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The Floral Binder and Thomas Hunt

A book of statutes for the constitution of God's House at Ewelme, a fifteenth-century almshouse some thirteen miles southeast of Oxford, is notable among many things for its decorated limp binding.[1] Its fine quality adds support to the view that such bindings were not cheap substitutes but prized for their technical and functional characteristics.[2] The defining feature of a limp binding is the absence of wooden boards, a simple definition that belies the sheer diversity in the structural types of books enclosed in limp covers, from the loose wrapper to the decorated leather of the present example. There must have once been many more books in similar limp covers as suggested by the occasional survivals of, for instance, sixteenth century account books in tooled limp leather bindings.[3] The covering of Bodleian Library MS d.d. Ewelme d.41 is one example of the high quality workmanship possible within the category's broad spectrum—an example that can be closely localised—and one that further counters a longstanding view of limp bindings as 'temporary and inferior' structures, and as 'the work of non-professionals'.[4] In what follows I identify the Floral Binder—known only for his blind-stamped stiff-board bindings—as the maker of the Ewelme binding, offering a new piece of evidence that limp covers could be made by the best of professional craftsmen. I use the updated list of the bookbindings attributed to the Floral Binder (Appendix) to reevaluate the established narrative for the binder's location and identity. Finally, I review extant medieval copies of the Ewelme Statutes to suggest how their textual and material evidence might be understood in relation to the Ewelme foundation's early constitution.

MS Ewelme d.41 is relatively large in size (250 x 170 mm), especially when compared with the average dimensions given for books in limp bindings of the same classification.[5] It comprises only 28 parchment leaves, consisting of three quires of eight leaves (each with a

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[1] The foundation supported two priests, thirteen poor men and a school, and in return for this charity the community served a chantry chapel. A detailed study of the documentary archive for Ewelme, including a transcription of the book of statutes in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS d.d. Ewelme d.41 (hereafter 'MS Ewelme d.41'), is given in John A.A. Goodall, *God's House at Ewelme, Oxfordshire: Life, Devotion and Architecture in a Fifteenth-Century Almshouse* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 213–55. A transcription of the only surviving booklist from Ewelme, excerpted from an inventory of goods dated 10 September 1466, is discussed in Nigel Ramsay and James M.W. Willoughby (eds), *Hospitals, Towns, and the Professions*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 14 (London: British Library in assoc. with the British Academy, 2009), pp. 42–49 (hereafter 'CBMLC 14').

[2] For a typology of limp bindings see Agnes Scholla, 'Early western limp bindings. Report on a study', in *Care and Conservation of manuscripts 7*, Proceedings of the seventh international seminar held at the Royal Library, Copenhagen 18–19 April 2002, ed. by G. Fellows-Jensen and P. Springborg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2003), pp. 132–58. This study of the structural features of limp bindings supplements the chapter provided in J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 285–319.

[3] I wish to thank the two readers who made this point and provided examples: for the sixteenth-century account books, see J. B. Oldham, *English Blind-Stamped Bindings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 33–34; CBMLC 14, p. 45, reports a 'similar binding' to the Ewelme Statutes on a copy of Sebastian Brant's *Das Narrenschiff* (Basel, 1497), now Bodleian Library, Broxbourne 77.1; for another statutes book in limp covers with a flap (but no tooling), see James Willoughby, 'An Early College Bookbinder', *New College Notes*, 13.2 (2020), pp. 1–7.

[4] Szirmai summarises past misconceptions of limp covers, including the idea that they were 'the work of incompetent craftsmen' (*Medieval Bookbinding*, p. 286). The second quote is from Scholla who also notes the improbability that most limp covers ever 'served as interim bindings' ('Early western limp bindings', p. 150).

[5] Of a sample of 40 limp bindings with quires sewn to supports and integrated by various means to the cover, the majority measure from 140 to 170 mm in height (Szirmai, *Medieval Bookbinding*, p. 312).

catchword), preceded by a single bifolium (originally blank), and concluded by another bifolium containing the last page of the statutes. The manuscript has been regularly ruled for 24 lines to a full page, allowing generous proportions for both text and margin, and the chosen script is a sumptuous textura quadrata embellished with fine hairlines. The statutes for the constitution, written in legal formulae and in English, set out a contract between founders and community for a mutually beneficial 'exchange of prayers for charity'.[6] A preamble and eighty-nine regulations give the rationale for the almshouse, the precise terms of the founders' financial provision, and the detailed rota of 'spirituall occupation of very trewe trusty and devoute dayli prayere' expected of residents to 'increce of oure merite and joy'.[7] A large illuminated initial on rose and blue quartered ground with white filigree announces the founders' opening address, expressed in first person plural, and made further emphatic by the green- and rose-lobed feathering with gold balls extending to form a two-sided border. Eighty-eight two-line blue initials with red penflourishing extending into partial borders mark the start of each regulation, apart from the first, and most herald the refrain: 'Also we wyll and ordeyne…'. In addition, each regulation closes with a red and blue line filler, where space permits, for further visual punctuation in the subdivision of text. The binding is a limp cover of tanned black-brown leather with a fore-edge flap in a trapezoidal shape, and decorated all over with the use of five stamps (Figs 1–3). Although there are no boards, the construction of this limp binding would have been very similar to wooden board bindings in which the quires were sewn on to sewing-supports (five in this instance) and then laced into the leather cover.[8] The quality of the parchment and script, the range of decorative elements from the use of gold and pigments to coloured ink for line-fillers, combine to confirm that cost-saving was not a consideration in the production of this particular book.

The common association between limp bindings and lower economic status is illustrated in discussion around another book known to have been at Ewelme in 1466, John Lydgate's English translation of Deguileville's *Pelerinage de la vie humaine*, inventoried as 'couered with blak lether withoute bordes'. The description of the binding was interpreted by R. F. Green as signalling the book's status as an 'unpretentious' and 'simple' reading copy, while Ramsay and Willoughby note the value of comparing what is *said* of the Lydgate limp binding with what can be *seen* on MS Ewelme d.41: 'there is no reason why limp bindings around multi-quire text-blocks could not have risen to some magnificence'.[9] Indeed, 'magnificence' is easier to appreciate when the book of statutes is viewed in the context of the institution and its founders. The scale of what was intended at Ewelme developed rapidly in its ambition, according to John Goodall's study of the medieval architecture and muniments. The original royal license of 1437 granted William and Alice de la Pole (née Chaucer), then Earl and Countess of Suffolk, the right to found an almshouse adjacent to the

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[6] Goodall, *God's House*, p. 213.

[7] MS Ewelme d.41, fol. 7r (or p. 13, if following the post-medieval pagination).

[8] Significant repair work—the replacement of the leather inside the cover, at the edges and around the clasp (a large metal fastening that may be original)—makes it difficult to appreciate the exact method of original attachment to the cover. The sewing is visible in the centrefold of each quire but the extent of the later interventions suggest that it is not original. An expert in bookbinding conservation will be better able to appreciate what survives of the original sewing structures. For my interests—localising manuscripts and their craftsmen—the stamps are mercifully more than adequate.

