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### Dulce et Utile

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# **Dulce et Utile**

The (Im)practicality of *Agricultural Texts in Middle English Manuscripts  
and Printed Husbandry Books*



**university of  
 groningen**

**faculty of arts**

The research reported in this dissertation has been carried out under the auspice of the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG) of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen

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university of  
 groningen

# **Dulce et Utile**

The (Im)practicality of Agricultural Texts in Middle English  
 Manuscripts and Printed Husbandry Books

**PhD thesis**

to obtain the degree of PhD at the  
 University of Groningen  
 on the authority of the  
 Rector Magnificus Prof. C. Wijmenga  
 and in accordance with  
 the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on  
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by

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## To the reader

Where many wedes be in a felde of corne  
All though the weders thynk to wede it clene  
Some shall remayne, whan the fylde is shorne.  
Drawke or cokle, yet there wyll be seen  
The fawtes therof, is in the handes and eyen  
Lykewyse where many wordes and lettres be  
No mervayle is, though I some overse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Copland, Envoy to *Secretum Secretorum* (London: Copland, 1528), ll. 22-29.

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Since the start of my PhD project the world lost three brave women. This book is dedicated to them. Ans Wessel-Pol (1937 – 2018), Dien Jonkers-Holthuis (1924 – 2016), and Gerrie Kuipers-Kluvers (1928 – 2016), you are missed.

## Preliminaries

### Abbreviations

<i>BL</i>	British Library
<i>CCCC</i>	Corpus Christi College Cambridge
<i>CUL</i>	Cambridge, University Library
<i>DIMEV</i>	Digital Index of Middle English Verse
<i>EEBO</i>	Early English Books Online
<i>EETS</i>	Early English Text Society
<i>IPMEP</i>	Index of Printed Middle English Prose
<i>ISTC</i>	Incunabula Short Title Catalogue
<i>ME</i>	Middle English
<i>MED</i>	Middle English Dictionary
<i>MS(S)</i>	Manuscript(s)
<i>NB</i>	Netherlandish Books
<i>ODNB</i>	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
<i>OED</i>	Oxford English Dictionary
<i>STC</i>	Short Title Catalogue
<i>TC</i>	Trinity College (Cambridge)

### Manuscript references

Manuscripts are referred to by their shelf mark and, if they are listed in the Appendix, provided with a **bold** number in between parentheses. These numbers also correspond to nodes in the network visualisations that feature in this dissertation.

### Translations

Unless otherwise specified, translations are my own. Middle English texts are not usually translated in this dissertation, except when their meaning is not immediately clear.

### Network diagrams

The images that feature in this dissertation are best viewed digitally. Each figure is, therefore, supplied with a footnote containing a permanent link to a high-resolution image. An overview of these images can also be found on <https://wp.me/p5HhMj-4b>.



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## Introduction<sup>2</sup>

I will advise [a yong gentyلمان that entendth to thryve] to rise betime in the morning, [...] and to go about his closes, pastures, feldes, & specially by the hedges, & to have in his purse a paire of tables, & what he seeth any thing that wold be amended, to wryte it in his tables.<sup>3</sup>

The scene above presents an image of a sixteenth-century landowner. One who would get up early in the morning to take a stroll around cornfields and sheep-filled pastures, take notes, and discuss improvements with his reeve. Naturally, such landowners would know that the lay of the land ensured the well-being of their households, which besides the nuclear family also encompassed domestic and farming staff. Therefore, they would have closely observed the weather to make judgements about sowing and harvesting and employed astrological computations to pinpoint the right times for planting certain crops. Since agricultural know-how must have been at the forefront of the medieval landowner's mind, it would seem straightforward to assume that they, too, would note down such information for personal reference or posterity.

