Intelligent by Design: The Manuscripts of Walter of Whittlesey, Monk of Peterborough

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It goes without saying that no structurally complex manuscript is visible all at once. At any given time, a single opening, or membrane, is usually all there is to see: this gives rise to a quandary familiar to exhibition curators, and one which probably taxed people in the Middle Ages as well. But the designers of medieval books and rolls were nevertheless concerned with integrity of appearance, whether they sought it through similarity, dissonance (as with the intermittent addition of rubrics or illumination) or a combination of the two. They realized that, over and above specific instances of looking, the viewer retained a mental image which was cumulative and could add up to a meaningful impression of the whole object. Where the quality of this impression was thought to matter, for example owing to the significance of a patron, text or function, special efforts of design were often made. This is clearest in the case of high-grade illuminated manuscripts, although scholars of these often focus on the aestheticized 'moments' per se, rather than the place of those moments in the structure of the whole. It is less obvious in other cases, and the relation of overall design to the ideas of makers offers much scope for further thought where decoration is qualitatively indifferent or non-existent.

This article is not devoted to a general consideration of manuscript design, but attempts a contribution to the subject through analysis of two particular fourteenth-century manuscripts – Add. MS. 39758 and Add. MS. 47170 – in whose creation overall design was a major consideration.[1] These manuscripts, one a codex, the other a roll, contain what are normally classified as non-spiritual texts, and both come from Peterborough, the great Fenland Benedictine abbey which ranked among England's oldest and wealthiest monasteries. They stand out as a pair primarily because a monk named Walter of Whittlesey donated them to Peterborough, and each bears conspicuous evidence of his patronage. For the art historian, their manufacture in a period and under circumstances which also produced some of England's most remarkable luxury prayer books makes them interesting witnesses to the context and effects of illumination at the highest level. The connection is almost palpable in the reference in Add. MS. 39758 to the Peterborough Psalter now in Brussels as 'written in letters of gold and azure and wonderfully illuminated' (f. 115v).[2] It is likely that Walter of Whittlesey and

[1] *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years 1916-1920* (London, 1933), pp. 172-6 (Add. MS. 39758); *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years 1946-1950, Part 1: Descriptions* (London, 1979), pp. 242-3 (Add. MS. 47170).

[2] *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores varii*, ed. J. Sparke, 3 vols in 2 (London, 1723), vol. ii, p. 173 ('psalterium literis aureis et assuris scriptum, et mirabiliter luminatum'). On the Peterbrough Psalter (Brussels, Bib. royale MS. 9961-2) see chiefly L. F. Sandler, *The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels & Other Fenland Manuscripts* (London, 1974). A new facsimile of this manuscript with a commentary volume by Professor Sandler will be published in 2016 by Quaternio Verlag.

the men who produced his manuscripts had seen examples of these solemn, pompous objects: some evidence for this, based on the layout of a page in Add. MS. 39758, is produced later on. Yet the interest of the manuscripts discussed here transcends this association. Their contribution to modern understanding of Peterborough's cultural condition at the time they were made is distinctive and valuable.

The interest of Walter of Whittlesey's manuscripts is recognized by historians of Peterborough, and they have been discussed under the same heading before, most recently in a survey of the abbey's chronicles by Nicholas Karn and Edmund King.[3] This and other work relating to them is insightful and grounded in a solid understanding of medieval Peterborough, but it is nevertheless plain to anyone who has studied them closely that these manuscripts have not received sufficient attention as objects. The cleverness of their design and its implications for their use have been largely overlooked. At the same time, scholarly judgements about the part Walter played in the production of his manuscripts differ to the extent of confusion. This problem needs clearing up, at least insofar as the evidence allows. Walter is variously thought to have composed, designed, written out and decorated elements of them: as represented here, the latter is a particularly important claim whose implications have been ignored in the literature on English illumination, either because art historians do not trust it or else because their attention is on more sumptuous objects. As a self-aware patron who grasped the potential of aesthetics for the function of non-spiritual manuscripts, Walter has few known parallels among the professional religious of his period, and while he has been called a chronicler, scribe and illuminator, zealous patronage may in fact be his best claim to fame. In order to substantiate this proposal, his manuscripts need close examination.

Walter of Whittlesey

Walter is prominent in scholarship on Peterborough, as the notional author of his abbey's history from 1246 to 1321, and also in connection with Add. MS. 39758, a book which is part hagiography, part chronicle and part cartulary. However, as with most medieval monks, little is known of him personally. The matter is inherently complicated by the ubiquity of 'Walter' as a name in the period, and the fact that 'Whittlesey' was a toponym particularly associated with Peterborough: the town of that name is only five miles distant, and the abbey had important rights in relation to both the large lake called Whittlesey Mere and the villages and fens bordering it.[4] It follows that identification of any instance of the name with the book-patron discussed here is not necessarily simple. For example, a Walter of Whittlesey mentioned in one of Peterborough's fragmentary customaries (now London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 198b: probably made in the 1360s or 1370s) seems to have flourished in the second half of the thirteenth century. In this case, the name is used in connection with another customary, now lost, which is referred to as 'consuetudinarium fratris Walteri de Wythseye'. A *terminus post quem* for this lost volume is established by the fact that it included a regulation made by Abbot Richard of London, who ruled from 1274 to 1295.[5] It is unlikely, if not impossible, that a monk of the seniority implied by this evidence would still have been actively commissioning books around 1330.

With this said, there is a little clutch of documents from the middle of the fourteenth century which contain the name Walter of Whittlesey and probably do refer to the patron of the manuscripts discussed here. In two of the records he is styled sacrist, a senior obedience

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[3] N. Karn and E. King, 'The Peterborough Chronicles', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, lxi (2008), pp. 17-29.

[4] *Charters of Peterborough Abbey*, ed. S. E. Kelly, Anglo-Saxon Charters, 14 (Oxford, 2009), pp. 54, 103, 143-4, 157, 264-6, 269, 274, 277-8, 289-94, 329-30, 372, 377, and the associated charter texts.

[5] A. Gransden, 'The Peterborough Customary and Gilbert of Stanford', *Revue Bénédictine*, lxx (1960), pp. 625-38 (pp. 626-7).

which required maturity and often preceded election to the abbacy at Peterborough.[6] To begin with, there is a note among some records of mortuary payments contained in a Peterborough register which states that a Brother Walterus de Wytlesey was sacrist in February 1354.[7] At this time he was evidently fresh to the post, for the same register contains another document – part of a rental of the manor of Paston (near Peterborough) – headed by the declaration that it was made in the first year of brother Walterus de Wytlysseye (that is, in his first year as sacrist) and also the first year of Abbot R.[8] Given that this Walter was sacrist in 1354, the abbot referred to must be Robert of Ramsey, who ruled from 1353 to 1361.[9] The name occurs again in two external documents of the period. First, a 'Walter of Witlesey, monk of Peterborough' was among 156 people – including five from neighbouring Thorney Abbey but no other from his house – granted a papal indult to choose a confessor in 1349.[10] Subsequently, in 1360, 'fratre Waltero de Witleseye' of the same place was licenced by the bishop of Lincoln to entertain his choice of brethren in his private chamber (for the purposes of religious conversation), in view of the 'many labours' he had undertaken for his monastery.[11] It seems pretty likely that all four records refer to one man, and that the external concessions were made in consideration of his efforts as sacrist. From this point, a leap of faith to the conclusion that the same individual commissioned Add. MS. 39758 some time around 1330 does not seem to involve excessive risk. In the past, a death date for Walter in the 1320s has been extrapolated from the contents of this manuscript, but as this is based on the unsupportable assumptions of authorship reviewed below, it is no barrier to this association.

Two other points about Walter's identity deserve to be mentioned. The first is that he is styled 'commonachus' (i.e. 'fellow monk') of Peterborough in an added inscription near the beginning of Add. MS. 39758. While in theory this would be a suitable designation for any monk other than an abbot or first prior, it suggests that whoever wrote it did not associate Walter with a particular office. However, this hardly disqualifies the possibility that the manuscript's patron had been sacrist: as someone who came later, the note's writer may simply have been ignorant of Walter's status. Second, a recent conjecture that the patron of Add. MS. 47170 was related to William Whittlesey, archbishop of Canterbury (1369-74), may be set aside as effectively groundless.[12] The last entry added to the dorse of the roll records that prelate's death and the name of his successor, but this is either a trivial coincidence caused by the annalist's recognition

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6   I am extremely grateful to Tim Halliday, who is editing the register mentioned here, for discussing its references of Walter of Whittlesey with me and sending me copies of his transcripts ahead of publication. Robert of Lindsey (d. 1222), Walter of Bury St Edmunds (d. 1245), Richard of London (d. 1295) and William Woodford (d. 1299) were all elected abbot from the office of sacrist.

7   Sacrist's register compiled in July 1404 by Brother George Fraunceys, p. 323 (hereafter 'Fraunceys register'). This manuscript belongs to the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, and is deposited at the Northamptonshire Record Office in Northampton. I am grateful to Crispin Powell, archivist of the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, for generous access to it.

8   Fraunceys register, p. 428.

9   J. D. Martin, *The Cartularies and Registers of Peterborough Abbey* (Peterborough, 1978), p. 33, and *Henry of Pytchley's Book of Fees*, ed. W. T. Mellows (Kettering, 1927), p. xxxii, both assign this page of the rental, along with another (Fraunceys register, p. 419), to the thirteenth century, though they disagree on its date. The entry on p. 323 suggests that this is wrong, for the possibility of two sacrists of this name being mentioned in one volume is exceedingly remote. There is no palaeographical objection to dating the page of the rental to the 1350s.

10   *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters Vol. III, A.D. 1342-1362*, ed. W. H. Bliss and C. Johnson (London, 1897), p. 380.

11   This is in a memoranda roll of John Gynwell, bishop from 1347 to 1362 (Lincoln, Lincolnshire Archives, REG/8, f. 131). It is dated 20 November 1360. I owe the reference to Tim Halliday.

12   O. de Laborderie, *Histoire, mémoire et pouvoir: les généalogies en rouleau des rois d'Angleterre (1250-1422)* (Paris, 2013), pp. 152, 222.

that a figure of national importance came from the Peterborough area, or else an example of simple correlation by someone who had noticed the same name in the roll's colophon (discussed below).[13] Had there been a known familial link then anyone aware of the donor's name would surely have indicated it.

The proposition that the man mentioned in Add. MS. 39758 and Add. MS. 47170 was a sacrist of Peterborough is attractive, but it implies nothing about Walter's agency in respect of his manuscripts. Obviously, this is a subject of central importance for the question of form and purpose. The clearest way of approaching it is to take the manuscripts in turn, beginning with the roll, which as originally made is the older of the two. Its design and content will be discussed later: here it need only be noted that it contains royal genealogies illustrated with many roundels, and that the latest and comfortably longest original entry is for Edward I and concludes with his death in 1307 (Add. MS. 47170, mm. 8-10, front). This evidence for manufacture some time during the reign of Edward II is supported by the anglicana script and style of the drawings. At the end of the roll (m. 12, front) is a large commemorative colophon: '[C]ronica Rotulata, Latine et Gallice conscripta, cum regibus Anglie, ex utraque parte depicta, ffratris Walteri de Witteliseye monachi monasterij de Burg sancti Petri. Anime Cuius propicietur deus. Amen.'[14] ('The roll [*or* round] chronicle, written in Latin and French, with kings of England, painted on both sides, of brother Walter of Whittlesey, monk of the monastery of Peterborough. On whose soul may God have mercy: amen.') (fig. 1). This is written in textura script and so hard to date narrowly, but its embellishments, which include a large oak leaf, suggest the fourteenth century rather than fifteenth. It was probably added soon after Whittlesey's death, although this conclusion is complicated by the fact that the head of the roll has been replaced and lacks at least one membrane in its current state. Some reference to Walter may have stood at the beginning of the roll, and the irregular locus of the current inscription, which is not revealed until (and unless) the reader has worked his way through the whole thing, conceivably relates to a wish to preserve valued information. With this said, the surviving inscription is clearly more than a defence against the sin of forgetting. Its size and decorativeness are calculated inducements to pray for Walter's soul, and this may also be true of its position, because the tail end of a 'round' (*rotulata*) manuscript implied the nadir of fortune's wheel, a diagram aptly represented at the head of some contemporary roll chronicles.[15] As such, the colophon belongs to a broader monastic tradition of commemorating those who gave or made books.[16]

Although the inscription is in basic, unambiguous Latin, and is correspondingly simple to translate, its meaning has been interpreted in different ways. Some have read into it a medieval claim that Walter wrote out and illustrated the roll, others that he did in fact do so, still others that he may have done these things. This has effectively lent the colophon an ambiguity it does not have. Thinking about this matter involves an elementary caution against reading too much into the genitive case, and also being influenced by the showiness of the inscription, which does not affect what it says. The presumption seems to have begun with a brief article published in 1904, whose author interpreted the inscription to mean that the manuscript was Walter's 'work'. When the roll was acquired for the British Library, this was repeated, and a suggestion of it

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13 Add. MS. 47170, m. 11 (dorse: written twice): 'Anno domini Mccclxxiiiij obiit Magister Willelmus de Witlyseye Archiepiscopus cantuariensis in locu eius successit Magister Simon de Sutbyry Episcopus Londoniensis'.