[9] CBMLC 14, SH14. 17 (at p. 49); and R. F. Green, 'Lydgate and Deguilevile once more', *Notes & Queries*, 223 (1978), 105–6 (p. 106).

church.[10] By the 1440s, however, the construction of a palace and a substantial school-house were also underway, and the statutes set out the provisions for schooling. Goodall's research suggests that the extent of both the school building and original endowment plan hint that William de la Pole intended to create a feeder school for an Oxford college. His appointment as Protector of the university of Oxford in 1447 would have been an advantageous position if, indeed, imitation of the Henry VI's recent foundations at Eton and King's colleges was the aim.[11] Connections between Ewelme and the university endured beyond William's death in 1450: the statutes stipulate that the first priest, the 'master', was ideally to be a 'learned man of the University of Oxford', and both William Marton (fl. 1455–1495x1498) of Queen's College, and Thomas Reve (fl. 1488–1494) of Magdalen College, fulfilled the preference for a graduate of the university.[12] In 1456 Marton's accounts show payment to Doctor Thomas Benefraunt, also of Queen's College, for writing a revised text of the statutes – and the relationship between this record and extant early copies can be clarified by studying their materials.[13] I will return to these considerations—textual, codicological, and archival—in the conclusion, showing how a combined approach can determine when and where medieval texts were made. I start, however, with the exterior of MS Ewelme d.41—its bookbinding— as the first of many potential means of situating the volume within its production context.

A Limp Binding by the Floral Binder

In the case of the Ewelme statutes, the choice to use a limp binding reflects a selection process that responded to the positive functional aspects: limp covers are lighter in weight than wooden board binding, they are flexible (with a greater variety in sewing and attachment) and the book block is well-protected by the flap, especially around the fore-edge.[14] Indeed, the physical extent of the statutes-text—three quires and two bifolia—is so small that the attachment of oak boards would have made the volume unnecessarily heavy and cumbersome. At the same time, the generous dimensions of the text-page allowed for a leather cover with a large surface area, creating a considerable canvas for the binder's decorative tools. The flap affords additional protection to an already stiff ('semi-limp') binding, while its surplus leather—extending some 100mm beyond the edge of the back cover to be folded over and fastened to the front cover—also expands the decorative scope. In structure and design, the binding demonstrates both practical and aesthetic considerations. The five stamps used to decorate the leather are identical to tools 165, 172, 174, 177, 178 in J. Basil Oldham's *English Blind-Stamped Bindings*, a combination that makes it attributable to his 'Floral Binder'. Oldham listed 22 books as examples of this binder's work, and the majority (17 books) are Continental incunabula with dates ranging from 1477 to 1495 (see

[10] Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 1–35. The location was significant for its manor house, the residence of Alice's parents, Thomas and Maud Chaucer. Their deaths in 1434 and 1436, respectively, and their burial in Ewelme church, apparently provided the impetus for the endowment of a religious foundation on the same site. Like the Chaucers before them, the de la Poles adopted Ewelme Manor as their principal residence, and Henry VI's licence to establish an almshouse came within a few weeks of their inheritance.

[11] For the school, see Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 28–31, 108. Alice was herself a patron of the university library and Divinity School, contributing books and gold for which she received letters of thanks in 1454 and 1461: see CBLMC 14, p. 44; Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 11-12; and H. Anstey (ed), *Epistolae Academicae Oxoniensis*, Oxford Historical Society 35–36 (1898), pp. 326–27, 369.

[12] Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 109–11, 123–29. The medieval records of Magdalen College show that Ewelme was a retreat for college fellows and scholars during the outbreak of plague: see W. D. Macray, *A Register of the Members of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford*, 8 vols (London: Henry Frowde, 1894–1910), I, p. 21.

[13] Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 216–17.

[14] For detailed study of these advantages see Scholla, 'Early western limp bindings', esp. pp. 149–51.

Appendix).[15] Twelve of the binder's fourteen known tools are floral and we are fortunate that the impressions from four of the five stamps are especially well-preserved beneath the protective fold of the extended leather (Fig. 3). The decorative design of the blind tooling is typical of late medieval English binding: intersecting fillets form a frame infilled with a repeated stamp (a branch of floral foliage) while the space within is divided by diagonal fillets into lozenges and triangles, each containing further floral stamps. Characteristic of the Floral Binder, in this instance as elsewhere, is the use of smaller stamps at the corner points or around the circumference of larger stamps (in this instance the star is used in conjunction with either the fleuron or fleur-de-lys). In addition, the border area outside the frame is decorated with the star in clusters of three, while the fifth stamp—a barbed double rose— occurs only twice, once on either side of the clasp, on the extended leather cover. Although the 'rosette' category of stamps is common, its prominence in the arrangement of the design is potentially significant: Goodall observed, for example, that a double rose occurs on Alice's signet ring and on the counterpoise to the font in Ewelme church.[16]

There are several challenges to the attribution, whether viewed from the perspective of text, language, or the binding's overall design. The content—a book of statutes—is not typical of the Floral Binder's oeuvre, and the use of English similarly constitutes an oddity among the Latin and Greek of the listed titles (Appendix). The 22 books identified by Oldham are staples of the medieval university curriculum, comprising reference works for the study of biblical history, theology, classics, and both canon and civil law. They form a cohesive category in terms of their intended readers (the clerical and the university-educated), while the Statutes of God's House was clearly conceived as a document of legal record. The structure of the Ewelme binding—its satchel-style and limp leather cover—is again not typical of the Floral Binder's work. Some of the oddities may in fact be interlinked. Limp bindings, as Szirmai notes, are 'ubiquitous in archives', suggesting a connection to their circumstances of use.[17] The earliest English examples reported by Michael Gullick, for example, occur on Royal Household account books dating from 1306.[18] It is worth mentioning in this regard that the Ewelme binding bears a striking resemblance to another category of binding discussed by Szirmai, that of the leather 'overcover' (a stiff-board binding with a cover and, usually, a flap extending beyond the edge of its wooden boards).[19] The visuals are entirely compelling until one takes the Ewelme volume in hand and feels by weight the absence of oak. Again, there is a strong association between 'overcover' bindings and legal or administrative records, and the link implies that some bindings, at least, were viewed as appropriate to their task.[20] The atypical use of a limp leather covering by the Floral binder is not a strong impediment to the attribution; rather, the atypicality itself reinforces the

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[15] Oldham, *English Blind-Stamped Bindings*, p. 22, n. 6. Oldham's date-range '1477–1496' misreads one item (appendix, no. 5, dated 1486) as '1496'.

[16] Goodall, *God's House*, p. 214.

[17] Szirmai, *Medieval Bookbinding*, p. 286.

[18] Michael Gullick, 'The binding descriptions in the library catalogue from Leicester Abbey', in *Leicester Abbey: Medieval History, Archaeology and Manuscript Studies*, ed. by J. Story, J. Bourne and R. Buckley (Leicester: The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 2006), pp. 147–72 (p. 158, n. 88).

[19] I mention this category for the possibility (unlikely) that wooden boards were removed during the repairs to the Ewelme statutes, and that the Ewelme 'limp' binding was formerly an 'overcover' binding. For terminology I follow Szirmai's distinctions between textile 'chemise' and leather 'overcover' bindings: *Medieval Bookbinding*, pp. 234–36 (p. 236).

