page (or sheet by sheet), but in distinct stages or campaigns': 'Copy Description in Incunable Catalogues', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 95 (2001), pp. 173–239 (p. 226).

[49] Suzanne Reynolds' study of decoration in Cambridge incunabula found that the localisable style of decoration is consistent with the place of printing in around 80% of cases. In the remaining cases where the style of decoration is at odds with place of printing (around 20%), the decorative additions are for the most part

Satoko Tokunaga's *Caxton and Beyond*, a web platform that intends to host images of the decorated initials in Caxton's imprints from 1471 to 1483, will be a significant aid to future investigations of potential points of confluence between the rubricators and limners who assisted in the 'finishing' stages of books retailed by Caxton.[50]

The regularity of the Incunables limner's association with Caxton has invited comparison with the rubricators and bindery, opening a new line of enquiry into Caxton's activities at Westminster. For this artist to have operated in the same kind of proximity to Caxton's business as these known craftsmen (a highly convenient arrangement for the publisher), clearly something more substantial than the occasional illumination of Caxton's own imprints was required.[51] The five Continental imprints decorated by the Incunables limner and, in particular, the emerging parallels with imported books attributed to the Caxton bindery by Howard Nixon, constitute the most important clues for the source of that work. Printed between 1476 and 1484, and with rubrication in a style comparable with 'Caxton's own standard rubrication', it is the Incunables limner's foreign books that indicate the potential for

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consistent with the eventual destination of the book. The exceptions are five books in early Cambridge ownership that were printed in Nuremberg or Venice and yet had penwork decoration added in a style localisable to the northern Netherlands ('Tracking Changes', forthcoming). Although the phenomenon might be explained by Netherlandish artists working in England, the possibility that books were decorated en route to England in the Netherlands–even in minute numbers–suggests that caution is necessary when assessing the Rhenish-style penwork in Italian incunabula illuminated by the Incunables limner.

[50] 'Caxton and Beyond: Copy-Specific Features' <http://caxtonandbeyond.dmu.ac.uk> [accessed 26 March 2019]: under construction at the time of writing.

[51] The extent to which illumination was the most specialised aspect of the traditional book crafts is indicated by Kathleen L. Scott's conservative estimate that around 3,000 of 40,000 extant fifteenth-century manuscripts and rolls are illuminated ('Design, Decoration and Illustration', in *BPPB*, pp. 31–64 [p. 31]).

a longer term association beyond the 1483–84 production period of the *Golden Legend*.[52] In summary, it seems probable that the artist was *normally* responsible for the illumination of books regularly imported by Caxton; another tentative possibility is that he was drawn from the cohort of apparently in-house rubricators and engaged more often in the minor aspects of ornamentation. Both theories make sustainable the artist's apparently unique ability to specialise in the illumination of printed books.

The implications for 'interest in decorated books within Caxton circles'[53]

Although the focus of this article has so far been on imported incunabula decorated by the Incunables limner, these books derive their significance from the five copies of Caxton's *Golden Legend* illuminated by the same limner. Only one previous study assembled the evidence for Caxton's interest in *illumination*, in particular, and the importance of its conclusions deserve revaluation in light of the material attributable to the Incunables limner. In 'Decorated Caxtons', A. S. G. Edwards corrected the notion that the Pierpont Morgan Library copy of Caxton's *Sarum Horae* (Bruges, 1476) was 'the only instance of illumination among English incunabula' by listing five further books with very different decorative programmes.[54] Nevertheless, the new grouping was not substantial enough to warrant

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[52] See note 11.

[53] Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', p. 503.