14 A coloured initial 'C' was planned but never executed.

15 For examples of this use of the wheel of fortune see D. Tyson, 'The Manuscript Tradition of the Old French Prose *Brut* Chronicles', *Scriptorium*, lv (2001), pp. 107-18 (pp. 110-11); A. Bovey, *The Chaworth Roll: A Fourteenth-Century Genealogy of the Kings of England* (London, 2005), pp. 6, 14, 17; P. Binski and P. Zutshi, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 185 (no. 196).

16 See for example *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons*, ed. T. Webber and A. G. Watson, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 6 (London, 1998), p. xxv; N. R. Ker, 'Medieval Manuscripts from Norwich Cathedral Priory', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, i (1949), pp. 1-28 (p. 6).
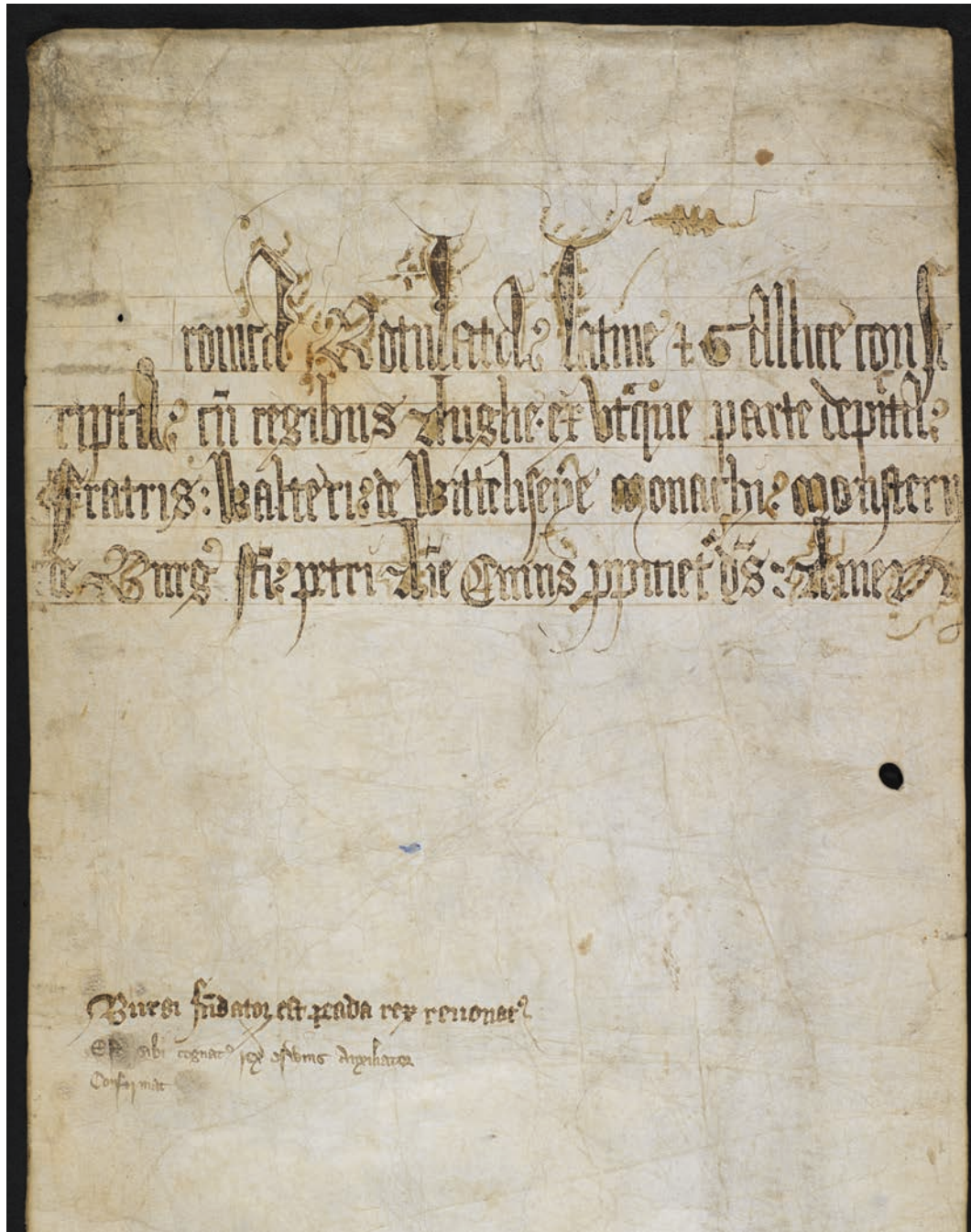
Fig. 1. BL, Add. MS 47170, m. 15, front: colophon commemorating Walter of Whittlesey.

lingers in the current catalogue.[17] William Monroe, author of an important Courtauld Institute doctoral thesis on English genealogical chronicles, stated that the colophon 'claims [the roll] to have been written and painted on both sides by the Peterborough monk, Walter of Whittlesey' (although he doubted the supposed claim), while in the Peterborough volume of the *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues*, which is otherwise authoritative, the inscription is cited as evidence that Whittlesey was 'both scribe and illuminator'.[18] It is possible but unnecessary to cite further examples. In fact, these claims draw their strength only from the use of the genitive case, on which basis one might as well suppose that Whittlesey's fellow monk Walter of Rouceby was the scribe and illuminator of the luxurious Barlow Psalter, with its inscription 'Psalterium fratris Walteri de Rouceby, cuius anime misereatur deus. Amen'.[19]

Monks and canons in the later Middle Ages knew that personal involvement in making something could be effectively communicated through the expression *de propria manu* ('by his own hand'). This is found in several manuscripts, most famously the Tickhill Psalter and the so-called 'classbook' of St Dunstan (where it is a late medieval addition). Indeed, it occurs in Add. MS. 39758, where the chronicler describes how the foundation stone of the late thirteenth-century Lady chapel was laid by William Parys, then prior, 'manu propria' (f. 100).[20] One might expect to find it in the roll's colophon, too, if Walter had done the illustration, particularly in light of the visual fanfare with which the inscription announces him. Because the roll contains information about Peterborough, and points of textual similarity with Add. MS. 39758, it is reasonable to think it made at the abbey, and thus, since Walter possessed and perhaps commissioned it, under his aegis. But it would be risky to build any other hypothesis on this one.

Certain leaps of faith have also been made with respect to Walter's involvement in the making of Add. MS. 39758. These are deeper rooted and of a different, though related, nature. This manuscript has a sort of celebrity status among Peterborough scholars, and has been thought somehow to encapsulate Walter of Whittlesey: 'it is *his* book'.[21] In this case, nobody seems convinced that Walter did the illumination (which is slight except for that of f. 20), although the belief that he illustrated Add. MS. 47170 has led to some flirtation with the idea.[22] However, there is nigh-universal agreement that he was the manuscript's compiler, scribe and the author of the chronicle from 1246 to 1321 (ff. 84v-115v), which is no more or less than a *gesta* of six abbots ending with an unusually detailed account of the achievements of Godfrey of Crowland (1299-1321). While the attribution of compilation to Walter seems reasonable enough, there is

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[17] O. Barron, 'A Royal Pedigree and a Picture of the Black Prince', *The Ancestor*, xi (1904), pp. 158-60 (p. 158); T. C. Skeat, 'The Egmont Papers', *The British Museum Quarterly*, xvi (1951), pp. 62-5 (p. 64); Catalogue of Additions, 1946-1950, p. 242.

[18] W. H. Monroe, '13th and Early 14th Century Illustrated Genealogical Manuscripts in Roll and Codex: Peter of Poitiers' *Compendium*, Universal Histories and Chronicles of the Kings of England', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art (1989), pp. 293-4 (quotation), 326-7 (doubts); *Peterborough Abbey*, ed. K. Friis-Jensen and J. M. W. Willoughby, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 8 (London, 2001), p. xxii n. 1.

[19] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Barlow 22, f. 2: E. Solopova, *Latin Liturgical Psalters in the Bodleian Library: A Select Catalogue* (Oxford, 2013), p. 179. The Barlow Psalter's images are published in Sandler, *Peterborough Psalter*, pp. 56-61; see also eadem, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285-1385*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 5, 2 vols (London, 1986), no. 91.

[20] *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores varii*, vol. ii, p. 149; D. Egbert, *The Tickhill Psalter and Related Manuscripts* (New York, 1940), p. 5 and pl. LXXXIXa (New York, Spencer Public Library, MS. 26, f. 1); M. Holcomb et al., *Pen and Parchment: Drawing in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2009), pp. 50-2 (no. 7: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Auctarium F.4.32, f. 1). See also *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons*, pp. 393, 394; *Chronica Johannes de Oxenedes*, ed. H. Ellis, Rolls Series 13 (London, 1859), p. 294.

[21] Karn and King, op. cit., p. 22 (quotation).

[22] See for example *Peterborough Abbey*, p. xxii; Karn and King, op. cit., p. 22; P. Lasko and N. J. Morgan (eds.), *Medieval Art in East Anglia 1300-1520* (London, 1974), p. 15 (no. 14).

no obvious basis for the other two assertions. They appear to stem from the verse inscription on f. 20, which reads 'Witilssey natus [/] Walter Burg iam monachatus [/] hunc recolens Christum [/] librum Petro dedit istum'. ('Born at Whittlesey, Walter is now a monk at Peterborough; with Christ in mind, he gave this book to St Peter.') (fig. 2).

The only germane information here is that Walter was a monk who donated the book to his abbey. This inscription interested later monks, as it has modern scholars, partially because it is written in gold and set in a remarkable initial containing an image of a Benedictine kneeling before the Virgin and Child, with God the Father, or the risen Christ, above.[23] Others wrote the following things on leaves added to the beginning of the manuscript, after it was complete: 'Walterus de Wytillesey' (f. 1v); 'Iste liber fuit quondam fratris Walteri de Wytlese' (also f. 1v); 'ffundacio ecclesie de Burgo sancti Petri ffratris Walteris de Witilseye Commonachi de Burgo sancti Petri cum bullis […] et aliis […] et cum magnis cartis regum Anglie et cum gestis abbatum Abbathie Burgi cum cronicis aperitatis' (f. 7v).[24] Quite when these additions were made is unknown, though the first and third of them are certainly of fourteenth-century date. In any case, it is important to emphasize that we do not have four separate witnesses to Walter and his involvement with the book here. We rather have one, on f. 20, from which the others derive. The term 'commonachus', the only extra bit of information, is probably no more than an inference from the black habit of the monk in the miniature.