[20] Examples of Gothic overcovers on legal texts are given in Szirmai, *Medieval Bookbinding*, pp. 235–36. For the different associations of earlier Romanesque overcover bindings see p. 166.

pattern noted by Szirmai between such bindings and their circumstances of use. The Ewelme Statutes may fit into a tradition of medieval account books in limp and overcover bindings, although the volume's small book block was surely the primary determinant for limp covers. The clearest comparison to date, in fact, is with another small statutes book at Winchester College, comprising limp covers with a wrap-around flap and three ties of plaited red silk. This near-contemporary binding can be firmly dated (1451–52) and identified as the work of an Oxford stationer (Thomas Bokebynder, alias Hokyns, d. 1465).[21] It is fitting, then, that we turn to a subsequent generation of Oxford stationers for the producer of Ewelme's limp binding.

The wider grouping of books attributed to the Floral Binder provides clues not only for the binder's customary clientele but also for his likely location. One of the five manuscripts is unusually clear about its origin: Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 227, a copy of commentary on Aristotle by Duns Scotus and others, contains colophons written by two scribes in Oxford in 1491. Moreover all five manuscripts demonstrate consistent provenance evidence for their use in late medieval Oxford (see appendix, nos. 18–22). Corpus MS 227 was owned by the Oxford Franciscans and appears to have been made for the ongoing use of one of its scribes.[22] Further commentaries on Aristotle occur in Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 63, annotated with institutional and personal inscriptions that prove that the book was in use within the college in the late fifteenth century.[23] Finally, a trio of Greek manuscripts from the library of scholar William Grocyn were given to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, by first president John Claymond (1517–1537).[24] All three were written by Petros Hypsilas for Grocyn in Italy, during a period of study that began in 1488 and ended some time before 1491 when Grocyn returned to Oxford to deliver the first public lectures in Greek. The Floral binder's work on the Greek volumes must therefore postdate 1488.[25] From the binder's five manuscripts, at least, we can safely deduce that the place of use was probably the same as the place of production, a surmise that is considerably reinforced by the scribal colophons of Corpus MS 227. The printed books by contrast are all continental imprints from a range of locations, with printing towns in the Low Countries and southern Germany featuring most prominently (appendix, nos. 1–17). While the manuscripts suggest that the binder was active in Oxford, the binder's incunabula confirm that the period of activity ranged from c. 1477 to c. 1495. The 'finishing' crafts—illumination and bookbinding—make obvious the benefit of combined study of manuscripts and incunabula for resolving issues that relate, in particular, to localising and dating the activity of craftsmen.

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[21] Willoughby, 'An Early College Bookbinder', p. 2.

[22] R. M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscript of Corpus Christi College Oxford* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), p. 113.

[23] 'Scarysbrok' (fol. i verso: Thomas Scarsbrook, demy of Magdalen in 1492), 'Codex collegij marie' (fol. 96r, s. xv), and 'D Walt' (fol. 97v: Richard Walter, fellow 1495–1499). See the forthcoming catalogue: R. Hanna and D. Rundle, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of Magdalen College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society).

[24] N. Wilson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College Oxford* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), pp. 15, 23–24. See R. M. Thomson, with the assistance of J. G. Clark (eds), *The University and College Libraries of Oxford*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 16, 2 vols (London: British Library in assoc. with British Academy, 2015) (hereafter CBMLC 16), I, pp. 564–69 for UO31. 2, 18 and 27.

[25] A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957–1959), II, pp. 827–30; CBMLC 16, I, p. 522.

J. B. Oldham tentatively assigned the Floral Binder to Oxford, but he did so only on the strength of the present-day location of the majority of books in Oxford libraries. Clearly this is a less secure basis upon which to form an opinion of medieval origin than the early provenance evidence recited in the paragraph above.[26] Graham Pollard, who took a more critical approach to provenance, later accepted the localisation and identified the Floral Binder with Thomas Uffington, a bookbinder who features in Oxford records between 1479 and 1496.[27] The identification of the Floral Binder with Uffington is conjectural. The attribution is based only on a consensus between dates in life-records and dates in books, and there is certainly cause for doubt, as I have found. Even applying Pollard's own methodology it is clear that there is at least one other candidate for an Oxford bookbinder who was active at precisely the dates associated with the Floral Binder: Thomas Hunt. From the first record describing him as a bookseller in 1473, to his role as university stationer by the 1480s, to his death by 1498, Thomas Hunt's activities included valuing books, selling second-hand books (manuscript and print), supplying parchment and, crucially, binding books.[28] Hunt was also a retailer of brand new printed books (nearly all of which, presumably, required binding)—a point discussed further below. As Malcolm Parkes observed, the 'assumed' connection between the appointment of Christopher Coke as university stationer in 1492 and the death of Hunt is an assumption that overlooks the long precedent for multiple university stationers in post at one time. Parkes' suggestion is more convincing, namely that Hunt 'died by 1498' when the lease of his High Street tenement passed to his wife, who was further described in a document dated 14 March 1500 as 'recently' widowed.[29] The importance of this to the present discussion is that Pollard *believed* that Hunt had died in 1492, the date of Coke's appointment.[30] The opportunity to consider Hunt's 'fit' to the Floral Binder has never arisen.

The Floral Binder: Thomas Uffyngton or Thomas Hunt?

Two aspects of Thomas Hunt's biography stand out in light of the binder's oeuvre: Hunt retailed printed books and Hunt was regularly paid for bookbinding. Hunt's 'bookbinding' is best conceived in broad terms: he may have handled the needles, thread, glue, etc., himself; equally his book business may have simply included a bindery. The size of his premises alone, occupying Haberdashers' Hall, confirms that he oversaw a large operation.[31] In

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[26] Oldham, *English Blind-Stamped Bindings*, p. 23.

[27] G. Pollard, 'The Names of Some English Fifteenth-Century Binders', *The Library*, 5th ser., 25.3 (1970), 193–218, esp. pp. 196, 210, 213. Pollard reports but does not list 'some thirty books' known to him in Floral Binder bindings.

[28] M. B. Parkes†, 'Thomas Hunt and the Oxford Book-Business in the Late Fifteenth Century', *The Library*, 7th ser., 17.1 (2016), 28–39. See further Jenny Adams, 'Thomas Hunt's Monograms', *The Library*, 7th ser., 22.3 (2021), 376–382.

[29] Parkes, 'Thomas Hunt', pp. 36–37.

[30] Pollard, 'Names of Some English Fifteenth-Century Binders', 203, 209. Several bibliographers have followed Pollard's reference to Hunt as having 'died in 1492': [A. C. de la Mare], *Duke Humfrey's Library & the Divinity School 1488-1988* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1988), p. 112, no. 113; M. M. Foot, 'English Decorated Bookbindings', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1485*, ed. by J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 65–86 (p. 70); P. Needham, 'Continental Printed Books Sold in Oxford, c. 1480–3: Two Trade Records', in *Incunabula: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Printed Books presented to Lotte Hellinga*, ed. by Martin Davies (London: British Library Publications, 1999), pp. 243–70 (p. 249).