[54] London, BL IB.49410, *Recueil des histoires de Troie* (Bruges [about 1474]: ISTC il00113000); BL IB.55081 [C.11.d.8], *Golden Legend* (Westminster [1483–84]: ISTC ij00148000); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Inc. 2.D.30, *History of Jason* ([Westminster, 1477]: ISTC il00112000); Oxford, Merton College, Scr.P.2.1, *Canterbury Tales* ([Westminster, about 1476–77]: ISTC ic00431000): and Oxford, St John's College, MS 266/b.2.21, a *Sammelband* including *Troilus and Criseyde* ([Westminster, 1483]: ISTC ic00435600), the *Canterbury Tales* ([Westminster, 1483]: ISTC ic00432000), and *Quattuor sermones* (Westminster [1482–83]: ISTC iq00013500). Described and illustrated in Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', pp. 497–501.

modification of the long established view that there was no market in England for the

illumination of incunabula: 'Caxton himself does not seem to have made any very sustained

efforts, apart from rubrication, to make decoration an aspect of his book production'.[55]

According to Edwards' findings, 'all the copies containing illumination belong to the

beginning of Caxton's career'—most to the period in Bruges and some to the period

immediately after his arrival at Westminster—and not a single artist appears to have

illuminated more than one copy. Edwards raised the possibility that Caxton's 'initial plans as

publisher included the option for purchasers of his book to have them decorated', and he is

likely to be right that the inconsistency in personnel is better explained by freelance artists

rather than in-house craftsmen.[56] Differences in scale characterise the decorative programmes

of the early years—twenty-four full-page illuminated borders in the Merton *Canterbury*

Tales, two illuminated borders in the *Sarum Horae*, one penwork border in a copy of the

History of Jason, and a single gold initial in a *Recueil des histoires de Troie*—implying a

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[55] 'Decorated Caxtons', p. 496, citing E. G. Duff ('there does not seem to have been much demand for luxurious

books [in England], and the art of the illuminator was never applied to them') and N. F. Blake (who viewed

Caxton's books as 'primitive and utilitarian' in comparison to those produced on the Continent) in, respectively,

English Printing on Vellum to the end of the Year 1600, Publications of the Bibliographical Society of

Lancashire, 1 (Aberdeen, 1902), p. 3, and *Caxton: England's First Publisher* (London and New York, 1976), p.

120. A. I. Doyle observed that there was 'little to show that Caxton's was in any way a luxury trade in printed

books' ('English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', in *English Court Culture in the*

Later Middle Ages, ed. by V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), 163–181 (p.

180)). For Lotte Hellinga, too, the tradition of book illumination that Caxton witnessed in Bruges 'seems to have

had little effect' on him, despite its prominence in books printed by Colard Mansion (Caxton's probable partner

in Bruges). She further adds: 'There is also very little evidence for English and Scottish limners and flourishers

working on imported printed books' ('Printing', pp. 98, 100). *Cf.* James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators

of…Incunabula', and Reynolds, 'Tracking Changes', both forthcoming.

[56] 'Decorated Caxtons', pp. 503, 505.

system of *ad hoc* responses to particular purchasers. There are two outliers to this otherwise suggestive chronology—illuminated copies of books printed by Caxton between 1482 and 1484—but these are viewed, quite understandably, as 'a final vestige' of such a system.[57] They now assume a new significance.

A very different approach to enhancement is announced by the uniform design of a single spray initial intended to feature at the same point in multiple copies of a single edition. The two colleagues who illuminated at least six copies of Caxton's *Golden Legend* would seem to indicate that Caxton's strategy changed between 1476 and 1484. Caxton's 'original publishing plan', characterised by *ad hoc* employment of different Flemish artists,[58] apparently switched to a more sustained arrangement with fixed personnel. It remains a possibility that the proliferation of decoration within this particular imprint was due to its patron, William FitzAlan, the Earl of Arundel (1417–1487), whose promise to buy a 'resonable quantyte' of copies may have led to an unusual level of enhancement.[59] However, given the known correlation between format and ornament, the speculative illumination of Caxton's *largest* book is rather to be expected.[60] The concentrated production of folio-sized editions of substantial works in the period 1482 to 1485, in particular, made it 'the busiest of [Caxton's] entire career', and it is not unreasonable to suppose that a small portion of many

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[57] *Ibid*., p. 505, and, further, as 'faint echoes of such continental preoccupation' (p. 506). The first is the St John's *Sammelband* belonging to London mercer Roger Thorney, with items printed 1482–83, and the second is the British Library copy of the *Golden Legend*, printed 1483–84 (see note 54). I have assigned the latter to the 'Assistant' of the Incunables limner: see note 7 and Fig. 3).