The customized verses show that Walter was certainly the patron in this case, and the design of f. 20 in particular suggests a considerable psychological investment in the book, aroused by devotion and local patriotism. But, as with the ostentatious inscription in the roll, the fervour communicated by appearances is no support for hands-on involvement. There is nothing here to show that the manuscript as originally executed is Walter's autograph. On the contrary, its fine textura script and the highly skilful way that one chronicle has been written into the margins of another between ff. 8 and 92v reveal the hand of an expert scribe. Walter may have been such a scribe, but it seems more likely that he commissioned someone to do the work, as monks tended to when they wanted to be commemorated through the gift of a splendid book.[25] The case for Walter as chronicler is another matter, but is hardly less influential for modern thinking about his relationship to Add. MS. 39758. In a nutshell, the chronicle contains no internal evidence to show that he was its author, and given the large number of monks at Peterborough around 1330, there are in theory plenty of other candidates. The inscription and image on f. 20 are located at the head of the earlier chronicle of Hugh Candidus (for whose authorship there is unambiguous evidence), not at the beginning of the section Walter is said to have composed.[26] Again, it is necessary to observe that while psychological investment of the sort displayed here may suggest many things, authorship is not one of them. To understand the implications of Walter's patronage for these questions, more information would be needed about his monastic career.[27] Here it is worth emphasizing the basic point that even if Walter could be identified as the scribe of his own book, this would not affect the question of his authorship (and vice versa). To think

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[23] As there are no wounds, it is probably not intended for Christ; but illuminators were often not as fastidious about details as one might like.

[24] The missing words have been erased because they referred to papal documents, and I cannot recover them under UV light.

[25] Compare for example Cambridge, University Library, MS. Ii.2.24, a late fourteenth-century *Polychronicon* donated to St Augustine's, Canterbury, by the monk Thomas Arnold and embellished with a similar initial to that in Add. MS. 39758 (Binski and Zutshi, op. cit., p. 171 (no. 181)). There is no suggestion, and extremely little likelihood, that Arnold was the scribe of this book. Compare also J. G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle c.1350-1440* (Oxford, 2004), p. 110.

[26] For Hugh as chronicler, see *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, ed. W. T. Mellows (London, 1949), pp. xv-xvi, 92-6.

[27] Apparently, only Dorothy Owen has questioned (by implication) Walter's authorship of the chronicle on ff. 84v-115v. See D. Owen, 'The Importance of the Peterborough Manuscripts', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, vii (1985-6), pp. 139-42 (p. 141).

Fig. 2. BL, Add. MS. 39758, f. 20: detail of figured initial with commemorative inscription.

otherwise would be an example of what may be called Beckmesser's error, after the zealous clerk in Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger* who mistakes copy for authorship with ludicrous consequences. The Middle Ages knew about this error, and readers were warned against it. Thus Walter Bower (d. 1449), abbot of Inchcolm, in his continuation of the *Scotichronicon*: 'Even I, the writer of this book, who earlier called myself the writer as distinct from the scribe', and so on.[28]

In light of these remarks, any attempt to get closer to Walter the monk through his manuscripts looks doomed to circularity, at least on the basis of current evidence. This is regrettable because, to cite only one reason, distancing him in this way removes a powerful incentive for tackling the important but underplayed issue of self-directed artistic and scribal activity by monks in later medieval England. This is undoubtedly a large subject, but it is very difficult to get any purchase on it owing to the general anonymity of the work and the prevailing belief that manuscript embellishment of professional standard was more or less exclusively the province of laymen after c. 1300. With respect to the latter issue, Christopher de Hamel puts the case: 'It is commonly asserted (usually with some truth) that almost no manuscripts were made in English monasteries or by monks after the thirteenth century'.[29] It seems likely that the illustration as well as the writing out of Walter's manuscripts was done at Peterborough, within the abbey or (just possibly) somewhere in the town. There is simply too little illumination in Add. MS. 39758 to support the idea that it was sourced from far afield, while the fact that the first membrane of Add. MS. 47170 is a later replacement for a lost first effort, but by the same artist and scribe, indicates the local availability of these men.[30] Again, it is most unlikely that anyone sent to London, or even somewhere closer, for such a slight reason; and the same can be said of the minor but accomplished figure-work in other fourteenth-century books and documents from Peterborough, such as the pretty pen-drawn heads in the cartularies belonging to Brother John of Achurch, and the image of King Wulfhere of Mercia on the large (805×610 mm) display copy of a charter he reputedly granted to the abbey.[31] These are matters of economics as much as ideals. But, of course, local manufacture does not mean that monks carried out the work, and it would be quite useless to speculate on how likely monastic involvement is. Lay scribes and artists often worked for the religious orders, and not enough is known about the situation at Peterborough to decide either way.

Add. MS. 39758: Liber qui fuit fratris Walteri de Wytlese

All of this clears the way for a fresh examination of the manuscripts. As suggested at the outset, this will focus mainly on their design and its relation to purpose rather than the contents of their texts. Here I wish to come at Add. MS. 39758 first. While the standard catalogue entry

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[28] *Scotichronicon*, ed. and trans. D. E. R. Watt et al., 9 vols (Aberdeen, 1989-98), vol. vi, pp. 406-7 ('ego conscriptor huius libri, qui me prius scriptorem intitulavi ad differenciam scribe'). In general, see also M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 3rd edn (Chichester, 2013), pp. 127-8.

[29] In P. Binski and S. Panayotova (eds.), *The Cambridge Illuminations: Ten Centuries of Book Production in the Medieval West* (London, 2005), p. 109. Compare A. I. Doyle, 'Book Production by the Monastic Orders in England (c. 1375-1530): Assessing the Evidence', in L. L. Brownrigg (ed.), *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence* (Los Altos Hills, CA, 1990), pp. 1-19; L. Dennison, 'Monastic or Secular? The Artist of the Ramsey Psalter, now at Holkham Hall, Norfolk', in B. Thompson (ed.), *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 6 (Stamford, 1999), pp. 223-61.

[30] Or man, if artist and scribe were identical. A difference in the colour of the lines of descent between the first and second membranes shows that the replacement was not done to correct some botch during the manufacture of the rest of the roll. It is a closely contemporary addition.

[31] Peterborough Cathedral, MS. 6, f. 9 (head of King Wulfhere); London, Society of Antiquaries, MS. 38, ff. 159v-170 (forty-one heads of knights); BL, Cotton MS. Augustus II.5 (single-sheet charter with bust of Wulfhere and other motifs in black and gold), for which see also *Charters of Peterborough Abbey*, pp. 144, 151.

contains many of the volume's vital statistics, it does not make the original structure very clear, and this has occasionally misled scholars.[32] For present purposes, the most important task is to distinguish the manuscript's primary matter from the additions it has acquired. Currently, there are 300 leaves, but only 227 of these contain writing in the textura hand present on f. 20, while a further eight belong to original quires and are of the same fine grade of parchment. The other sixty-five leaves are later additions, as indicated by their heavier, coarser parchment.[33] These leaves, which include the whole first quire of seven (ff. 1-7), were put in early, perhaps in Walter of Whittlesey's lifetime. As things stand, f. 8, which contains the beginning of a hagiography framed by a chronicle written in the margins, is the first original leaf to survive (fig. 3). While the content of this leaf makes a logical beginning to the manuscript's sequence of texts, the original flyleaves must have been lost, probably taking with them further indications of Walter's patronage. (Alternatively, but less probably, the volume remained unbound until the current ff. 1-7, and the other additional leaves, were put into it.) It is vaguely possible that the 'Walterus de Wytillesey' on f. 1v is autograph, as Janet Martin has suggested, but it is anyway ambiguous and would make an unorthodox declaration of custody.[34] One would expect the use of a word like *constat*, *pertinet* or perhaps the bolder *attinet* in a personalized monastic ex libris. Here it is relevant to note that the f. 20 inscription indicates that Walter had the book made not as a personal possession but as a gift to his abbey.

As things stand, the added memoranda on ff. 2-4v are the first components of the text. They begin with a list of the foundation dates of fifty-six English monasteries (ff. 2-3), in which Peterborough comes third after Glastonbury and Abbotsbury: the date and order assigned to it – A.D. 555, before the Benedictine houses of Canterbury or any other monastery in eastern England – are noteworthy in light of the fact that foundational precedence was considered prestigious and sometimes practically useful in the later Middle Ages.[35] For this reason, such lists were common, and that in Walter's manuscript is related to others in circulation during the same period.[36] After this comes a list of English kings and their obit dates, from Alfred to Edward II, with Arthur (d. 546, it is said) by himself at the beginning, perhaps to give atmospheric context to the depth of Peterborough's roots (f. 3r-v). Such king-lists are another common feature of monastic manuscripts. The terminus of this list does not, however, help to date these additions closely, because the historical memoranda which follow (ff. 3v-4) are in the same hand and include the battle of Poitiers in 1356. There is then a list of sainted popes and prelates, and the obit dates of various other saints (f. 4r-v). All of this is by one scribe, and was introduced in the second half of the fourteenth century to provide the manuscript with a set of the historical statistics which monks liked to know. As usual in monastic manuscripts, these statistics were inserted in a place of ready reference so that the volume did not need to be searched to find them.

After three leaves which are blank apart from the 'commonachi' inscription on f. 7v, the primary material is reached, and it is immediately clear that the design of the pages from this point was calculated to impress the viewer by its ingenuity and attractiveness. The quality of the hand is superior, quite unlike that usually employed for historical writing and documents at the time, and the pages are made to incorporate two texts rather than one, with a marginal

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[32] For example, Don Skemer, in an otherwise meticulous article, states that the memoranda on ff. 2-4v are by Walter, which is highly unlikely: D. C. Skemer, '*Frater* Richard of Bury's Roll: Ownership and Use of an Early Genealogical Chronicle of the Kings of England', in A. S. G. Edwards and O. Da Rold (eds.), *English Manuscripts before 1400*, English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700, 17 (London, 2012), pp. 60-106 (p. 95 n. 74).

[33] That is (according to my collation), quires 1 (ff. 1-7: there is the stub of a cancelled leaf between ff. 1 and 2), 12-14 (ff. 129-160), 17 (ff. 185-192), 26, 27 (ff. 283-300).

[34] Martin, op. cit., p. 17.

[35] The date is earlier by a century than that given in the subsequent chronicles, but there is no indication that this troubled anyone.