[31] In 1477 Hunt's rental consisted of four shop fronts on the High street, extended to five in 1479: Parkes, 'Thomas Hunt', pp. 28–29, citing H. E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford*, ed. W. A. Pantin, 2 vols, Oxford Historical Society, new ser. 14, 20 (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1960–69), I, 125, no. 162; for a map see *Catalogue*

addition to bookselling and bookbinding, Hunt appears to have invested capital in printing books in Oxford. Hunt is described as 'socius' to the Oxford printer Theodoric Rood in the colophon to Rood's 1481 edition of the Latin translation of the spurious letters of Phalaris, although the precise detail of their association is unclear.[32] Like another of Rood's 1481 editions—Alexander de Alexandria's commentary on the first book of Aristotle's *De anima*—the printer's colophon contains a variation on the statement that it was 'impressum…in alma vniu*er*sitate Oxon'.[33] Rood's connection with the university may have been precipitated by Hunt who was one of its serving officers. This press was, as Susan Powell has argued, 'a fledgling university press, printing texts for and sometimes by Oxford fellows'.[34] The collaboration with Hunt is again clear in Rood's 1482 special issue of Lathbury on Lamentations printed on parchment. In this instance, Hunt's monogram as well as the name of All Souls College, some of its fellows, and fellows from other colleges, were added in ink to the surviving parchment copies, as though they were subscribers to that edition. Parkes, like Ker before him, recognised that some of the names were added in Hunt's handwriting, and that the domination of Hunt's monogram among the surviving names indicated that he 'underwrote the issue and took a number of copies into stock'.[35] Indeed, if we return to Hunt's association with bookbinding, it is not difficult to imagine how an interest in retailing new locally-printed books could prove lucrative.

Of more direct relevance to the Floral Binder is Thomas Hunt's documented involvement in the retail of imported printed books in Oxford. The rare survival of a well-known business record testifies to this aspect of Hunt's trade, and it is worth revisiting in light of the possibility that Hunt and Oldham's Floral Binder were more closely connected than hitherto realised. The record in question is a list of sixty-six titles, the majority in single copies, that were supplied to Hunt in 1483 by Peter Actors, the king's stationer, and John of Aachen (the Louvain/Leuven printer who printed under the name of John of Westfalia).[36] The inventory makes clear that Hunt took delivery of a consignment of books from Actors and Achen on a sale or return basis. Paul Needham's identification of the specific editions listed show that two-thirds of the copies supplied were printed in either Louvain or Cologne, with another 13 copies originating from other printing towns in the Low Countries. The obvious explanation is that a Louvain-based printer acted as co-supplier to Hunt.[37] In addition, a significant proportion of the remainder appear to have been Venetian imprints, which can be viewed as '"secondary" Cologne imports, for it is very likely that they were first transported from

of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Library, pt XI: England, ed. by Lotte Hellinga ('t Goy-Houten: Hes & De Graaf, 2007), p. 14 (hereafter 'BMC XI').

[32] Phalaris, *Epistolae*. Oxford: Theodoric Rood and Thomas Hunt, 1481 (ISTC ip00560700), fol. 88r. For the Rood-Hunt connection, see BMC XI, pp. 13-15, 35-36, 52.

[33] Alexander de Alis, *Expositio super tres libros Aristotelis de anima*. Oxford: Theodoric Rood, 11 Oct. 1481 (ISTC ia00382000), fol. 240rb.

[34] S. Powell, 'Mirk's *Festial* and Theodoric Rood', *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 18 (2015), 50–102 (p. 53, with literature on further histories of Oxford University Press). See also James Willoughby, 'Universities, Colleges and Chantries', in *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain 1476–1558*, ed. by V. Gillespie and S. Powell (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 207–224 (pp. 210–211).

[35] John Lathbury, *Liber moralium super threnis Ieremiae*. [Oxford: Theodoric Rood], 31 July 1482 (ISTC il00075000). Parkes, 'Thomas Hunt', p. 34; see also N. R. Ker, 'The Vellum Copies of the Oxford Edition (1482) of Lathbury on Lamentations', *Bodleian Library Record*, 2 (1947), 185–88.

[36] Surviving on the endleaves of Bodleian Library, Auct. R sup. 1, a copy of Livy, *Historiae* (French, tr. Pierre Bersuire), pt. 1, Paris: [Antoine Caillaut and Jean Du Pré], 27 Nov. 1486 (ISTC il00250000): see Needham, 'Two Trade Records'.

[37] As proposed by Rudolph Juckhoff and supported in Needham, 'Two Trade Records', p. 250.

Venice to Cologne though the trade connections of Johannes de Colonia, the publisher of about half the Venetian titles'.[38] The Floral Binder's extant output shows that continental incunabula were the staple of his trade, indicating his proximity to a bookseller whose main business included retailing foreign printed books. With one exception, the Floral Binder's editions are dated or datable to between c.1483 and 1495 and thus they postdate Hunt's 1483 inventory. The exception is rather interesting. The earliest-surviving item that Oldham assigned to the Floral Binder (appendix, no. 1) can be plausibly connected to a specific printed edition on the Hunt list. The Floral Binder copy of the *Quodlibet* of Duns Scotus printed by Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen (Venice, 1477) is a compelling candidate for item number 4 on Hunt's record.[39] Several scholars have realised the potential of this inventory for relating its titles to surviving Oxford bindings. So far the focus has been on the 'Rood and Hunt Binder' (fl. c. 1478 to 1483), an Oxford contemporary of the Floral Binder, whose shop bound printed books produced both by Rood and by printers abroad.[40] His identity remains unknown and his binding practices—suggestive of training in a Low Countries tradition—rule out an identification with Hunt himself.[41] As with the Floral Binder, there is one title on the 1483 inventory that is a candidate for survival in a Rood and Hunt binding, hinting at the extent to which Thomas Hunt must have subcontracted the bookbinding work on a consignment of this size (105 copies).[42] If these candidate-copies for volumes on Hunt's booklist do in fact indicate that he was reliant on the services of both bookbinders in 1483, the disappearance of the Rood and Hunt Binder in c. 1483 may well have led to an increased quantity of imported books bound by the Floral Binder.

Although most of the Floral Binder's extant work covers books printed after Hunt's 1483 inventory was written, the Appendix shows that half of the foreign imprints handled by the binder simply continue the pattern of importation established by the earlier trade record. Five of the Floral Binder's books originated in the Low Countries: two from Louvain (appendix, nos. 6, 13), one each from nearby Brussels and Alost (nos. 2, 7), and one from further afield in Deventer (no. 3).[43] Many of the same printing houses thought to have supplied Hunt's 1483 consignment recur here, recalling the inventory's four editions (in six copies) from the shop of the Brussels Fratres, the two editions (in four copies) from Richard Pafraet's press in Deventer, and the 14 editions in multiple copies from Westfalia's Louvain press.[44] Three of the books supplied to the Floral Binder originated in Venice (nos. 1, 8, 12), including one from the partnership of Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen who published nearly

[38] Needham, 'Two Trade Records', p. 261.

[39] Ibid., p. 248.

[40] Ibid., p. 270; and Isabelle Pingree, 'A Catalogue of the Bindings of the Fifteenth-Century Bookbinder Called the Rood and Hunt Binder', *The Library*, 7th ser., 4.4 (2003), 371–401 (pp. 374–75).