[58] Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', p. 505.

[59] *Caxton's Own Prose*, ed. by N. F. Blake (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), p. 90.

[60] A clear pattern has emerged, for example, in the association between Caxton's folio editions and rubrication, which is much less evident in his quarto editions: see Tokunaga, 'Rubrication', p. 64.

of these works were reserved for upgrade with pigment and gold.[61] Thomas Frognall Dibdin's tantalising account of an illuminated copy of Caxton's 1483 edition of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, now lost, is certainly of interest in this context.[62] 'Caxton's 1483', a term used to refer to his most productive year, would seem to correlate with the culmination of Caxton's attempts to regularise the personnel involved in illuminating the books that he sold.[63] One of the two later books listed by Edwards—the St John's College *Sammelband*—contains a tinted pen-drawing attributed to an associate of the Caxton Master;[64] the other—the British Library *Golden Legend*—has now seen its simple spray initial multiplied in many copies, indicating that there was considerable effort to standardise the illumination in Caxton's books long after the printer first settled in Westminster. Furthermore, Caxton's later experimentation with new alternatives in decoration—from his first use of woodcut illustration in 1481 to the complete

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[61] Sutton, 'Caxton, King's Printer', pp. 272–73, with the relative sizes of editions quantified by the number of leaves. Compare Nicholas Jenson's decision to print a small proportion of a print run on parchment: F. Edler de Roover, 'Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare', *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), 107–17 (with thanks to the anonymous reader for this reference).

[62] Dibdin reports 'a very fine copy' in the British Museum, 'written on vellum, and illuminated […] It appears to have been mutilated, at some period, for the sake of the illuminations of the initial letters" (in Joseph Ames, *Typographical Antiquities*, 4 vols [London: William Miller, 1810–19], I, p. 185) but, as Edwards confirmed, it cannot be reconciled with the two Gower fragments in the British Library ('Decorated Caxtons', p. 496 n. 18).

[63] A. S. G. Edwards and Carol M. Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England', *The Library*, VI, 15 (1993), 95–124 (p. 118; p. 98 for the works printed in this year, and the 'relative buoyancy in Caxton's general economic position').

[64] A designation that arises from the Caxton Master's illustration of manuscripts linked to the printer; see Kathleen L. Scott, *The Caxton Master and his Patrons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

replacement of the rubricators with woodcut initials in 1484—perhaps indicates a wider pattern for the printer's far more systematised approach to illumination during this period.[65]

As further examples of work by the Incunables limner come to light, interpreting the evidence regarding his activity will no doubt become easier. The recent turn towards copy-specific cataloguing of incunabula promises to open a vast new resource to those who are interested in the art historical aspects of printed books.[66] Paul Needham's recommendations for a shared standard in cataloguing, one where the 'usership' is prioritized and where the interaction between the aspects of copy information and the bibliographic record is clear, has gained traction.[67] His excellent guidelines for the description of decoration require one addition: that illumination, where present, should be broadly localised.[68] It remains a significant problem that illumination is seldom catalogued according to national style.[69] In

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[65] Tokunaga, 'Rubrication', p. 63; Edwards, 'Continental Influences', p. 235. As noted at the outset, the period 1481 to 1484 correlates with the imprints of books decorated by the Incunables limner in all cases but one. It is feasible that the outlier, the *Speculum morale* (Strasbourg, 1476), was illuminated some years after printing.

[66] The *Material Evidence in Incunabula* (*MEI*) database promises to record the decoration in fifteenth-century printed books, and that "every element recorded (a certain style of decoration or binding, a manuscript note, prices, etc.) is treated as a valuable clue for provenance, therefore it can be geographically located and chronologically dated": <http://data.cerl.org/mei/_search> [accessed 17 April 2019].

[67] Needham, 'Copy Description', p. 203. On the interaction of copy evidence, see pp. 205, 234.