[36] See J. M. Luxford, 'A Leiston Document from Glastonbury', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, xl (2003), pp. 278-88.
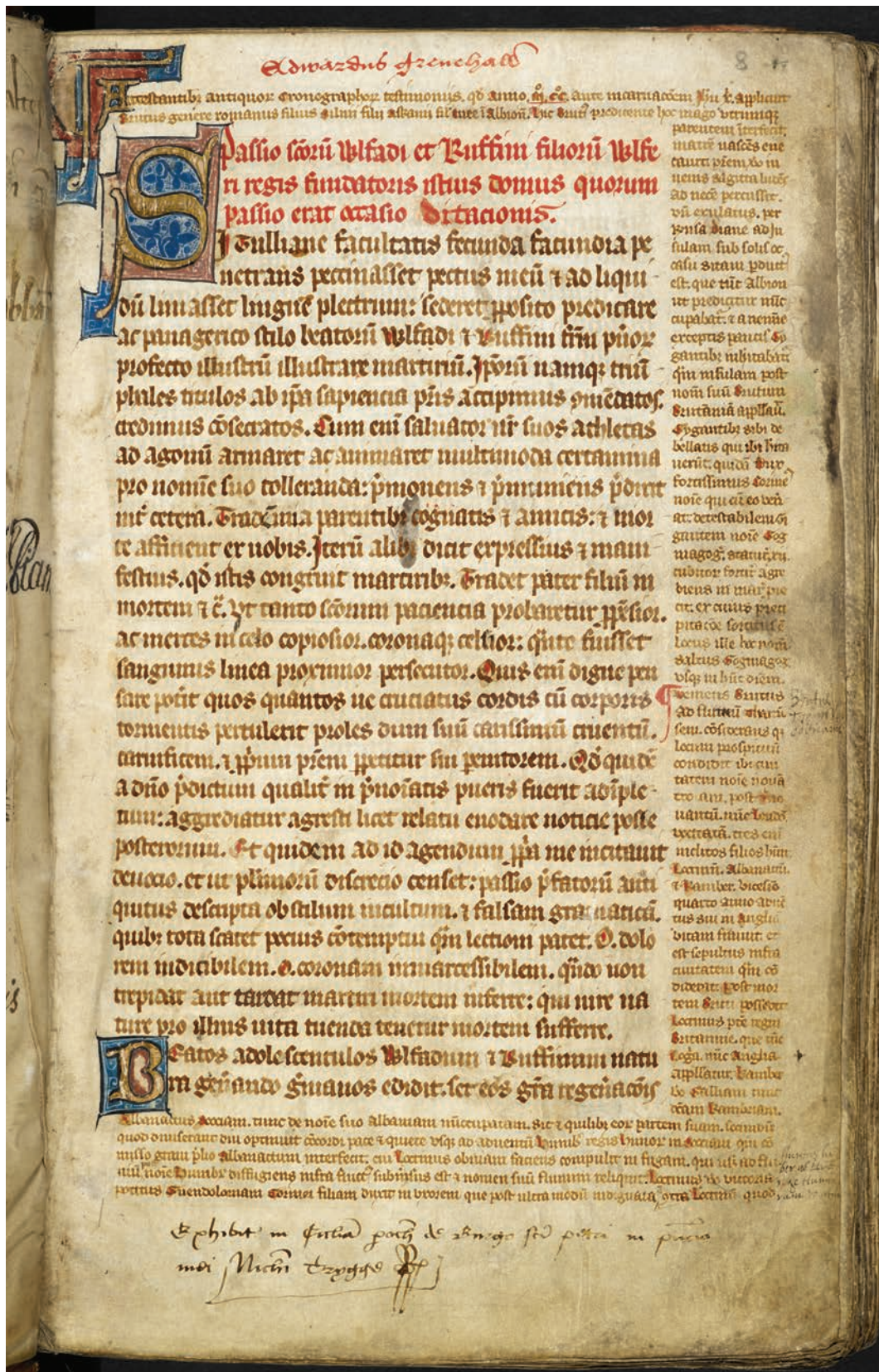
Fig. 3. BL, Add. MS. 39758, f. 8: the first surviving original text page.

chronicle minutely written around the main text block. This marginal chronicle begins on f. 8 with Brutus, and breaks off abruptly at the foot of f. 92v, shortly after Edward I's coronation (fig. 3).[37] Most of it is in the same hand as the main text, but on ff. 35v-36 and from f. 76 onwards, another scribe did the work, sometimes writing over erasures. The anglicana of this second scribe resembles that in which the original parts of Walter's roll are written, but, as Cecily Clark has noted, the two hands do not seem to be identical.[38] It looks as though this marginal chronicle was added after the execution of the central texts, though the parts of it written by the principal scribe presumably followed almost immediately. In places, it covers up erased rubrics relating to the main text (e.g. on ff. 48v, 49r-v, 50v, 51v, 53v, 54), and from f. 21 onwards, its chronology keeps pace fairly closely with the chronicle of the abbey it surrounds, something more easily achieved with the main text in situ. It also accommodates a series of heraldic shields in the margins of ff. 50-53, where a copy of the abbey's feodary is embedded in the main chronicle text (fig. 4).[39]

All in all, the arrangement must have reminded monastic readers of glossed theological and legal manuscripts they had seen. If so, then Walter was also conscious of the resemblance, and while it would be sophistry to say that the marginal chronicle glosses the local one, the arrangement undoubtedly suggests an intention to couch Peterborough's history in that of the nation at large. This is further suggested by interpolation of the abbey's foundation history, and other matters of institutional significance, into the marginal chronicle from ff. 21v to 27v. The *Brut* chronicle, smaller and peripheral, thus has the status of an ancillary paratext which provides a screen of momentous events on which the history of Peterborough plays out. This inversion is at once a nice evocation of the local patriotism that characterized much monastic thinking about history in the later Middle Ages and a symbolic affirmation of Peterborough's value which any contemporary reader could have grasped. In assessing the symbolic and aesthetic calculations behind this design, it must be stressed that arranging one text around another like this was neither easy nor practical from the point of view of conveying information.[40] The marginal chronicle is user-unfriendly, and would have been much more comprehensibly presented on its own.

As far as one can judge, the mise-en-page adopted here was a Peterborough speciality. There was, as it happens, a local precedent for it, in the form of an abbreviated *Brut* in Anglo-Norman French which was written into the margins of the abbey's copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the late thirteenth century.[41] Walter probably got the idea for the page design of Add. MS. 39758 from this. He was, however, much more ambitious for it, and had another marginal text inserted later in his book, a reckoning of the temporalities of the abbey taken by the king's escheators after the death of Godfrey of Crowland (ff. 116-128v). This, too, is married to the text it encloses, which is a valuation of Peterborough's manors based on the convent's own estimates. Walter may also have envisaged the marginal chronicle of the popes (ff. 161-184v) which surrounds copies of the abbey's papal privileges (ff. 161-185), and the extensive set of proceedings of county courts in the period 1329-33 (ff. 193-270), which borders texts of Peterborough's royal charters (ff. 193-280v). These two items are in anglicana hands, but the original scribe wrote out the main texts they enclose.

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[37] See Karn and King, op. cit., pp. 23-5, who print translated extracts from the marginal chronicle.

[38] *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. D. Whitelock, with an appendix by C. Clark (Copenhagen, 1954), p. 42 n. 21.

[39] Martin, op. cit., p. 18. There are twenty-six shields in total, of which ten were never filled in. The feodary's text is printed in *Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, pp. 162-70.

[40] The difficulties involved are indicated on ff. 46v-50v, where a long passage about William the Conqueror, omitted for some reason when the *Brut* was first written out, has been inserted out of sequence in the tail margins. An ingenious apparatus of red lines, manicules, minute, finely drawn heads and other *signa* is supplied to steer the reader around the compromised text (see fig. 4).

[41] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc. 636, ff. 86v-90v; reproduced and discussed in *The Peterborough Chronicle* (ed. Whitelock).
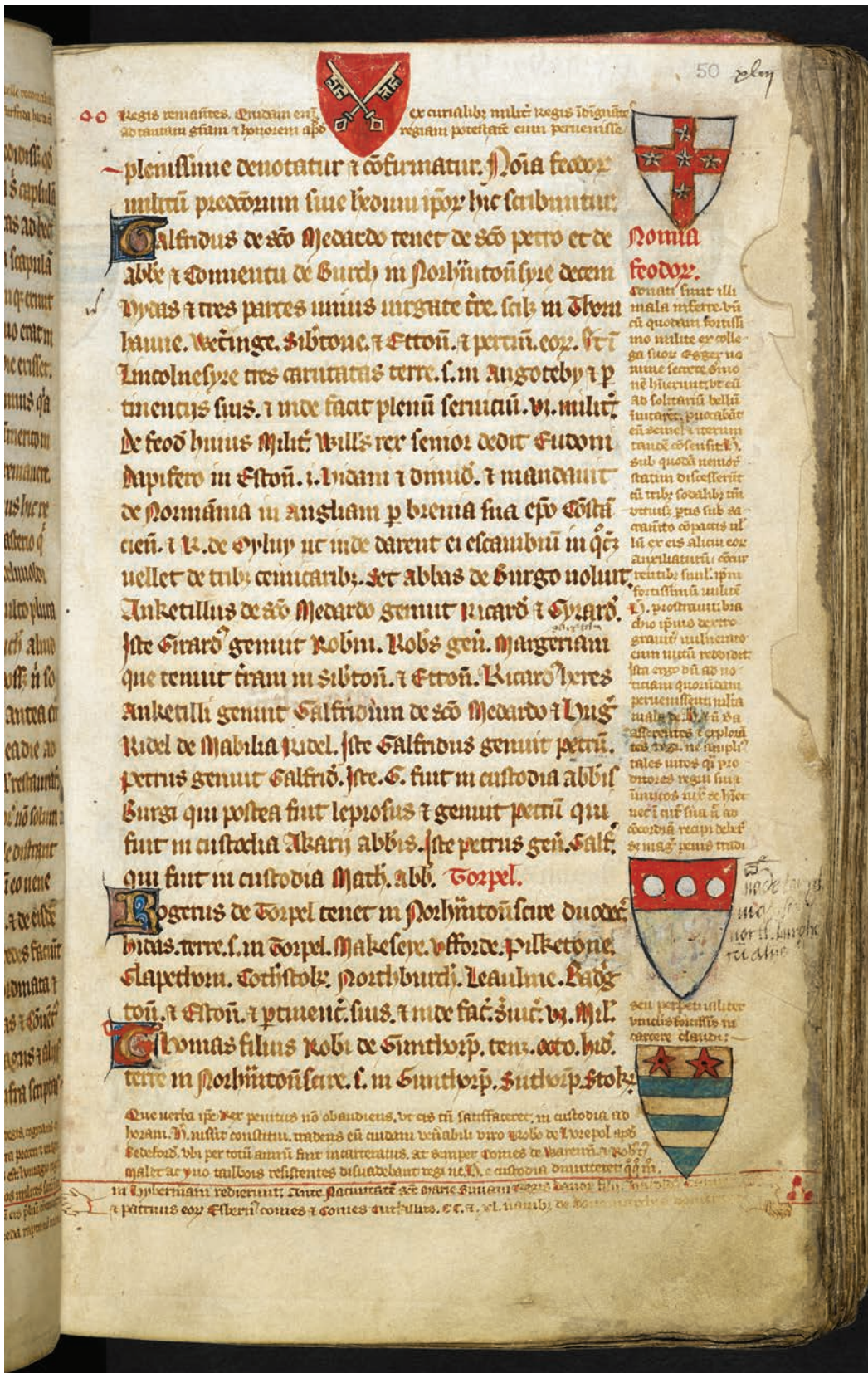
Fig. 4. BL, Add. MS. 39758, f. 50: opening page of the feodary, with marginal apparatus of text and shields.

The choice and ordering of the central texts is also strategic. There was a tradition at Peterborough of combining chronicles with charter material, but the composition of Add. MS. 39758 is distinctive, and adds up to an *omnium gatherum* of what it is reasonable to call vindicatory texts; that is, texts which justified for any foreseeable purpose the status and privileges of the abbey in spiritual, historical and forensic terms.[42] Here, in a book of manageable size (approximately 260×150 mm), are all the substantive proofs: the illuminated display charter of Wulfhere surviving from the period looks like a product of the same strategy, albeit differently expressed.[43] The selection of material also had a religious, particularly commemorative value. A sense of this arises from a textually similar compendium produced at Westminster in the mid-fifteenth century by a monk named John Flete. This contains, in order, an account of the abbey's foundation, selection of charters and bulls issued by kings, saints and popes, list of relics and indulgences (Add. MS. 39758 also incorporates a relic list, at ff. 38v-39v, in its copy of Candidus's chronicle), and a series of abbots' lives going back to the tenth century and involving more information about Westminster's origins. Flete introduced his work with the statement that 'it is useful and decent and also stands to reason' that churchmen and above all monks should know of the rights and gifts given to their institutions, as such knowledge would enable them to serve both Christ and their founders (who included their abbots) appropriately, the latter through pious intercession.[44]

Regarded from either angle, Walter's book amounts to a semiotic and aesthetic whole arising from textual convergence of a kind that overrode typological differences in the service of higher ends. The way in which the opening text segues into the domestic chronicle following it is one indication of this. Folios 8-19v are occupied by an account of the martyrdom of saints Wulfhad and Ruffin, supposed sons, and victims, of King Wulfhere (d. 675).[45] These saints were not buried at Peterborough, but they were nephews of Peada, whom the convent recognized as its principal founder, and the earliest charter the monks could produce was one they thought had been issued by Wulfhere, who was also considered a first founder. The relationships – schematically set out on the dorse of Walter's roll for anyone motivated to look – allowed the origin and enrichment of Peterborough to be woven into this first text as an act of penance by Wulfhere (f. 18v), so that the whole challenges that distinction between hagiography and historiography which so often seems to need questioning.[46] The martyrdom account effectively functions as a prologue designed to locate the abbey's origins in saintly blood, miracles and the Christian conversion of a lapsed king (Wulfhere). After it comes the chronicle of the abbey, occupying ff. 20-115v. As commonly acknowledged, this developed in three main stages, the first, covering the period 656-1177, written by Candidus in the later twelfth century, the second, usually attributed to Brother Robert of Swaffham, updating Candidus with accounts of the abbots down to 1245, and the third, unique to Add. MS. 39758, doing likewise down to 1321. Naturally, it is presented as a continuous narrative, with only the introduction of the feodary from f. 50 checking the flow (fig. 4). The jump from hagiography to domestic chronicle is expressed by the special embellishment of f. 20, and also the change of narrative gear. For example, Wulfhere's munificence is explained in the chronicle (f. 22r-v) without reference to Wulfhad, Ruffin or any of the other romantic details found in the first text.