Indeed, a brief look at the repositories of practical writings that were produced in premodern England, Schotland, and Wales seems to underpin the assumption that medieval readers collected agricultural information in their manuscripts. For instance, Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge's *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* lists one manuscript containing farming memoranda,<sup>4</sup> Ruth Dean's *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* lists six texts outlining the duties of seneschals and landowners,<sup>5</sup> and George Keiser's tenth volume of *A Manual of Writings in Middle English*, which catalogues 558 medieval works of a practical or scientific nature,

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<sup>2</sup> Parts of this dissertation are incorporated in the chapter "Field Knowledge in Gentry Households: Pears on a Willow?" in *Household Knowledges in Late-Medieval England and France*, edited by Glenn Burger and Rory Critten, (Manchester: UP, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> John Fitzherbert, *The Boke of Husbandry* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1533), *STC* 10995.5, 63r.

<sup>4</sup> This manuscript, London, British Library, Add. 61735, also known as the "Tollemache Orosius", contains valuations of livestock, seeds, farming implements, and other goods that were supplied by Ely Abbey to Thorney Abbey, as well as an inventory of livestock on the Ely farms, see Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, listing no. 300.

<sup>5</sup> See the listings for items 328, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396 in Ruth J. Dean and Maureen B.M. Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999).

files seven texts under the rubric of “farming and estate-management”.<sup>6</sup> Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that the items catalogued in these repositories are not quite the hands-on agricultural texts they seem to be. For one, some texts in Keiser’s *Manual* predate the Middle English period as they are reworkings of older, often classical, material. Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry*, for instance, is originally an Anglo-French estate-management treatise which was translated into Middle English at a time when demesne farming was starting to fall out of fashion.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the instructions for tree grafting and wine preservation that are known under the title *Godfridus super Palladium* are translated from the Latin work of Gottfried von Franken,<sup>8</sup> who in turn borrowed most of his material from late-classical and early medieval authors, such as the fourth-century Roman agronomist Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus Palladius and the Italian Pietro de’ Crescenzi (c. 1230 – c. 1320). Likewise, a Middle English rhyme-royal translation of Palladius’ *Opus Agriculturae*,<sup>9</sup> which was made at the behest of Humfrey, duke of Gloucester (1390 – 1447), is unlikely to have been used as a practical agricultural manual. In fact, it would seem that a brief poem that warns against the dangers of buying land, comes closest to being an original Middle English composition related to landownership.<sup>10</sup> The relative vacuum in the production of vernacular agricultural or managerial works in medieval England, moreover, is not unique to the Anglophone corpus: the repository of Middle-Dutch scientific and utilitarian prose or *artes-literature*, for example, only lists three manuscripts containing agricultural and horticultural texts.<sup>11</sup>

To my knowledge, no surviving text composed in the Middle English period instructs how to store barley or how to deal with crop diseases, not even scribbled notations.<sup>12</sup> This is not to say

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<sup>6</sup> George R. Keiser, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500 Volume 10* (Connecticut: Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1998), 3689-3691; 3902-3905. It should be noted that the *Manual* does not provide a comprehensive list of agricultural works, as Keiser mainly lists text that have appeared in critical editions.

<sup>7</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, listing 432.

<sup>8</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, listing 433.

<sup>9</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, listing 437.

<sup>10</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, listing 437; *DIMEV*, 6640.

<sup>11</sup> One of these manuscripts is kept in the Amsterdam University Library (MS II E 42) and two are currently at the Wellcome Institute in London, where they are catalogued as MS 517 and MS 639, see Ria Jansen-Sieben, *Repertorium van de Middelnederlandse Artes-literatuur* (Utrecht: HES, 1989), p. 91.

<sup>12</sup> To the modern reader, premodern literature on crop protection presents a conundrum, as Jan C. Zadoks argues in *Crop Protection in Medieval Agriculture: Studies in Pre-modern Organic Agriculture* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2013): there is not enough evidence to establish who practised the technique, whether it was applied generally or incidentally, and if the