[68] *Ibid*., pp. 223-227. Needham's repeated recommendation to reproduce images of binding and decoration is a good alternative. The provision of photographs for all decoration on the Glasgow University Library (GUL) Incunabula Project's website, for example, is a highly effective workaround both for cataloguers and researchers (<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/incunabula/>). The single most useful resource for categorising illumination by style is the ongoing series *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Cambridge Colleges*, 5 parts (London: Harvey Miller, 2009–).

[69] The British Library's BMC catalogues, for example, allow identification of only English imprints with illumination (using the index in BMC XI); the Bodleian Library's *Bod-Inc Online* allows a global search on

the very few UK collections where the English portion can be seen in context, it is abundantly clear that England's illuminators handled mostly Continental imprints. This finding makes obvious the search criteria that the user should apply—'English-illuminated Continental incunabula'—but it is not currently viable beyond Cambridge University Library, Cambridge Colleges, and the Fitzwilliam Museum.[70] Indeed, the misconception that there was little contemporary interest in England in the illumination of printed books has arisen precisely because this specific category of item was not searchable before the Cambridge cataloguing projects of recent years.[71]

Conclusions

Books illuminated by the Incunables limner are an important demonstration of the artist's connection both to Caxton and to the 'Latin trade' in printed books, providing tangible evidence for the way in which England's readers were indebted to a cosmopolitan network of English and Continental merchants. The movement of books across borders—books like the

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'gold' (<http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>), meaning that each of the 1960 results would have to be checked. For further discussion of this issue, see my 'Illumination of…Incunabula', forthcoming.

[70] Using *iDiscover* (<http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/>), for Cambridge University Library (CUL), and Andriolo and Reynolds, *Illuminated Incunabula*, 2 vols, for the colleges and the Fitzwilliam Museum.

[71] See note 55. Using the average percentage of the illuminated portion of the incunabula collections in CUL (4.6%) and GUL (14.2%), it is possible to extrapolate (very roughly, of course) the potential scale of what is hidden from view in other UK collections. The British Library's (BL) incunabula collection makes for a thought-provoking case: if around 9.4% of the BL's 12,500 incunabula are illuminated, we can expect 3.5% of the illuminated portion to have been illuminated in England. What this means in terms of book numbers is that a minimum of 38 incunables with English illumination exist, in an irretrievable state, among the 12,500 incunabula in the stacks. Indeed, it is a conservative estimate for the BL since the addition of illumination was unlikely to have been as much of a priority within the university context as it was for the private libraries that form the foundation of the national collection.

Biondo and the Pliny—and its coordination by figures such as Caxton, clearly kept apace

with the 'cosmopolitanism that marked intellectual life'.[72] Reconstructing the transmission of

books from Europe to England is immensely difficult because of its reliance on the

revelations of copy information: on localizable and datable inscriptions, binding, and

decoration. It is not surprising that the study of early printed books in England is devoted

overwhelmingly to English imprints, and to Caxton's in particular, or that our sense of the

complexities of interaction between England and the Continent remains 'more acknowledged

than analysed'.[73] We might *know* that Caxton imported books but we cannot point to the

individual volumes within each consignment. Nixon's use of binding evidence to group

multiple imprints, domestic and foreign, is clear in its potential to isolate examples of books

imported by Caxton (even if 'so much is inference, so little proved fact').[74] Like Nixon, I

cannot *prove* that Caxton imported the books purchased by Wright, Mayhew, and Audley—

these men might have purchased their books on the Continent—but I can speculate on the

compelling link with an illuminator whose work is known only in copies of a Caxton

edition.[75] The swift efficiency with which Wright's copy of Durandus was acquired from

Strasbourg, illuminated by the Incunables Limner, bound by the Indulgence Binder, and then

donated to Pembroke Hall in 1485, certainly implies a professionally-organised process.

Similarly, the emerging overlap in the foreign sources of books bound by the Caxton bindery

and decorated by the Incunables limner further encourages the idea that these were the actual

items of Caxton's (and later de Worde's) wider book-selling business. I might have waited

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[72] David Rundle, 'English books and the continent', in *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500*, ed. by

Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 276–91 (p. 291).