[41] Foot, 'English Decorated Bookbindings', pp. 77–78; Pingree, 'Rood and Hunt Binder', pp. 372–73 for Pollard's mistaken identification of the binder with 'Nicholas Bokebynder' and for the resemblance of the binder's work to Low Country practices in bookbinding.

[42] Item 52 identified by Needham as '2 copies: Alliaco, Petrus de, *De imagine mundi*. [Louvain: Johannes de Westfalia, about 1480?, not after 1483]': 'Two Trade Records', p. 258.

[43] Johannes de Westfalia (no. 13) and Thierry Martens (no. 7) printed in partnership in Alost (1473–1474), founding the first press in the southern Low Countries, before Westfalia established his printing house in Louvain (1474–1496). See Renaud Adam and Alexandre Vanautgaerden, *Thierry Martens et la figure de l'imprimeur humaniste (une nouvelle biographie)* (Turnhout: Brepols, Paris: Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Bruxelles: Musée de la Maison d'Erasme, 2009); Paul Needham, 'Fragments of an unrecorded edition of the first Alost press', *Quaerendo. A Quarterly Journal from the Low Countries devoted to Manuscripts and Printed Books*, 12 (1982), pp. 6–21.

[44] Needham, 'Two Trade Records', pp. 251–60.

half of the Venetian titles on the earlier inventory. It is likely that arrangements very similar to the 1483 agreement between Hunt and his two suppliers, Actors and Westfalia, explain the arrival of many more printed books into Oxford in this period (and some, feasibly, passed from Actors or Hunt to the Floral Binder). The surviving customs rolls of the port of London provide circumstantial evidence, showing that Actors and Westfalia regularly paid duty on imported cargos of books both before and after 1483. Moreover, Peter Actors' son and daughter were resident in Oxford some two decades later, and both were associated with the book trade. Needham's idea that 'Peter Actors himself was not just a sometime visitor, but rented a tenement there, where his records were kept'[45] adds to the overwhelming impression of the ease with which neighbouring book importers, retailers and craftsmen could secure enduring collaborations.

If around a third of the Floral Binder's continental imprints derive from places of printing in the Low Countries—thus reflecting the dominant trend of the 1483 trade record—half of the list (eight incunables) diverges from the earlier trend by originating in the southern German-speaking towns of Basel and Nuremberg. Nuremberg, as the second largest town in the German Empire, was a major trading centre, while Basel boasted a distinguished university and developed rapidly as a centre for humanist learning and publishing. The preeminent merchant-publishers were Anton Koberger in Nuremberg (no. 5) and Johann Amerbach in Basel (nos. 4, 9, 10, 11) who also printed in partnership with Johann Petri (nos. 15, 16). Amerbach's surviving correspondence conveys the joint-interests of these three men in the production, financing, marketing and distribution of printed books 'in a publishing circuit that joined Basel and Nuremberg'.[46] The geographical reach of Koberger's bookselling network, with fixed agents in important sites of international commerce, made him the ideal distribution partner for the Basel printers.[47] The connection established between centres of learning and of trade is a southern equivalent of the pattern evident in the 1483 inventory, between Louvain and Cologne. For publishers operating in the international Latin market, selling their texts involved maintaining contacts 'with a network of booksellers located in every part of Europe'.[48] At least six Amerbach imprints entered the Floral Binder's shop between 1486 and 1489, during a period that has been identified as one of rapid expansion for Amerbach's publishing business (1485–1490).[49] Alongside Koberger, Amerbach had his own network of local agents and resellers such as the German bookseller Andrew Ruwe, a London-based book-importer and stationer with a shop in Paul's Churchyard (and a Bachelor degree in Civil Law from Oxford).[50] During the 1490s Ruwe requested books that must have

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45 Kew, The National Archives, E.122.194/26 and E.122.73/43. See Needham, 'Two Trade Records', pp. 249–50.

46 Koberger (c. 1440–1513); Amerbach (c 1443/45–1513); Petri (c. 1441–1511). See V. Sebastiani, *John Froben, Printer of Basel: A biographical profile and a catalogue of his editions* (Brill, 2018), pp. 13–17 (quotation p. 17); Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 36–38, 67–82.

47 Amerbach, for example, delivered books as unbound sheets in barrels to Koberger who then moved them either to his own warehouses in Strasbourg for storage and later distribution or directly to the main seasonal fairs at Lyon and Frankfurt (Sebastiani, *Froben*, pp. 31–34). See Barbara C. Halporn, *The Correspondence of Johann Amerbach. Early Printing in Its Social Context* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

48 Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, p. 77.

49 Based on a measure of increased employee numbers and press output: Sebastiani, *Froben*, p. 17, esp. nn. 32–33.

50 Others include Peter Metlinger in Paris, Paul Hürus in Zaragoza, and Adolf Rusch in Strasbourg, who made requests during the 1480s for specific editions in multiple copies from Amerbach's stock. For a summary of Amerbach's network see Sebastiani, *Froben*, pp. 15, 32; Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, pp. 73–82. For

held appeal for Oxford stationers (classics of Roman law, theology, the arts), and some in large quantities such as the fifty copies specified for each of Augustine's *De civitate* and *De trinitate*.[51] Ruwe's expectation that Amerbach would supply him with books on a sale-or-return basis follows the same principle as the Hunt-Westfalia-Actors arrangement. It is tempting to take the view that so many Amerbach volumes ended up in Floral Binder bindings because the resident stationer, Thomas Hunt, acted as the local retailer for importing stationers like Andrew Ruwe or Peter Actors.

Ultimately, the only firm evidence for books supplied to Hunt is the 1483 inventory, which gives us no more than contemporary precedence for his handling of foreign titles similar to those with bindings now attributed to the Floral Binder. Moreover, the list in the Appendix is dominated by a single point of origin incipient in the 1483 inventory: Basel. Does the different pattern of importation into Oxford work against a theory that Hunt supplied books to, or was himself, the Floral Binder? Not necessarily: there was evidently a dynamic quality to the way in which resident and importing stationers (men like Thomas Hunt) received books from multiple and changing sources. We see evidence for this in a second Oxford trade record associated with Peter Actors, for example, with its focus on editions printed in Paris; elsewhere, in Dennis Rhodes' catalogue of incunables in Oxford college libraries, we see a variety of continental editions in copies that retain evidence of medieval Oxford provenance.[52] The most compelling reason to connect the Floral Binder to Hunt remains the fascinating consensus between Hunt's life records and the binder's datable bookbindings. On these grounds, Hunt is one of two realistic candidates for the Floral Binder's identity, together with Pollard's Thomas Uffyngton. Books bound by the Floral Binder could be books bound *by* Hunt / Hunt's bindery, but equally they could be books bound *for* Hunt by Uffyngton, whose rented tenement was, conveniently, immediately adjacent to Hunt's own on the North side of Oxford's High Street.[53] Both bookbinders have an equally good claim to the Floral Binder's identity. The important outcome, as it stands, is that the application of Pollard's method produces two candidates, not one. Future cataloguers engaged in describing books in these bindings would be best advised to avoid the 'Uffyngton' attribution in favour of the 'Floral Binder': the new spectre of Hunt means that we are not likely to resolve the question of identity with any satisfaction.[54] Even circumstantial evidence that tends in Hunt's favour—such as the example of a copy of the fourth item on Hunt's 1483 inventory in a Floral Binder binding—is inconclusive in light of the immediate proximity of their tenements (and the consequently strong potential for a subcontractor relationship).