that medieval book-owners were not concerned about their produce: I have come across an abundance of recipes for rat poison and remedies for sick cattle scribbled on the pages of late-medieval manuscripts. Furthermore, whereas in medical writings we can observe a distinction between the learned tradition (i.e. tracts on Hippocratic and Galenic theory) and folk remedies, charms, and experimental cures which are often added in the margins or blank spaces of manuscripts, the agronomical domain seems to rely more deeply on the classical tradition, while farmer's knowledge remained predominantly in the oral sphere. Occasionally, folk wisdom and weather-lore found their way into the written tradition: the biblical adage "red sky at night, shepherd's delight" became a fixed expression in many languages,<sup>13</sup> and so did "April showers bring May flowers", first attested in Thomas Tusser's *Hundred Good Points of Husbandry*.<sup>14</sup> But apart from these commonplaces, there is a striking contrast between, on the one hand, the existence of literary texts tailored to an audience of landowners and, on the other, the absence of original factual literature on agricultural techniques. Because of its scarcity, the occurrence of farming information in a medieval manuscript immediately prompts a number of questions. Who copied it, and for whom? Were such texts actually read and used practically, and how can we tell if they were? Aiming to find answers to this series of questions, this dissertation unravels a number of interconnected strands: the analysis of practical literature and its manuscript context viewed against a background of agricultural history as well as the socio-cultural history of the late-medieval gentry. Together, they seek to establish whether husbandry books and agricultural works contributed to the societal role of gentry landholders in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England.

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method was applied to fields or just to gardens and vineyards.

<sup>13</sup> This saying can be traced back to biblical origins: "When it is evening, ye say, / It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, / It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering", King James Version, Matthew 16.2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Tusser's wording is slightly different: "Sweet April shewers / Doo spring May flowers", see *Five hundredth pointes of good husbandrie* (London: Richard Yardley and Peter Short, 1593), *STC* 24384, p. 81 / *EEBO* image no. 41).

### *Husbandry books*

In modern English, the word ‘husband’ usually refers to a married man, but during the premodern and early modern periods the word was synonymous with ‘husbandman’ or ‘yeoman’, a smallholder who belonged to the lower or middling gentry.<sup>15</sup> The word derives from the Late Old English *husbonda*, which is derived from the Old Norse *bóndi*, a “peasant owning his own house and land, freeholder, franklin, [or] yeoman”.<sup>16</sup> The derivation ‘husbandry’ refers to farm- and estate-management and was first recorded after the Anglo-Saxon period in a legal estate book (29) belonging to the Benedictine Abbey of Luffield.<sup>17</sup> In this manuscript, the treatise known as Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry* follows after the title *Ce est le dite de husebondrie ke vn sage homme fist iadis ke auoyt a non syre Walter de henle* (“this is a work on husbandry that a wise man, who had the name Walter of Henley, once made”).<sup>18</sup> Around the same time, an anonymous Anglo-French treatise that is associated with Henley’s *Husbandry* was copied on a vellum roll (17) under the heading *ceo est husebondrie*.<sup>19</sup> In addition, in a related Anglo-French text known as the *Seneschaucie*, it is explained that a provost (a reeve whose duties included tax-collecting and administration) is elected out of the town’s best husbandmen: “Le provost deit estre eslu e presente par commun assentement de tute la ville pur le meillur husebonde”.<sup>20</sup> These examples signify that the word ‘husband’ was adopted in the Anglo-French language and supplied with the suffix ‘-ry’ as it probably did not have a French counterpart.<sup>21</sup> For the same reason, the word was Latinised, as evidenced by a fifteenth-century copy (261) of Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry* carrying the title “Liber de Husbondria”.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> I apply the adjective ‘premodern’ to date any manuscripts and incunables that were produced prior to 1550, and the term ‘early modern’ to manuscripts, post-incunables and printed books produced between roughly 1550 and 1620.

<sup>16</sup> *OED Online*, s.v. “Husband, n”.

<sup>17</sup> Cambridge, University Library, MS Ee. I.i (29).

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Lamond, *Walter of Henley’s Husbandry, Together with an Anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste’s Rules* (London: Longmans, 1890), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cambridge, St. John’s College MS N. 13 (17).

<sup>20</sup> Chapter 35 of the *Seneschaucie* states that a “reeve ought to be elected and presented by the common assent of the whole township as the best husbandman and farmer”, translated by Oschinsky in *Walter of Henley*, p. 275.