[73] *Ibid*., p. 279.

[74] Nixon, 'Caxton and Bookbinding', p. 104.

[75] Elizabeth Armstrong, 'English Purchases of Printed Books from the Continent 1465–1526', *English

Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 268–90.

for more material for a 'perfect reconstruction based on tangible facts alone' but, as Lotte Hellinga put it, 'we have to fill in gaps, and provide tentative links'.[76]

The three early owners discussed—Wright, Mayhew, and Audley—join a growing cohort of scholars, affluent clerics, and lesser clergy who purchased foreign books subsequently illuminated in England, including bishops John Russell, John Morton, and William Atwater. The same market was supplied by the short-lived Oxford presses, and purchasers of English-illuminated copies printed there included James Goldwell and Thomas Chaundler.[77] Clerical readers created a demand for local illumination that was significant enough, it seems, to merit at least one specialist in the decoration of printed books. The hypothesis put forward here—that the primary role of the Incunables limner was to enhance Caxton's imported books for retail—is significant for its potential to confirm what we have long suspected about Caxton's wider book-selling strategies.[78] The combined evidence of the subsidy roll, the Caxton bindery and the Incunables limner, indicates that Caxton supplied two very different markets in England: a universities-religious-clerical class whose reading 'need' had to be met by the Latin trade, and a noble-gentry-merchant class whose reading 'leisure' was met by the books

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[76] Lotte Hellinga, *Caxton in Focus* (London: The British Library, 1982), p. 100: 'Newly established facts inevitably lead to new areas of speculation'.

[77] See James-Maddocks, 'Illuminators of…Incunabula', appendix. Edwards provides a useful overview of the scholars and clerics associated with London printers and printing who donated foreign books to the universities ('Continental Influences', pp. 249–51).

[78] On the idea that Caxton's involvement in the movement of books across borders was considerable, see Needham, 'Customs rolls', p. 148; Edwards, 'Continental Influences', p. 240; Alan Coates, 'The Latin Trade in England and Abroad', in *Companion*, pp. 45–58 (pp. 53–55); Sutton, 'Merchants', pp. 130–31. On the twofold nature of the sources for Caxton's life ('Caxton the merchant' and 'Caxton the scholar-printer'), see N. F. Blake, 'Caxton: The Man and his Work', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, 11 (1976–77), 64–91 (p. 65).

that Caxton himself printed, mostly in English.[79] Although it is a 'truism that early English printers, with a few exceptions, directed their publications not at the universities, but rather at an English-reading, principally non-Latinate, public', it is worth recalling the many different forms of Caxton's association with the university audience.[80] It was government-churchmen who supported Caxton's production of official documents—from the secular proclamation to the spiritual indulgence, to the sessional printing of statutes—the sort of jobbing work that must have been crucial during Caxton's early years as publisher in England.[81] John Russell, for example, the soon-to-be bishop of Rochester (and then Audley's predecessor at Lincoln), was among Caxton's first employers. Later, between 1479 and 1483, Caxton printed numerous texts in keeping with the university market's interest in Latin Classics and humanist works, a manoeuvre characterised as: 'a profitable departure from his normal policy to which he then made a timely return'.[82] It was during this period of production at Caxton's

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[79] On the clerical 'need', see Ford, 'Private Ownership', p. 207, and p. 218 for the necessity of Caxton's books to the 'life-styles' of the gentry-merchant classes.

[80] Margaret Lane Ford, 'Importation of printed books into England and Scotland', in *CHBB III*, pp. 179–201 (p. 192), noting that 'in the 1480s when Westminster and London printing made up 12 per cent of all books in the survey for England, it makes up only 2 per cent of the books owned by the university-educated'.

[81] Described as 'bread and butter' by Sutton in 'Merchants', p. 128, and 'King's Printer', p. 264. See also Edwards, 'Continental Influences', pp. 230-31, and David R. Carlson, 'A Theory of the Early English Printing Firm: Jobbing, Book Publishing, and the Problem of Productive Capacity in Caxton's Work', in *Caxton's Trace: Studies in the History of English Printing*, ed. by William Kuskin (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2006), pp. 35–68.