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[42] Earlier Peterborough manuscripts coupling extensive chronicle and charter material are BL, Cotton MS. Otho A. XVII (destroyed in 1731), London, Society of Antiquaries, MS. 60, and Peterborough Cathedral, MS 1: see Martin, op. cit., pp. 1-12, 34-5 (nos 1, 2, 13); G. R. C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain*, rev. edn (London, 2010), pp. 152, 153, 155 (nos 754, 757, 772).

[43] That is, in terms of size and the formal attributes which gave large single-sheet documents their symbolic power. For the charter see n. 31 above.

[44] *The History of Westminster Abbey, by John Flete*, ed. J. A. Robinson (Cambridge, 1909), p. 33 and passim.

[45] Printed in *Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, pp. 140-59.

[46] See for example S. Gayk, *Image, Text and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 123-54. In the fifteenth century, the story of this penance was represented in the cloister windows: S. Gunton, *The History of the Church of Peterburgh*, reprint edn (Stamford, 1990), pp. 106-10.

The extent of the abbey's manors which begins on f. 116 has its own rubric heading, but flows directly from the chronicle as an evocation of the prosperity secured by the good governance of Abbot Godfrey. It is followed by a continuation of the chronicle to 1339 (ff. 129-147v: in a different hand, on an added quire), and the papal privileges and royal charters mentioned above, together with their marginal texts.[47] Among the royal charters is a reconfirmation of the abbey's properties, possessions and freedoms by Edward III. This is written in the expert hand of the main scribe and provides a *terminus post quem* of 1329 for the original campaign of work and Walter's gifting of the book. At the end of the volume, on added leaves and in later hands, is a non-local account of the Black Death and a *curiosum* about the radius of the earth (ff. 283-289v). Then, after nineteen blank pages, a note crops up on the verso of f. 299, stating that the manuscript was given ('ex dono') to Brother Robert Bird by Abbot Robert Kirkton in 1520. Bird was Kirkton's chaplain, and his interest in this sort of compilation is indicated by the presence of his name in other Peterborough registers.[48] The inscription is interesting for including, in red ink, the information that two other monks had witnessed the gift, evidently designed to forestall any claim of theft. More important here, however, is what the inscription suggests about Kirkton's ability to give Add. MS. 39758 away. It seems that Walter's manuscript was not kept with the conventual books, but rather in the abbot's household, and was considered a *secretum abbatis* or private possession of the abbot. There was a trend in the direction of discrete book collections in Benedictine houses towards the end of the Middle Ages and Walter's manuscript is not, in fact, represented in any book list from the abbey.[49] At St Albans, the abbot's study contained the largest of these satellite collections.[50] If Walter's book belonged to such a collection in the early sixteenth century, then this is circumstantial evidence that it was always intended as an abbatial perquisite. As the abbot was such a remarkable person in the eyes of his monks this hypothesis would help to account for the manuscript's attractiveness and striking design. The general cartulary of Glastonbury Abbey entitled *Secretum abbatis*, made c. 1340, is also handsomely designed, incorporating display scripts, marginal embellishments and illuminated initials.[51]

Without doubt, the most conspicuous aspect of this design is f. 20 (fig. 5).[52] Here, the marginal *Brut* was suspended in favour of a layout keyed to broader monastic experience. The opening of Candidus's chronicle is set in a three-quarter border of normal design for the period, with maroon and blue bars, gold banding and thorns, a modicum of interlace and elements of conventional foliage: daisy buds, vine leaves and what historians of illumination call, *faute de mieux*, 'serrated cabbage leaf'.[53] At the foot of the page are three quatrefoils impaled by squares, a common enough motif in thirteenth and fourteenth-century art (it is found e.g. in the Brussels Peterborough Psalter), but unusual for having lobes of ogee form rather than rounded ones

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[47] The whole chronicle, including the continuation and extent of the manors, is printed in *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores varii*, vol. ii, pp. 1-237. A modern edition is currently being prepared by Professor Edmund King.

[48] See *Peterborough Abbey*, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv, for citations.

[49] Compare *Peterborough Abbey*, pp. xxxi-xxxii, xxxvi n. 49.

[50] Clark, op. cit., pp. 84-9.

[51] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Wood empt.1: Davis, op. cit., p. 88 (no. 435).

[52] This page has the added distinction of being perhaps the earliest example of post-Conquest English illumination to have been engraved for publication (in 1723: *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores varii*, vol. ii, p. 1). It is not noticed in M. Braesel, *Buchmalerei in der Kunstgeschichte: Zur Rezeption in England, Frankreich und Italien* (Cologne, 2009), which should, however, be consulted on the phenomenon generally (particularly, pp. 197-271, 284-319, 393-454). The 1723 printing of f. 20 is also remarkable in that the text of the facsimile does duty for the first page of the edition, meaning that the reader reads from the manuscript, as it were: an extraordinary conceit in any period. The subject deserves more attention than it can receive here.

[53] For example, Lasko and Morgan (eds.), op. cit., p. 15 (no. 14).

Fig. 5. BL, Add. MS. 39758, f. 20: opening page of Hugh Candidus's chronicle of Peterborough, as written out for Walter of Whittlesey.

(fig. 6).[54] These quatrefoils contain images of people associated with the abbey's foundation set against gold backgrounds. On the left are two seated, cowled figures wearing dark blue and black habits, one of them crowned and holding a pastoral staff, the other a book. In the middle, there is a seated ruler with crossed legs, holding a sceptre and pointing to a church, while on the right there are two other crowned men, also seated and sceptred, gesticulating towards the central figure and church. The male rulers are clad in red tunics under blue mantles, and wear gloves. There is a clear presentational hierarchy with the single ruler and church exalted not only by centrality but also by the fact that his quatrefoil is more elaborately cusped on the inside. These points of detail indicate the designer's ambition to emphasize the status of one individual in the context of an abridged narrative whose actors were all highly important.

Fig. 6. BL, Add. MS. 39758, f. 20: figured quatrefoils in the tail margin.

The iconography can be recognized by reading the opening section of the chronicle. Following the prologue, and an explanation of the topography and etymology of the abbey, Candidus introduces its first founders: 'There were three brothers, Peada, Wulfhere and Æthelred, each a most Christian prince […] these men, with their holy sisters Kyneburga and Kyneswitha […] built this monastery from its foundations, and enriched it beyond all others and amply with privileges and lands, with gold and silver, and with divers ornaments'.[55] It is then pointed out that Peada began the labour of building, and that a priest named Saxulf, who Christianized the local people, became the first abbot. Peada, then, is the figure in the middle quatrefoil, with Wulfhere and Æthelred on the right. In the left-hand quatrefoil, the crowned figure is Kyneburga, first abbess of Castor, while the other figure must be intended for Kyneswitha, the second abbess. The two sisters share the insignia of religious leadership – staff and book – between them. A merely plausible identification for the figure on the far left with Saxulf is undermined by the presence of a halo, where Saxulf was not considered a saint. Presumably, Kyneswitha lacks a crown because, although a princess, she was never married to a ruler, as Kyneburga was.[56] Taken together, the three quatrefoils sum up the convent's unique identification with a family group of royal founders rather than a single figure, and also constitute a development of the model found in illustrated genealogies like Add. MS. 47170.

Although the figures were meant to be distinguishable, there is also a diffuser sense – grasped at a glance, without reading the following pages – in which they signify the basic facts that rulers and holy people founded Peterborough, and that the highest levels of support underpin the abbey's entitlements. As such, it is a well-structured complement to the edifice of vindicatory texts. A sense of egregious privilege buttressed by antiquity is also found in other examples of foundational imagery. This survives most familiarly in the designs of ecclesiastical common seals, but was once widespread in monumental art: at Peterborough, for example, enthroned figures of Peada, Wulfhere and Æthelred were mounted on the wall above the dias in the abbot's hall, while the cloister was

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[55] Add. MS. 39758, f. 21v. I have used Charles Mellows's translation: *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, ed. W. T. Mellows, trans. C. and W. T. Mellows (Peterborough, 1941), p. 3.

[56] Alternatively, and given the difficulty of legibly combining a crown with a halo in work on this scale, it could be that the sisters share attributes appropriate to both, as they share the staff and book.

glazed in the fifteenth century with a narrative cycle representing the abbey's foundation and restoration after its sack by the Danes.[57] Foundational imagery also existed in various classes of manuscript. There are narrative examples in the Ramsey Psalter (c. 1300-10) to put beside those discussed here, as well as the final roundel of the Guthlac Roll (c. 1210) from Crowland Abbey, where donors surge forward to offer their charters, the tinted drawings of King Offa overseeing the construction of St Albans Abbey in the so-called 'Book of St Albans' (1240s), and, from further afield but also Benedictine, a series of images in the Sherborne Missal (c. 1400) of kings and prelates holding up sealed documents for the viewer to notice.[58]

At the top left of f. 20 is a large letter 'S', nine lines deep, with an ornamental text-panel containing the first words of the chronicle's rhetorical incipit: 'Scripturus de loco' ('Now I will write of the place') (figs 2, 5). This accommodates the imagery and personalized inscription mentioned above. In the upper compartment is the half-length figure of God or Christ dressed in blue with a red mantle, blessing with one hand and holding a three-part orb in the other with water in the lower cell (a motif common in devotional books).[59] Below is a seated Virgin and Child, the Virgin in a red-lined, blue mantle over a green tunic, the Child in a red smock. The Virgin has the splayed lower legs common in contemporary manuscript painting, and her feet and the hem of her mantle challenge the frame of the initial in a lively, similarly conventional way. Instead of a sceptre, she holds a branch with three roses on it, identical to the attribute given her in other East Anglian illumination of the period.[60] The Christ Child, holding an orb of his own, turns towards a monk in a black habit, who arises from some lower position on the right, where he presumably kneels. Above the monk's hands is a scroll, inscribed in gold 'miserere mei', and he duly receives the Child's encouragement. Following the duct of the 'S', and occupying all of it from the point at which the monk appears, is the commemorative inscription beginning 'Wittilsey natus'. These first two words bracket the monk, suggesting personal identification rather than the idea, common and appropriate enough in monastic illumination, of an anonymous individual serving as a *pars pro toto* figure for his convent.

Here, then, is the main evidence for Walter's hand in the design of the manuscript. As patron, he must have ordained this imagery, and if this does not altogether prove him the designer of the page as a whole, or indeed the rest of the manuscript, it at least demonstrates his taste for balanced, beautiful and meaningful combinations of text and imagery. It also highlights a resourcefulness which looks, at least from the modern point of view, intelligent. This marriage of personal commemoration and institutional history to aesthetics was apparently innovative. There is nothing of the sort in the Book of Robert of Swaffham, from which the text of Candidus's chronicle was apparently copied: there, the corresponding page, although dignified enough, has only red and blue initials with pen flourishing to mark it out.[61] Walter seems to have realized not just that embellishment leads attention where the patron wishes – in this case, towards an embodied request for individual commemoration – but also that conflating personal and institutional identity had a special potential to galvanize the viewer. That the kneeling figure is an institutional patriot as well as a devotee of Christ and the Virgin makes a particular claim on the viewer's sympathy: awareness of this may have been what caused someone to rewrite the golden inscription, with its loyal acknowledgement of St Peter, at the bottom

[57] Gunton, op. cit., pp. 4-5, 103-12; BL, Add. MS. 71474, f. 118; R. Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1993), p. 88.