<sup>21</sup> The sixteenth volume of Walther von Wartburg’s *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Basel: Zbinden, 1959), lists “husband” as a Germanism, p. 275, which is unlikely as the word is of Scandinavian origin. I thank Rolf Bremmer for his notes on the etymology of the word ‘husbandry’.

<sup>22</sup> The manuscript is known by the shelf mark Oxford, Merton College, MS 1258 (261), ff. 154v-59v.

By the fifteenth century, ‘husbandry’ had become integrated into the English language to such an extent that it became a metonym for agricultural literature itself. This is evinced by the Middle English of Palladius’ *Opus Agriculturae*, in which the word ‘husbondrie’ translates as several different Latin words. First of all, the translator uses ‘husbondrie’ as a collective noun that refers to members of the third estate, for example in the lines “For clergie, or knyghthod, or husbondrie” (I: l. 97) and “pasture and housynge ffor husbondrie” (I: ll. 9-10). Furthermore, in the first book of the *Opus* both ‘husbondrie’ and ‘husbondyng’ are used for the translation of the Latin word for agriculture, *agricultura*.<sup>23</sup> Lastly, ‘husbandry’ is used to denote the written agronomical tradition, “As dede byforn, is holden husbondrie” (I: l. 439), “Now husbondrie his olde vines plecheth. / The long endurid, old, forfreton vine / Is not to helpe, as Columelle techeth” (ll. 330-332), and to self-reference the *Opus Agriculturae*: “this first[e] book / Of husbondrie” (I: ll. 1170-1). In the early modern period, (now-obsolete) derivatives from ‘husband’ came in use, such as the adverb ‘husbandly’, a synonym for ‘thrifty’ and ‘economically’, and the adjective ‘husbandlike’, which also connotes frugality, a character trait that was evidently the mark of a good husbandman.<sup>24</sup>

The widespread usage of the term husbandry in premodern and early modern agricultural literature seems to suggest that these works were aimed at husbandmen while, realistically, their audiences would be of above-average means. The period also witnessed a number of publications with ‘husbandry’ on their title pages, such as John Fitzherbert’s *Book of Husbandry*, Thomas Tusser’s *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, and Barnabe Googe’s *Four Bookes of Husbandry*, yet these books are aimed at a more differentiated audience. This is exemplified by a copy of Googe’s *Four Bookes*, which has been annotated in Latin with references to Latin classical authors, ostensibly made by a schooled individual.<sup>25</sup> Beside agricultural information, husbandry books also proffer

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<sup>23</sup> Examples of this use of ‘husbandry’ in the Middle English *Palladius* are: “In thingis iiij, al husbondrie most stonde” (I: l. 15); “oon good poynt of husbondyng.” (Book I: l. 469); “Of husbondri a poynt not this the lest is” (Book I: l. 521); “Now husbondrie for stablis write y wolde” (Book I: l. 504); “To fatte hem eke is husbondrie” (Book I: l. 686); “another husbondrie” (Book I: l. 749); “al this longe yeer / Of husbondrie” (Book I: l. 1208-9). References are to Barton Lodge’s *EETS* edition (OS, no. 52) *Palladius On Husbondrie* (London: Trübner & Co., 1873).

<sup>24</sup> See *OED Online*, s.v. “husbandly” adj., and “husbandlike”, adj. and adv.

<sup>25</sup> This copy, *STC* 13197, is now at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.



moralistic advice and, in Tusser's case, poetry and songs. Because of this variety of contents, I consider the term 'husbandry book' preferable to more narrow classifications such as agricultural manuals, farming treatises, and estate-management tracts. Moreover, as I will argue throughout this dissertation, husbandry books play such a substantial role in establishing the identity of the 'husbandman' or gentry landowner that they should not be dismissed as purely technical manuals.