Ruwe, see P. Blayney, *The Stationers' Company and the Printers of London 1501-1557*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), I, pp. 94, 158 n. A, 468; Pollard, 'Names of Some English Fifteenth-Century Binders', 207; C. E. Welch, 'Julian Notary and Andrew Rowe: Two Contemporary Records', *The Library*, 5th ser., 6.4 (1956), 277–78; H. R. Plomer, *Abstracts from the wills of English Printers and Stationers 1492 to 1630* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1903), p. 2.

[51] Halporn, *Correspondence*, nos. 43 and 44; see also Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, p. 77; and Y. Rode, 'Importing Books to London in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries: Evidence from the London Overseas Customs Accounts', *JEBS*, 15 (2012), 41–84 (pp. 51–52).

[52] For the second business record, listing books delivered to Peter Actors by the Parisian printer Pierre Levet for sale in Oxford (c. 1480), see Needham, 'Two Trade Records', pp. 264–70. D. E. Rhodes, *A Catalogue of Incunabula in all the Libraries of Oxford University outside the Bodleian* (Oxford, 1982).

[53] Pollard, 'Names of Some English Fifteenth-Century Binders', 210.

[54] See CBMLC 16, II, p. 1726, for example, with an index entry for 'Uffington' but not for the 'Floral Binder'.

Finally, there may be marginally better circumstantial evidence for Hunt's connection to both the binder and the binder's collaborators. The evidence comes from a different source: the illuminator of the Ewelme Statutes. The large illuminated initial with a two-sided border, marking the founders' opening address, can be newly identified with the work of the 'Fitzjames Limner' (fl. c. 1465-1495), a craftsman who worked in some capacity for Hunt's 'socius', Theodoric Rood (Figs 4–6). His output, which I have discussed elsewhere, included the illumination of one copy of William Lyndewode's *Constituciones prouinciales*, printed by Rood (Oxford, c. 1483–1484), as well as two copies of the *Biblia Latina* printed by Nicholas Jenson (Venice, 1476).[55] The artist's work on the Ewelme Statutes is consistent with what we know so far about the medieval provenance of the other manuscripts that he decorated, all of which demonstrate early (if not first) ownership by Richard Fitzjames of Merton College.[56] The artist's work for academics like Fitzjames, for Rood's fledgling university press, and for products of the international book trade is most easily understood if we view it as co-ordinated to some degree by a university stationer like Hunt. The identification of the Floral Binder and Fitzjames Limner as direct collaborators on the Ewelme Statutes is important confirmation of their proximity within the same network. Future progress on understanding Hunt and Rood's milieu, its craftsmen and patrons, is likely to come from study of illumination and penflourishing—a class of evidence more ubiquitous than the sad survival rate of medieval bookbindings.[57] For our present purposes, identification of the binder and limner confirms that the Ewelme foundation employed the services of university-adjacent book craftsmen from the streets around the university church, nearly half a century after the first acts of constitution and construction. A long continuity in connections between the town and university and between the university and Ewelme are thus clarified by study of the book as an artefact.

Conclusions

A codicological study of MS Ewelme d.41 has indicated that it was almost certainly not produced within Alice Chaucer's lifetime (d. 1475). This has an important bearing on how we view the textual history of the Ewelme Statutes. The statutes survive in three fifteenth-century copies—not two as stated by Goodall—and this important factor, together with more precise dating for MS Ewelme d.41, prompts reassessment of all copies: their relationship to

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[55] H. 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, 2025), pp. 111-57: see the second case-study and appendix, nos. 8, 9 and 21. These are London, British Library, IC.55322 (ISTC il00413000); and Cambridge, University Library, Inc.3.B.3.2[1361] and Inc.3.B.3.2[1362] (ISTC ib00547000).

[56] Ibid.: Oxford, Merton College MSS 26, 89, 174. The artist has a wide range of motifs in his repertoire but two of the most distinctive are: i) a gold ball with double pincers (illustrated in Plates 5.3–5.5 in 'Illuminators of English and Continental Incunabula'); ii) a gold ball with triangular petals used in Ewelme (illustrated here in Figs 4 and 6). I have used images from Merton MS 26 in both essays (Fig. 6 here) to show that both gold ball varieties were used by the one artist. Figs 4–6 also show the Fitzjames Limner's more liberal use of a third type of gold ball with pen lines curled into 'hooks' and infilled with green, pink or blue colour. Other distinctive aspects of his style include the density of the pen-feathering, the relatively small and rounded finals of the feathering, and the 'squiggle' (a short line stacked with a '5' shape) that caps some finals at regular intervals (cf. Figs 4–5). Such minutiae provide a useful focus since these 'ticks' of fast, freehand pen-work, could not be easily reproduced by a second illuminating shop (and it would be difficult to explain the inclination and economic benefit of precise reproduction).

[57] See, e.g., S. Reynolds, 'Tracking Changes: Decoration, Binding, and Annotation in Incunabula Imported to England', in *Production and Provenance: Copy-Specific Features of Incunabula*, ed. by J. Goldfinch, S. Tokunaga and T. Kato (Leiden: Brill, 2025), pp. 158-89.

one another and to the history of the Ewelme foundation.[58] Goodall's compelling reconstruction of evidence for Ewelme's changing constitution, based on his study of the buildings and muniments, is key to understanding the codicological evidence of extant medieval copies. The Master's Accounts describe how Thomas Benefraunt of Queen's College, Oxford, was paid 20s in 1456 for a 'reformation of the statutes'.[59] Some minor revision was necessary after 1450, Goodall suggested, since the changed fortunes of the founders intervened to prevent Ewelme's substantial school-house from becoming a sister foundation to an Oxford college.[60] The main necessity, Goodall argues, was to redefine the role of the school whose newly-reduced provision was suddenly at odds with its architectural grandeur. Benefraunt's revisions were evidently very minor since the text reads as though it was compiled in a period of heyday between 1448 and 1450, with Willian described by his ducal title (1448) and as living (d.1450), and the main purpose of Benefraunt's role appears to have been to produce a fair copy.[61] Goodall goes on to suggest that MS Ewelme d.41 was 'the very text that Benefraunt drew up'—a theory that is clearly complicated by the identification of the binder and illuminator as craftsmen active in the last quarter of the century.[62] We would have to accept a considerable hiatus between the volume's *preparation* by Benefraunt in 1456 and its *finishing* by the Fitzjames Limner and Floral Binder one generation later. Although it is not impossible that MS Ewelme d.41 was a refurbished volume, it is a theory that adds, in all probability, an unnecessary layer of complexity.