[82] Luigi Balsamo, 'The Origins of Printing in Italy and England', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, 11 (1976–77), 48–63 (p. 60). The Verona and Parma editions here associated with Caxton undermine Balsamo's view that '[Caxton's] contacts were only with Italian men-of-letters in England and not with Italian books or printers', and that it was Oxford printers who were 'breaking away from the traditional culture to which Caxton stayed faithful til the end' (pp. 60–61).

own press that books like Mayhew's Pliny and Audley's Biondo were imported, illuminated, and sold. Competing imports like these were presumably not a problem to the printer-merchant-bookseller who controlled their supply. If the 'sellyng of printed bokes and other small tryffles' was a trifling commodity for other Merchant Adventurers,[83] it was for Caxton a crucial means of controlling the market from two mutually beneficial vantage points. 'Caxton wisely produced what could not be obtained elsewhere',[84] but he was surely wiser still in supplying what *could* be obtained, and both aspects were bound, rubricated and probably even illuminated by a regular workforce of traditional craftsmen. If these copies were imported by Caxton, as the association with the limner suggests, they would certainly be fine representations of Caxton's ingenuity in balancing 'the interaction of production at home and abroad'.[85]

The churchmen supplied by the artist's imported texts undoubtedly constitute a departure from the market associated with Caxton's own predominantly English-language editions. His prologues and epilogues make clear that he envisaged his audience among the 'grete lordes gentilmen & marchauntes' and—as one survey of owners of Caxton's books demonstrates quite conclusively—these were precisely the classes in which Caxton found his buyers.[86] Clerics of any type barely get a mention.[87] Caxton's own readers had come to expect texts in subject matter and language that could not be satisfied by imported books. This, it has often been said, was Caxton's genius: 'Caxton could be assured of success, because he exercised a virtual monopoly on books in English and at the same time may have indulged an affection

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[83] Needham, 'Customs rolls', p. 163.

[84] Ford, 'Private Ownership', p. 228.

[85] Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, 'Introduction', in *CHBB III*, pp. 1–30 (p. 29).

[86] Ford, 'Private Ownership', pp. 213–18.

[87] *Caxton's Own Prose*, p. 28.

for English literature'.[88] A monopoly on books in English was still, nevertheless, a limited monopoly. Carlson's argument that our sentimentality for Caxton's great literary folios is obfuscatory is relevant here: his exploration of Caxton's jobbing—the 'grubby, quotidian business of material production, spending and getting'—leads to the suggestion that Caxton's approach to building a market for English literature 'was conservative'.[89] Just as 'grubby', in this sense, were the vast profits of importation. Since 'the markets for books in Latin had no limits', it was the patrons of Caxton's imported books who provided the most significant returns on his investments.[90] Caxton's two markets might be said to be inextricable insofar as the consumption of one product made possible production of the other. Caxton's most enduring legacy in England is that 'he had made readers'.[91] But he did so by supplying established readers, readers whose safe titles provided the cash flow indispensable to early English print culture. With the copy-specific cataloguing of incunabula in UK collections now underway, it will become increasingly possible to identify the university men who were Caxton's customers, book purchasers whose sheer predictability made them the inadvertent underwriters of a far more audacious programme of printing and promoting English literature.[92]

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[88] *Ibid*., p. 227.

[89] Carlson, 'Jobbing', pp. 36, 57.

[90] Hellinga, 'Printing', p. 66. It was, as Edwards has said, an industry reliant 'on the marketing of foreign books to provide cash flow' ('Continental Influences', p. 256).

[91] Hellinga, adding that Caxton published 'literary works in English—texts that were his own delight—for a public that was not accustomed to owning books': *Caxton in Focus*, pp. 101–102. *Cf.* Carlson: 'Caxton's interest in English literature, such as it was, had not at all, or very little, to do with a love of literature' ('Jobbing', p. 58).

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