[58] L. F. Sandler, 'The Historical Miniatures of the Fourteenth-Century Ramsey Psalter', *Burlington Magazine*, cxi (1969), pp. 605-11; J. J. G. Alexander and P. Binski (eds.), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (London, 1987), pp. 215-16 (no. 37); W. R. L. Lowe, E. F. Jacob and M. R. James, *Illustrations to the Life of St Alban in Trin. Coll. Dublin MS. E. i. 40* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 33-4 and pls 47, 48; J. Berenbeim, *Art of Documentation: Documents and Visual Culture in Medieval England* (Toronto, 2014), pp. 73-101.

[59] The waters in the orb relate to Psalm 68 (discussed presently) and ultimately to the Creation.

[60] Compare Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS. 105, f. 17; Dublin, Trinity College, MS. 94, f. 8: see L. Dennison, 'The Fitzwarrin Psalter and Its Allies: A Reappraisal', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 42-66 (figs 16, 31). In the Dublin manuscript, the same attribute is also given to the zodiac figure of Virgo in the calendar (f. 4v).

[61] Peterborough Cathedral, MS. 1, f. 17.

of f. 19v.[62] This addition is undoubtedly a help to the reader, for the gold words are of themselves difficult to make out.

There is more to the design of the page than this. In spirit as well as appearance, f. 20 is programmed to appeal to monks by its imitation of a Psalm 68 page – *Salvum me fac* – from an illuminated psalter. The example in the Brussels Peterborough Psalter (f. 48v), with its gold writing, three-sided bar-frame border, similar leaf-forms and ornamental text-panel beside the dominant letter 'S' makes as good a comparison for it as any, although the fact that this manuscript left the abbey about ten years before Walter's book was made complicates the idea that it served as a direct model (figs 5, 7).[63] This layout was anyway found in other local psalters, with the Ramsey Psalter – a product of the same workshop as the Peterborough Psalter – providing another excellent comparison.[64] In these cases, the figure of the deity is formally very similar to the example in Walter's book, while the monk arising to cry mercy from some depression is a sensible and surely conscious parallel for Jonah beseeching God from the depths, the vignette of choice for the lower compartment of the 'S' in contemporary psalter illumination (fig. 8).

This manifest relationship to illuminated psalters brings to mind a recent observation by Felix Heinzer. With reference to medieval theological writings, Heinzer observed a 'natural and spontaneous, almost unconscious intertextual dialogue with the Psalter as the reference text par excellence, which seems to "flow in" spontaneously'.[65] In other words, the psalms got into theology in the way that Latin or French got into English. Something similar is present in the design of f. 20 in Walter's book, except that for 'intertextuality' we may substitute 'intervisuality'. I am not suggesting that the page was unconsciously produced to look like one from an illuminated psalter: this is not some example of artistic parapraxis. Rather, the suggestion is that the psalter was such a familiar and necessary object that monks thought of it reflexively with reference to a range of books, and that this was probably a catalyst for the design. Although Add. MS. 39758 is not as big as a lectern psalter like the manuscript now in Brussels, it is of similar size to various earlier and contemporary illuminated psalters from eastern England, including the (unglossed) one produced around 1220 for Robert of Lindsey, abbot of Peterborough, which was being updated with prayers and obits around the time that Walter's book was made.[66] At any rate, there is written evidence that the concept of the psalter was sufficiently internalized for it to represent for monks a general bibliometric unit. A contemporary chronicler, also Benedictine, also from the east of England, reports a book about the Tartars 'containing, it is thought, as many words as a psalter' (i.e. of the size and/or weight of a psalter).[67] He assumed his readers would understand what he meant by this, and the assumption was reasonable enough, because the physical psalter was naturally a familiar thing to monks. Very many copies circulated in large monasteries, despite the requirement of monks to know the psalms by heart. There were, for example, about 100 of them at Ramsey Abbey in the mid-fourteenth century, a number which suggests that each monk had the use of one and implies that what distinguished the psalters of abbots and executive obedientiaries was that they were more grandly produced and contained more texts.[68]

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[62] This is neither a guide inscription for the illuminator (it is on a separate gathering) nor, quite obviously, a catchword.

[63] On models and the role of visual memory in the illumination of Fenland manuscripts see L. F. Sandler, *Der Ramsey-Psalter: Kommentar* (Graz, 1999), pp. 132-3.

[64] Sandler, *Peterborough Psalter*, pp. 28, 34, 35, 95, 96 (Brussels, Bib. Royale MS. 9961-2, f. 48v); Sandler, *Der Ramsey-Psalter*, pp. 25, 70-1 (St Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. XXV/2.19, f. 76).

[65] F. Heinzer, 'Holy Text or Object of Display? Functions and Guises of the Psalter in the Middle Ages', *The Bodleian Library Record*, xxi (2008), pp. 37-47 (p. 45).

[66] See for example Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts*, nos 1, 10, 11a, 12, 42. For Robert of Lindsey's manuscript and its additions, now London, Society of Antiquaries, MS. 59, see N. J. Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts [I], 1190-1250*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 4 (London, 1982), no. 47; Sandler, *Peterborough Psalter*, p. 154. Lindsey also had a glossed psalter (Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts [I]*, no. 36): hence the distinction made here.

[67] *Chronica Johannes de Oxenedes* (see n. 20 above), pp. x, 217 ('continet litterae quantum continere creditur unum psalterium').

[68] Sandler, *Der Ramsey-Psalter*, p. 120 (psalters at Ramsey).

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Fig. 7. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS. 9961-2, f. 48v: Psalm 68 page.

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Fig. 8. Comparison of initials, BL, Add. MS. 39758, f. 20 and Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, MS. 9961-2, f. 48v.

Add. MS. 47170: Cronica rotulata fratris Walteri de Witteliseye

By contrast with his book, Walter's roll is a typologically familiar object, but one which nevertheless reinforces the idea of a patron ambitious for the design of his manuscripts. It contains two genealogical chronicles, one of the kings of England on the front, which is in French, and another of the rulers of Mercia on the dorse, which trails off into general annals in the course of the twelfth century. This second chronicle is in Latin, and included Peterborough's founders and foundation: that was a large part of its point. As a copiously illustrated treatment of its subject it is exceptional, and probably unique. The roll is unusual in more ways than this. In general, the presence of separate Latin and French texts is a peculiar feature: of the twenty-seven manuscripts analysed by Diana Tyson, only four have this combination.[69] The same is true of the evidence of monastic possession. Rolls of kings rarely have inscriptions which determine their provenance, but ownership by monks is usually not considered in discussions of their purpose, apparently on the basis that their texts are too simplistic (as if monks did not want simple, easily digested sources of information). A few other rolls are known to have belonged to monasteries, but the standard of execution and copious illustration of Walter's roll is rare evidence of positive enthusiasm on the part of regular clerics for this popular literary genre.[70]

The manuscript now has twelve membranes, but as already indicated, the first of these is a contemporary replacement and the beginning of the text on the front is defective.[71] Currently, the English chronicle commences with Ethelwulf, a king of the West Saxons (d. 858), but this is unique to this roll and looks incongruous in light of the fact that at least nineteen other surviving rolls begin with Ethelwulf's father, Egbert (fig. 9).[72] Moreover, it was normal for English royal genealogies, whether in roll or codex, to include one or more prefatory diagrams (of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy, Britain's Roman roads, the wheel of fortune), and it is hard to think that at least one such drawing was not also envisaged here given the copiousness of the remaining imagery. Probably, one or two membranes are missing, although the need to replace the first skin at an early date and the fact that the chronicle on the dorse is complete discourage speculation about the original state of Walter's roll. As things stand, the two sides have a total of 219 images, all connected by a customary apparatus of circles and lines. Fifty-five of the drawings have full-length figures, standing or seated, while the rest show heads or busts of various sizes. A single artist was responsible for the 187 drawings that belong to the primary campaign, although he took varying degrees of care over them. His best work, which combines iconographic variety with linear clarity and sensitivity to the expressive potential of faces, hair and clothing, is represented by the row of four large busts at the bottom of the first membrane on the front. The remaining thirty-two drawings were added in the later fourteenth century. The total number is swelled because rulers are shown twice, once as princes *en buste* and again as full-length figures. There is also a series of the dukes of Normandy from Rollo to William the Conqueror (m. 7, front). One scribe wrote most of the original text on both sides, receiving only occasional assistance.

In general, the genealogical chronicles of English kings are well served by existing literature, and there is neither requirement nor room in this context to discuss the texts of Add. MS. 47170 in any detail.[73] Priority belongs here to evidence for institutional customization and the nature of the design. On the front, the chronicle from Ethelwulf to Edward I was continued in the later fourteenth century on blank membranes provided for the purpose when the manuscript was first

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[69] Tyson, op. cit., p. 115.

[70] For other monastic examples, see St Andrews University Library, MS. 38660 (from Gilbertine Watton); Skemer, op. cit., passim (discussing a roll now in Princeton, probably from Augustinian Colchester); L. Cleaver, 'Past, Present and Future for Thirteenth-Century Wales: Two Diagrams in British Library, Cotton Roll XIV.12', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2013), art. 13 (www.bl.uk/eblj/2013articles/pdf/ebljarticle132013.pdf: discussing a roll probably from Benedictine Brecon).

[71] The roll measures approximately 236 × 9 in.

[72] Monroe, op. cit., pp. 270-5; Bovey, op. cit., pp. 6, 22; Laborderie, op. cit., p. 170.

[73] See particularly the studies by Laborderie and Monroe cited above.

Fig. 9. BL, Add. MS 47170, m. 1, front: opening of the English genealogical chronicle.

made. These additions, which are pictorial and do not include any text other than identifying labels, take things down to Edward III and the Black Prince (mm. 10-11, front).[74] A large roundel for Richard II was drawn but not filled in or labelled; after this there is more blank parchment until the colophon and an incomplete set of verses on the abbey's foundation are reached (fig. 1). The verses, in the same hand as the colophon, are interesting for also occurring in the marginal *Brut* chronicle in Add. MS. 39758 (f. 21v), where they are given in full and name, following Candidus's account, Peada, Oswiu, Wulfhere, Æthelred, Kyneburga, Kyneswitha and Saxulf.[75] Apart from the colophon, they contain the only reference to Peterborough on the front of the roll.

It is quite otherwise on the dorse, where the abbey is directly involved in the narrative. Here the text begins with the formula 'Attestantibus antiquorum chronographorum testimoniis', which is also the incipit of the marginal *Brut* chronicle in Add. MS. 39758 (f. 8); but because this formula was used in royal genealogies compiled elsewhere (e.g. Norwich), and other manuscripts which possibly contained it existed at Peterborough, it is a weaker hint of a direct link between roll and book than the incomplete verses below the colophon.[76] The text goes on to describe the extraction of the kings of Mercia from Scheaf, a direct descendant of Noah. The mythical elements included here were popularized by William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, where they occur as part of a genealogy of the kings of England via those of the West Saxons (rather than the Mercians).[77] Pybba and Penda are the first Mercian rulers named, followed by Peada and his siblings, who with Oswiu founded Peterborough: this munificence is presented *in nuce*, and the abbey's original entitlements referred to 'just as they appear in [Wulfhere's] charters and privileges, and the charters of his brother Æthelred' (m. 1, dorse).[78] This local material is clearly meant for a Peterborough audience, and the reference to documents represents an encouragement to consult other sources available there, such as Add. MS. 39758 and the illuminated charter now Cotton MS. Augustus II.5. It continues through the second and third membranes, with illustrations of the principal founders and occasional references to indigenous affairs. After this, the local material ceases, and the Mercian line is spliced with that of England through King Alfred (m. 6, dorse). Subsequently, on membrane 7, the text devolves from narrative into short annals, a form it maintains until it ends with the notice about William Whittlesey and his successor on membrane 11.