A second copy of the statutes, misdated by Goodall to the mid-sixteenth century, is in fact the better candidate for Benefraunt's 'fairhand' copy: BL MS Harley 113.[63] Its text is identical to MS Ewelme d.41 (allowing for variations in spelling), its ruling is identical (24 lines), as are the dimensions of its parchment folios (255 x 170 mm). The illuminated initial on folio 3r, marking the founders' opening address, is of the same design: a gold letter, 4-lines in height, on rose and blue quartered ground with white filigree (cf. figs 4 and 7). It is the distinctive spray border that confirms that we are dealing with a much earlier copy, one that was certainly produced within Alice Chaucer's lifetime. The initial and borderwork can be identified with work recently attributed to the limner Thomas Tresswell (fl. c. 1440–1470), a London stationer who rented a tenement in Oxford from at least September 1463 to June 1466, and who contributed illumination to books produced for university clientele at exactly this time: one volume for Thomas Chaundler of New College (1463 x 1465) and three for

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[58] Cf. Goodall, *God's House*, p. 213. The other two fifteenth-century copies are: London, British Library, MS Harley 113; and Ewelme, Ewelme Muniments A 25 and A 26, a charter drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury and written on two pieces of vellum.

[59] Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 216–17.

[60] In 1450 the duke was accused of treason and ignominiously beheaded with a rusty sword. See note 11 above for the school building and clues for its changed provision.

[61] Other aspects not updated were the descriptions of the first Master as alive (d.1454) and the Teacher of Grammar post as vacant (no longer the case in 1456). Goodall's research shows that 20s was a comparable rate for fair copies of statutes made for similar contemporary foundations: Goodall, *God's House*, p. 217.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Goodall, *God's House*, pp. 213–14, 218. Goodall uses the sixteenth-century annotations on the endleaves to infer that the text itself 'was completed between 1534 and the King's death in 1547' (p. 218). The binding is probably seventeenth-century. See: 'MS Harley 113', British Library, *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*; A.G. Watson, 'Sir Simonds D'Ewes's Collection of Charters, and a note on the charters of Sir Robert Cotton', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 2 (1962), 247–54 (p. 252, n. 33); A.G. Watson, *The Library of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (London: British Museum, 1966), p. 206 (no. 903).

Roger Keys of Exeter College (dated 1462, 1463, 1464).[64] Figures 7 and 8 allow comparison of some of Tresswell's unusual traits: large striated lobes on gold balls; motifs that combine clusters of both gold and colour (here a triple stack of gold balls and dotted coloured lobes); and a feathering style that alternates green finials with black wavy lines. Goodall's view that MS Ewelme d.41 was the copytext for MS Harley 113, and that Harley's 'deference' towards its exemplar indicated that MS Ewelme d.41 was 'the authoritative version' drawn up by Benefraunt in 1456, clearly needs correction.[65] Rather, the earlier Harley manuscript feasibly provided the copytext for the Ewelme manuscript, although whether Harley itself is the 'authoritative version' written by Benefraunt is another matter. One interesting discrepancy between the two copies, in view of the careful effort to replicate the *mise-en-page*, is the different scripts used. The Harley text is written in a high-grade cursive (Bastard Anglicana), the sort of script well within the capabilities of a senior university figure, compared to Ewelme d.41's Textura Quadrata, which is more believably within the domain of the professional 'textwriters' of the university-adjacent book trade.[66]

My suggestion that MS Ewelme d.41 is the later of the two copies is supported by the circumstances surrounding the production of yet another copy with an identical text. The third copy, in charter format and dated at Lambeth on 30 November 1480, provides a date that agrees with the careers of the illuminator and binder employed to complete MS Ewelme d.41. It is possible that *both* the charter and codex copies in the Ewelme muniments were produced c. 1480, with their identical texts derived from Benefraunt's reformed text of 1456 (possibly MS Harley 113 or another lost copy). The Latin preamble to the charter copy makes clear that the Master, William Marton, acted on the instruction of the wills of the late founders in seeking archiepiscopal reconfirmation of the statutes. The delay between when the foundation was established and when archiepiscopal confirmation was sought is anomalous, according to Goodall, and a combination of factors indicate that there may never have been a sealed version of the Ewelme statutes. The point of the charter copy, which was originally sealed, was to give the foundation's statutes 'legal weight in 1480'.[67] The employment of the Floral Binder and Fitzjames Limner for MS Ewelme d.41, together with a professional scribe, strengthens the idea that this particular volume was yet another product of the consolidatory constitutional activity that followed the death of the founder. Indeed, the text itself provides one reason for the usefulness of additional copies: regulation 87 stipulates quarterly readings of the whole text and monthly readings of a selection of rules by either the Master or Teacher of Grammar to the community (concluding 'Therefore wee woll that the…seide howse haue a trewe copy…to be redde amongis hem as ofte as they woll, that the contentis and the chapitres of the same mowe the more inwardly be co*m*mended to here myndes').[68] It is difficult to imagine the Benefraunt 'authoritative version' being put into circulation as a 'howse' copy, although MS Ewelme d.41 does appear to have fulfilled exactly that role. Its margins were once heavily annotated in English and Latin by many late

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[64] H. 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 S. Panayotova and P. Ricciardi (London/Turnhout: Harvey Miller/Brepols, 2017), pp. 109–23. See the appendix and colour plates for the ten manuscripts attributed to Tresswell (esp. nos. 7 to 10 for Oxford work) to which BL MS Harley 113 is a new addition.
[65] Goodall, *God's House*, p. 219.
[66] A search of Queen's College's medieval archives for specimens of Benefraunt's handwriting might settle speculation on the matter.
[67] Goodall, *God's House*, p. 219.
[68] MS Ewelme d.41, fol. 24v (p. 48).

medieval and early modern hands, another factor that works against Goodall's idea that the volume is Benefraunt's original. A study of texts and materials has helped to clarify the probable chronology of the extant fifteenth-century codex copies. Viewing the producers employed for MS Ewelme d.41 in light of the 1480 charter indicates that the founder's death was the impetus for the institution to commission not one but multiple copies of the statutes c.1480, at a time when the Master was engaged with consolidating the terms of the foundation. The employment of Thomas Tresswell for the illumination of MS Harley 113 comfortably places the production of this book some two decades earlier: Tresswell arrived in Oxford at least as early as June 1463, when extant records of the Chancellor of Oxford place him on Catte Street, and he may have already been there by the December 1462 colophon of a volume that he decorated for Roger Keys (assuming no gap between the scribe's work and the illuminator's).[69] His patronage by Alice Chaucer joins the patronage of Chaundler and Keys to shed light on the interesting question of *why* a London artist would move to Oxford. Coincidentally Tresswell's illumination of the Ewelme statutes continues the sort of work that engaged him in London: a book copy of the *Nova Statuta*, the cartulary of St Paul's Cathedral, London (1450), and the charters and by-laws of the London Pewterers' Company (Tresswell's work before 11 August 1463).[70] If Benefraunt's fair copy of the reformed Ewelme Statutes has survived at all, the evidence of the extant medieval copies points to MS Harley 113 as the best candidate.