The layout of the roll is not as inventive as that of the book, something hardly to be expected given the format and nature of the text, and the possibility that it is based entire on a lost exemplar must be acknowledged. However, by comparison with other surviving examples, it is remarkable in its rejection of straight lines of descent in favour of curved ones for the design of both sides. In almost all manuscripts of this type, straight lines are used exclusively or almost exclusively to connect the larger and smaller genealogical nodes. This was evidently a matter of taste or convention rather than a concession to a technical challenge, and it had the practical advantage of framing text-fields without checking or cutting through them, something there is a lot of in Add. MS. 47170. But the fact that the text of Walter's roll is regularly curbed or sundered by swooping red and yellow arcs gives any one membrane of it, and the composition as a whole, a mobility that is both attractive and – appropriately for a pedigree – compelling. The nature of the lines allows expressive groupings of figured roundels which branch and contract evocatively, here like a rainbow or the arms of a menorah (e.g. mm. 1, 7, front), there like a scientific diagram or pair of the eye glasses that were coming into use for reading and manuscript production at the time (e.g. m. 5, front) (figs 9, 10, 11).[79]

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[74] Barron, op. cit.

[75] Oswiu ('Oswy'), king of Bernicia and ruler of Mercia from 654-7: Peada married his daughter Alchfled.

[76] Bartholomew of Cotton, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series, 16 (London, 1859), p. 1; compare *Peterborough Abbey*, p. 173 (no. BP21.337e): 'De inchoacione Bruti et de aliis Regibus'.

[77] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 1998-9), vol. i, pp. 174-7; Monroe, op. cit., pp. 252-8, 271.

[78] 'Sicut patet in cartis eius et priuilegiis et cartis Ethelredo fratris sui'. For copies of these documents in Peterborough manuscripts see *Charters of Peterborough Abbey*, pp. 131-60, 175-85 (nos 1, 3, 4).

[79] For eyeglasses see P. Charron, 'Color, Grisaille and Pictorial Techniques in Works by Jean Pucelle', in K. Pyun and A. D. Russakoff (eds.), *Jean Pucelle: Innovation and Collaboration in Manuscript Painting* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 91-107, at 102.
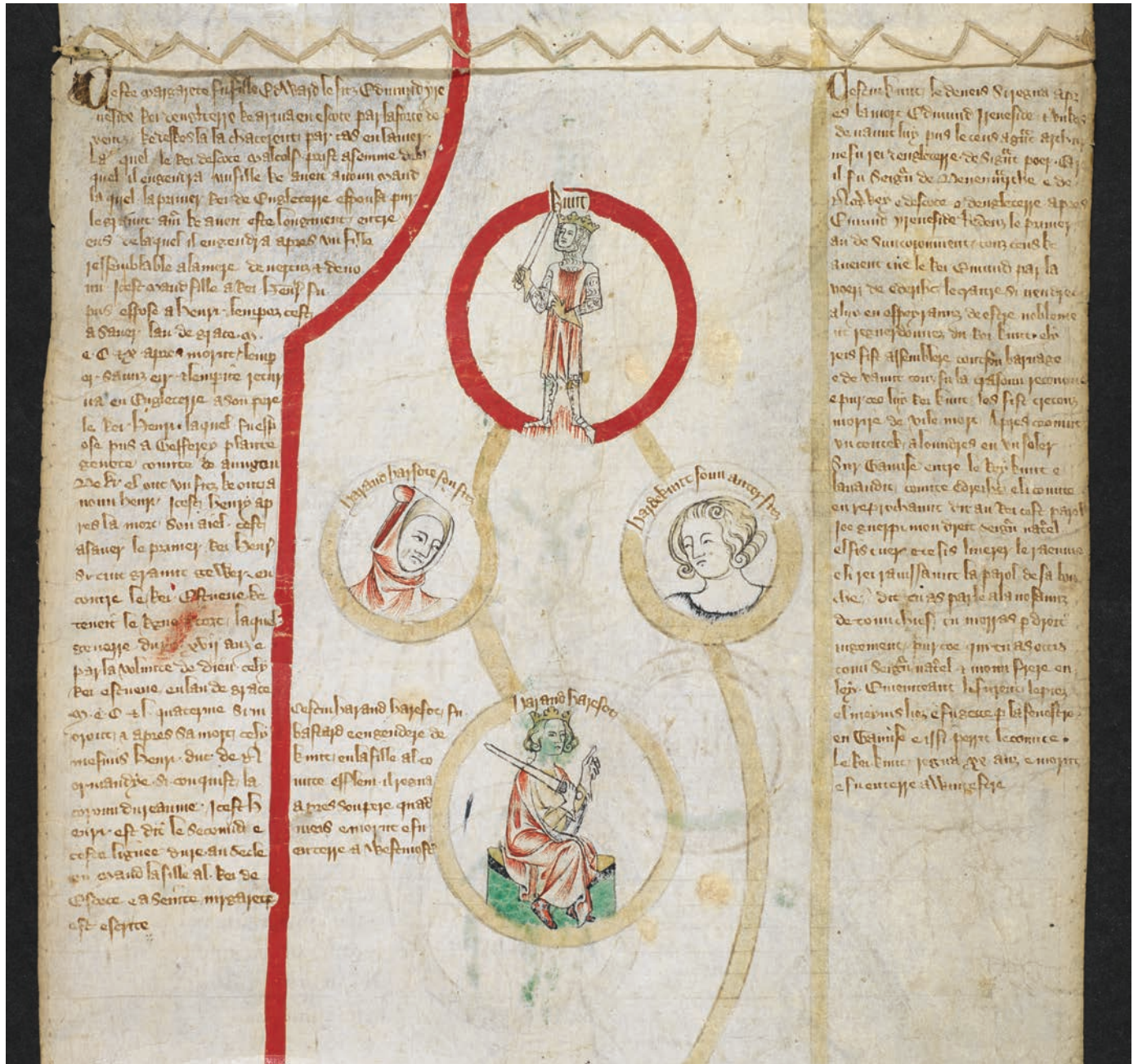
Fig. 10. BL, Add. MS 47170, m. 7, front: English genealogical chronicle (Richard I, John), showing treatment of lines of descent.

Fig. 11. BL, Add. MS 47170, m. 5, front: English genealogical chronicle (kings Cnut and Harold I), showing treatment of lines of descent.

Linear asymmetry and historical arrhythmias are exploited for aesthetic effect in an unusual way, particularly on the dorse, where the text quickly thins out and most of the space was available to the draughtsman. Here, the various breaks in lineage and relationships of blood and marriage between figures of differing historical importance were used to produce some striking combinations (e.g. mm. 4, 5, dorse) (fig. 12). None of this seems either conspicuously symbolic or naïve. The design is absorbed and enjoyed largely on its own terms, and the artist was manifestly in control of his project. The occasional unevenness to the duct of the lines, particularly on the dorse, would have been easy to avoid and thus looks conscious.

This artistic control is also present in the figure drawing. As mentioned, the quality of draughtsmanship is variable, and the minor busts with their identities inscribed around them can look like so many pennies lined up in a row (e.g. m. 7, front). But the larger ones devoted to rulers and their consorts, and also many of the intermediate and smaller faces (four basic sizes of roundel are used), are carefully and skilfully done. The drawing is confident and economical; the pen was lifted only for effect, never to regain control of a wayward line. The artist understood that the best way to engage viewers and bring cohesion to his work was to draw his figures well, vary their orientation, expressions, hairstyles and headdresses, and suggest a gestural and psychological interaction between them that would permeate the hermetic enclosures of the circles. Thus, the assorted figures and faces look down, up, across and obliquely at each other, leading the eye around the design in a historically sensible way. Princes stare down on themselves as kings, and kings up at themselves as princes, and siblings bound together by events as well as blood – for example, the saintly princes Wulfhad and Ruffin (m. 3, dorse) – exchange what seem to the informed reader prescient looks (figs 11, 13). While Walter's is not the only roll to steer attention around in this way, it sustains the approach with rare consistency, and the animation of the lines of descent contributes much to the effect.[80] The artist naturally worked with stock figure types whose mannerisms are those of their period, and there is much duplication and close similarity. But many of the busts are individually appealing, and the sober expressions on the faces give a proper sense of both the seriousness of history and the status of those represented as subjects of monastic intercession.

As suggested, Walter's roll contains a point of outstanding iconographic interest in its collective representation of the Mercian dynasty. In all, twenty-one kings and princes and one queen are shown full-length, and there are forty-one busts in roundels.[81] By contrast, Matthew Paris, whose own abbey of St Albans traced its foundation to another king of Mercia (Offa), does not appear to have considered Mercian genealogy a useful context for the presentation of that institution's origins. Taken individually, however, the iconography of the drawings contains few unusual features. The main exception to this, long since recognized for its peculiarity, is a pen and wash drawing by the later fourteenth-century continuator of the Black Prince holding Joan of Kent's hand and putting a protective, possessive arm around her shoulders (m. 11, front).[82] Otherwise, the motifs, poses and gestures, sometimes tailored to historical reputations, are conventional. Almost all of the rulers hold swords or sceptres, although King Ceolred of Mercia has a flower, and Edward the Martyr a palm. The invader-kings Cnut and William I are clad in armour, while Alfred and Henry I are presented as teachers; William II has a red face, Richard I a lion and a couple of the Mercian kings (Æthelred, Ludeca) hawks (figs 10, 11, 13). All of this comes from a repertoire already in use by the artists of rolls of kings before Add. MS. 47170 was made.[83]

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[80] For other examples see Bovey, op. cit.; O. de Laborderie, 'The First Manuals of English History: Two Late Thirteenth-Century Genealogical Rolls of the Kings of England in the Royal Collection', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2014), art. 4 <www.bl.uk/eblj/2014articles/pdf/ebljarticle42014.pdf>.

[81] The full-length figures are Pybba, Penda, Peada, Wulfhere, Æthelred (I), Cœnred, Ceolred, Æthelbald, Offa, Ecgfrith, Cœnwulf, Cynehelm, Ceolwulf (I), Beornwulf, Ludeca, Wiglaf, Beorhtwulf, Burgred, Ceolwulf (II), Alfred and Edward the Elder; the queen is Cynethryth, consort of King Wiglaf, who holds a crown as well as wearing one, and has a pet squirrel (m. 5, dorse).

[82] Barron, op. cit.

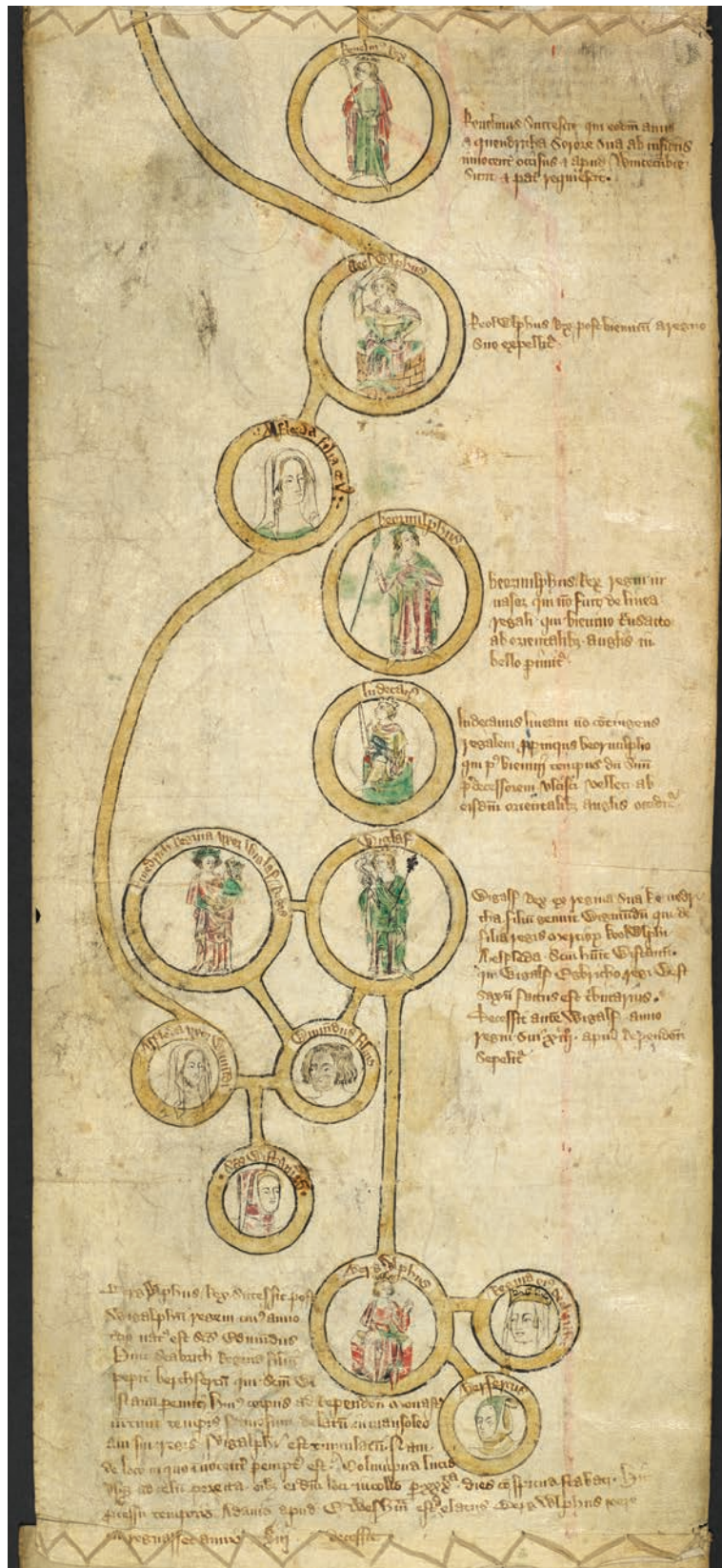[83] See for example Tyson, op. cit., pp. 113-14.

Fig. 12. BL, Add. MS 47170, m. 5, dorse: Mercian genealogical chronicle, exemplifying the creative treatment of the lines of descent.

Fig. 13. BL, Add. MS 47170, m. 3, dorse: Mercian genealogical chronicle (King Ethelred looking up at Cœnred, Werburga, Wulfhad and Ruffin).

The only promising individual feature is the armour worn by Edward, the son of Edmund Ironside (m. 4, front), which includes ailettes with crosses, a plate gorget and a kettle-hat with broad brim and protective ridge, with a mail coif underneath it and visible at the temple (fig. 14). This may reflect knowledge of current armour, as this distinctive sort of helmet is a feature of English art in the early to mid-fourteenth century. Kettle-hats are found both earlier and later, so the appearance of one here is not useful evidence for the roll's date, but its combination with ailettes, which are uncommon in art after c. 1350, at least suggests an attempt to animate the viewer's experience through recognizably current motifs. A good comparison for the armour, exactly contemporary, is available in the figure of the knight who spears a unicorn in one of the margins of the Ormesby Psalter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 366, f. 55v: c. 1310-20).[84] It is quite possible that gear like this was represented among armour kept at the abbey.[85]

From the point of view of style, the work is sufficiently competent to analyse in art historical terms, but nevertheless hard to classify with precision. Like much skilful but minor manuscript art of the period, it incorporates features which were widespread and thus found in more than one of the stylistic families identified by modern research. Lynda Dennison is apparently the only scholar to have aligned the roll with one of these families. She attributed its drawings, without discussion, to the artist responsible for painting two East Anglian Books of Hours she placed between 1340 and 1345, now in Baltimore and Dublin.[86] This dating will obviously not do for the roll if, as seems very likely on the basis of the text, it was made during Edward II's reign, but as any artist of the period could in theory have had a working life of some decades, the idea is not thereby disqualified. Dennison's points of comparison were presumably the large, slanted eyes with beady pupils and the wavy, almost sculptural hair of the busts at the bottom of the first membrane on the front of the roll, which undoubtedly resemble work by the main artist of the Dublin manuscript in particular (fig. 9). On the whole, however, the drawings in the roll exhibit more differences than similarities with the miniatures in these Books of Hours: there is little to be said for the comparison with respect to the treatment of drapery, head-to-body ratios, general facial mein or figure posture. Those points of contact between the larger busts on the roll and (say) the Dublin manuscript, particularly the frankness of the heads and forms of eyes, noses, mouths and so on, are also observable in manuscripts such as the Garrett Psalter at Princeton, made at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and for that matter monumental painting like the murals of c. 1330 in the great chamber at Longthorpe Tower near Peterborough.[87] These murals have been compared to miniatures by artists working in the style of the Queen Mary Psalter, but the articulation and proportions of the standing figures and more candid treatment of the heads is easily as close to what appears in the roll.[88] The point here is obviously not that the roll's artist was somehow involved with Longthorpe Tower, or for that matter the Garrett Psalter and its allies, but rather that his personal style was rooted in its environment and was, like that of all trained painters, a product of various influences and choices. As this style is unlikely to have been static, it is possible that other examples of his work survive in manuscripts that look rather different from Walter's roll; although surely not so different as the prayer books at Dublin and Baltimore.

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84 See further *The Holkham Bible Picture Book: A Facsimile*, intro. M. P. Brown (London, 2007), ff. 29, 31, 31v, 40. On kettle-hats and ailettes in art generally, C. Blair, *European Armour, circa 1066 to circa 1700* (London, 1958), pp. 31-2, 45-6.

85 Compare *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln*, ed. A. H. Thompson, 3 vols, Canterbury and York Society, 17, 24, 33 (London, 1915-27), vol. iii, pp. 284 n.1, 290 (1440s).

86 Dennison, 'Fitzwarrin Psalter', p. 60 n. 90. For the Books of Hours see n. 60 above, and Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts*, nos 117, 118.

87 See most recently L. F. Sandler, 'Questions for Homeless Manuscripts: The Case of Princeton Garrett Ms. 35', in C. Hourihane (ed.), *Manuscripta Illuminata: Approaches to Understanding Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts* (Princeton, 2014), pp. 161-85; E. Impey, *Longthorpe Tower* (London, 2014).

88 E. C. Rouse and A. Baker, 'The Wall-Paintings at Longthorpe Tower near Peterborough, Northants', *Archaeologia*, xcvi (1955), pp. 1-57.

Fig. 14. Add. MS 47170, m. 4, front: King Edmund Ironside contemplated by his son Edward 'the Exile'.

Finally, Walter's ownership of a simple, popular text, partially in French and copiously illustrated, does not seem to raise any urgent questions about monastic interests or taste. It is most interesting, perhaps, for what it indicates about the decorum of textual presentation. Accordingly, French was appropriate to the national history because it was the language of kings and of such chronicles, while Latin was proper for anything to do with the monastery. The same idea is found at the same time in a short, handsomely produced chronicle added to the Psalter of Hugh of Stukeley (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 53).[89] Here, a condensed account of the kings of England ending with Edward I is given in French (ff. 180v-184) followed by an abstract of the history of Peterborough Abbey, in the same hand but in Latin (ff. 185-186v).[90] There is similar evidence from elsewhere: for instance, one of the general cartularies of Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire includes a short chronicle from Brutus to Edward I in French, while the domestic history in the same volume is in Latin.[91] Apart from this, manuscripts in French were widely owned by monks and canons, and the information they contained was as relevant and useful to professional religious men as anyone else.

Indeed, the adaptation of Add. MS. 47170 to include Peterborough's foundation history is a variation on a widely favoured alternative to compiling from scratch a chronicle which conflated national and local events; an alternative chosen at Peterborough more than once in the years around 1300, as the abbey's version of the Bury St Edmunds chronicle and the history attributed to Abbot William of Woodford (d. 1299) show.[92] Anglo-Norman French was bound to be familiar in a large monastic house in the early fourteenth century, because so widely spoken and written by the landowners with whom the monks had constant dealings, above all the king himself. It was a business language of the convent's social peer-group, and any monk ambitious for his knowledge or manners needed it. Accordingly, there is a glossary of Anglo-Saxon words and a treatise on weights and measures in one of Peterborough's general cartularies with translations into French.[93] Godfrey of Crowland gave a Bible in French to his house (recorded in Add. MS. 39758 at f. 113), a French *Brut* was, as noted, put into the abbey's manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and Hugh Candidus's history of Peterborough was itself translated into French verse, to make it more memorable and entertaining through the idioms of contemporary romance. Furthermore, the surviving book catalogue from Peterborough, the so-called *Matricularium*, contains many records of books 'gallice'.[95]

In this light, any a priori assumption that such material was made for the benefit of lay visitors seems misbegotten, although some of it may certainly have been used in that way. Where the roll is concerned, the inclusion of the Latin chronicle in the same hand and by the same artist as its French counterpart shows that a monastic readership was anticipated from the outset. Probably, attention to such things by monks was counted an honest amusement, in the same spirit that reciting verse and reading chronicles of kings ('regnorum cronicas') and descriptions of the wonders of the world were prescribed for scholars at Winchester in the late fourteenth century.[96] It also had the practical value of supplying information that a monk, as an educated man obligated to his benefactors, could reasonably be expected to know, and ultimately also a genealogical model of time around which he could wrap further knowledge.

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[89] Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts*, nos 23, 66.

[90] About a century later, these texts were extended in the same languages to f. 184v and f. 188v respectively.

[91] *Registrum Malmesburiense*, ed. J. S. Brewer and C. T. Martin, 2 vols, Rolls Series 72 (London, 1879-80), vol. i, pp. 50-9 (*Brut*); vol. ii, pp. 357-91 (domestic history, which is a contemporary addition at the beginning of the cartulary).

[92] See Karn and King, op. cit., pp. 21-2.

[93] London, Society of Antiquaries, MS. 60, ff. 218v-219, 229.

[94] Printed, with a prose translation, in *Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*, pp. 175-218.

[95] *Peterborough Abbey*, pp. 159-162, 165, 168, 170-3, 176-7.

[96] T. F. Kirby, *Annals of Winchester College: From Its Foundation in the Year 1382 to the Present Time* (London, 1892), p. 489.

Conclusion

For the historian to whom such things matter, Walter of Whittlesey's patronage is arguably most interesting for what it suggests about the trust that monks placed in well-designed manuscripts as witnesses to important facts and vehicles of essential information. For a historically rooted impression of this, one has to acknowledge the closeness with which local monastic identity was bound up with institutional foundation and chronology in the later Middle Ages. The relationship of a monk and his convent to the past was both umbilical, stretching back along a defined path to a fixed point of first foundation, and tentacular, reaching out among the precinctual buildings and into a landscape of possessions and privileges which simultaneously sustained and constituted any institution like Peterborough. Walter's surviving manuscripts present a model for each of these concepts. Whether or not Walter had any manual involvement in producing them – and I have argued here for caution about the assumption that he did – the manuscripts also illustrate a strategy for commemoration theoretically available to many individuals who had the means to commission books and would otherwise be remembered only through the fleeting, annual acknowledgement prompted by enrolment in a martyrology. Such considerations bring out the vitality of Walter's manuscripts; the goal-orientation that governed their production and still seems to resist their modern status as passive repositories of archaic data.

This quality is only enhanced by recognition of the manuscripts' relationship to their material environment, as known, for example, through descriptions of the cloister glass, elevated founder figures in the abbot's hall, vestments that had heads of kings embroidered into them, and the images of the rulers of England, 'from the first to the latest', set around the walls of the Lady chapel, each of which – as in the roll – was accompanied by a short inscriptional biography.[97] Through such associations, material objects which assert their autonomy through hard edges and opaque surfaces become permeable and relational. Thus, in a recent discussion of the psalter now in Brussels, Paul Binski has remarked on the deliberateness with which the great book ''spoke'' of Peterborough'.[98] While they 'speak' with different emphasis, Walter of Whittlesey's manuscripts are no less eloquent.

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[97] Add. MS. 39758, ff. 98v-99, 100; *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores varii*, vol. ii, pp. 148, 149-50.

[98] P. Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style 1290-1350* (New Haven and London, 2014), p. 311.