The 'finishing' crafts—illumination and bookbinding—constitute the relatively unknown territories of bibliographical scholarship. The potential they offer for clarity on the often fraught questions of when and where a book was made is demonstrated by study of these aspects of MS Ewelme d.41's production. Books attributed to the Floral Binder and Fitzjames Limner allow us to combine very different types of evidence to form a better picture of the circumstances of production, from the colophon, to medieval marks of ownership, to many printed dates of publication. Grouping books according to their styles of illumination or binding is a potentially powerful tool for localising and dating typically anonymous manuscripts. Accepting that there is an unavoidably subjective element in the attribution of anonymous works, it is clear that such list-making benefits from regular update and reflection, as demonstrated here in this reassessment of the corpus attributed to Oldham's 'Floral Binder'. It is to be hoped that future work on Oxford books of this period can shed some light on the coincidence of Thomas Hunt's dates and relevant activities in view of the reopened question on the binder's identity.

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[69] James-Maddocks, 'Thomas Tresswell', pp. 111–14 (Oxford, Exeter College MS 57, dated 5 December 1462).
[70] Ibid., pp. 115, 119–20, and appendix nos. 1–3.

Appendix[71]

The Floral Binder (fl. c. 1477–1495)

Incunabula:

1. **1477, Venice**: Johannes de Colonia and Johannes Manthen. Johannes Duns Scotus, *Quodlibeta*, edited by Thomas Penketh (ISTC id00393000; GW 9068).   London, Westminster Abbey, M. 2. 8

2. [c. **1483, Brussels**: Fratres Vitae Communis]. Petrus de Alliaco, *Quaestiones super libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* (ISTC ia00480500; GW M32002).   Worcester Cathedral Library, Inc. 33

3. **[1484-85], Deventer**: Richardus Pafraet. Raymundus de Sabunde, *Theologia naturalis* (ISTC ir00032000; GW M36906).   London, Lambeth Palace Library, [ZZ] 1480.1

4. **1486, Basel**: [Johann Amerbach]. Petrus Comestor, *Historia scholastica* (ISTC ip00465000; GW M32164).   London, Lambeth Palace Library, [ZZ] 1486.5

5. **1486, Nuremberg**: Anton Koberger. Antonius de Butrio, *Super primo libro decretalium* (ISTC ib01343000; GW 5823).   Oxford, St John's College, HB4/Folios.4.1.4

6. **[1486-88], Louvain**: Aegidius van der Heerstraten. Henricus de Piro, *Super institutiones* (ISTC ip00651500; GW 12258).   Oxford, All Souls College, z. 9. 18

7. **1487, Alost**: Thierry Martens. *Sermones compositi super particulis antiphonae Salve regina* (ISTC is00471000; GW M41750). London, Lambeth Palace Library, [ZZ] 1486.8.04

8. **1487, Venice**: Baptista de Tortis. Publius Vergilius Maro, *Opera* (ISTC iv00178000; GW M49829).   Oxford, Brasenose College, UB/S I 40

9. **1487-88, Basel**: Johann Amerbach. Nicolaus Panormitanus de Tudeschis, *Lectura super V libris Decretalium* (ISTC ip00051000; GW M47787). Bristol, Public Library, EPB 188-189/SR 38 (parts IV-V printed in 1488)

10. **1487-88, Basel**: Johann Amerbach. Nicolaus Panormitanus de Tudeschis, *Lectura super V libris Decretalium* (ISTC ip00051000; GW M47787). York Minster Library, Inc. 5-6 (part I printed in 1488)

11. **1487-88, Basel**: Johann Amerbach. Nicolaus Panormitanus de Tudeschis, *Lectura super V libris Decretalium* (ISTC ip00051000; GW M47787). York Minster Library, Inc. 5-7 (part II printed in 1487)

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[71] This is Oldham's list (*English Blind-Stamped Bindings*, p. 22, n. 6) with updated shelfmarks, dates and places of publication, and the new addition of the Ewelme Statutes (no. 23). A subsequent addition to the oeuvre – the New Testament edited by Erasmus (Basel, 1519) in Oxford, Corpus Christi College, Delt.19.6 – is incorrect (attributed in CBMLC 16, I, p. 618, and on the University of Oxford's SOLO catalogue <https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/permalink/44OXF_INST/35n82s/alma990122789260107026> [accessed 4 March 2024]). The error seems to have arisen from a mistaken reading of 'floral' in Oldham's index of rolls as the binder's epithet.

12. **1488, Venice**: Hieronymus de Sanctis and Johannes Lucilius Santritter, for Petrus Benzon and Petrus de Plasiis, Cremonensis. Johannes de Janduno, *Quaestiones in libros Physicorum Aristotelis* (ISTC ij00355000; GW M14083).   Oxford, All Souls College, g.1/infra 7

13. **1488, Louvain**: Johannes de Westfalia. Aurelius Augustinus, *De civitate dei* (commentary by Thomas Waleys and Nicholaus Trivet) (ISTC ia01242000; GW 2886). Oxford, Brasenose College, UB/S I 85

14. **1488, Basel**: Nicholaus Kesler. Petrus Lombardus, *Sententiarum libri IV* (commentary Henricus de Gorichen) (ISTC ip00491000; GW M32482). Oxford, Brasenose College, UB/S I 75

15. **1489, Basel**: Johann Amerbach [and Johann Petri de Langendorff]. Aurelius Augustinus, *Explanatio psalmorum* (ISTC ia01272000; GW 2909). Durham Cathedral Library, Inc. 44

16. **1489, Basel**: [Johann Amerbach, and Johann Petri de Langendorff?]. Robertus Holcot, *Super sapientiam Salomonis* (ISTC ih00291000; GW 12886). Durham, Ushaw College, XVIII. A. 6. 2

17. **1495, [Lyon**: Jacques Maillet?]. Helias Regnierus, *Casus longi super sextum librum Decretalium*; *Casus longi Clementinarum* (ISTC ir00117700; GW M37576). Cambridge, St John's College, I.8.38

Manuscripts:

18. **1491, Oxford** (colophon). ?John Duns Scotus, Commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, etc., written by Petrus Pauli de Nycopia and William Vavasour (Thomson, *Catalogue*, p. 113).   Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 227

19. Late fifteenth century (binding after 1488). Plato, *Republic*, etc.; Proclus, *In Platonis Alcibiadem* (Greek), written by Petros Hypsilas (Wilson, *Catalogue*, p. 15). Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 96

20. Late fifteenth century (binding after 1488). Aristotle, *Ethica Nichomachea*, etc. (Greek), written by Petros Hypsilas (Wilson, *Catalogue*, p. 23).   Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 112

21. Late fifteenth century (binding after 1488). Aristotle, *Problemata*, etc. (Greek), written by Petros Hypsilas (Wilson, *Catalogue*, p. 24).   Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 113

22. Fifteenth century (binding by 1492? Flyleaf inscription by Thomas Scarsbrook, demy of Magdalen in 1492). Comprising two originally separate manuscripts (Walter Burley, on Aristotle's *De caelo*; Henry of Wyle on Aristotle's *De anima*) written in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Both parts were conjoined before the present binding (given a different order in the contents table): see Hanna and Rundle, *Catalogue*, forthcoming. Oxford, Magdalen College, MS Lat. 63

23. Fifteenth century (illumination and binding after c. 1480). Statutes for the constitution of a chantry foundation at Ewelme, Oxfordshire. This copy is undated; a second copy of the statutes with archiepiscopal confirmation is dated 30 November 1480. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS d.d. Ewelme d. 41