#### *Research statement*

By and large, husbandry books have been invariably treated as one-dimensional manuals of a practical nature. Beside George Keiser's assertion that husbandry books were "a means to both security and social advancement" to the gentry,<sup>26</sup> the importance of these works within their sociocultural landscape is not sufficiently described. Like Paul Strohm, I believe that "ignoring the literary/nonliterary divide [fosters] appreciation of the social 'work' of the text, [offering] a more generous assignment of creativity across a larger range of written productions".<sup>27</sup> My dissertation, therefore, does not focus on husbandry books alone, but places them in an intertextual context of late-medieval vernacular literature. To maximise the relevance of my analysis, my research covers the transitional phase between two pivotal stages in British (book) history: the evolution from manuscript to printed book and the sixteenth-century Reformation, during which the book market became increasingly institutionalised. As the production of books is inherently linked to societal developments, this research enhances our understanding of the effects of macro-societal movements on the micro-societies that are reflected in medieval books.

#### *Structure of the dissertation*

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, each of which illuminates the medieval husbandry book tradition from a different perspective.

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<sup>26</sup> George Keiser, "Practical Books for the Gentleman" in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* Volume III: 1400-1557, ed. Lotte Hellinga (Cambridge: UP, 2008), 470-494, p. 493.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text*, published as Volume 26 of the *Medieval Cultures* series (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000), p. xv.

In the opening chapter, *Husbandry texts and related literature*, I provide an overview of premodern and early modern English texts that are related to agriculture and estate-management. The chapter opens with a brief discussion of the origins of agronomical literature in medieval England (§1.1), and highlights a number of Arabic and Classical texts which have been pivotal in the development of the husbandry genre in the medieval West. It proceeds (§1.2) with an overview of the primary sources that feature in this dissertation, and concludes with a survey of the appraisal of these husbandry books from the seventeenth century onwards. Since my thesis aims to rectify some of the persisting misunderstandings concerning practical literature that are pervaded by library catalogues and unfortunate classifications in repositories, it is worthwhile to reexamine the philological groundwork on premodern agricultural literature in England as the source of long-held and persistent attitudes towards practical texts. Therefore, §1.3 covers editions and scholarly publications on agricultural literature from the onset of philology in the late nineteenth century through to the formation of New Historicism in the 1980s. Lastly, the final part of paragraph 1.3 singles out key publications by contemporary scholars. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of my research, the scholarly contributions that underpin and influence my research are sourced from various disciplines. In my literary review, therefore, I do not aim to offer an exhaustive survey of publications concerning the primary texts of my research. Instead, it presents a selection of scholarly contributions that have shaped scholarly attitudes towards medieval English agricultural literature, and highlights publications that are emblematic of the developments in the textual criticism concerning such works.

The second chapter, *Husbandry books in manuscript and print*, revisits several of the primary texts that have been introduced in the literary review in the first chapter, and discusses them in the light of their manuscript context (§2.1). The ensuing paragraph presents a methodological evaluation of scholarly approaches concerning the utilitarian value of Middle English practical literature, and examines whether written responses, paratextual elements, and signs of use are reliable ways of tracing how medieval readers interacted with practical texts (§2.2). The idea that

agricultural texts are not straightforwardly practical, but may have also served a literary function, is explored more fully in this section. Since it is my aim to establish a clearer picture of the uses of agricultural literature, this chapter provides a macro-level analysis of manuscripts and their compilation (§2.2.i-ii), with a particular focus on the connections between literary and practical works in gentry-owned manuscripts. To facilitate reference to these manuscripts, the next section (§2.3) offers a brief discussion of the problematic terminology surrounding manuscripts containing more than one textual item. In the subsequent paragraph (§2.4) I introduce network diagrams to illustrate the complexity of manuscript compilations featuring agricultural literature. Chapter two concludes (§2.5) with a case study of John Lydgate's *Dietary*, a health regimen that was popular among the late-medieval gentry and urban bourgeoisie and features in several manuscripts discussed in §2.4. This text serves as a vantage point to discuss the concept of discursive flexibility, a notion which is pivotal to the remainder of the dissertation.

The third chapter, *Husbandry books and grafting treatises*, revolves around the idea that husbandry texts are multidimensional by nature, and that this feature can be inferred from their manuscript context. In paragraph 3.2.i, I provide examples from early managerial texts written in Old English to illustrate their proximity to literary compositions, both codicologically and stylistically. Furthermore, I trace the development of Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* (§3.2.ii), a text that was translated from Anglo-French into late-medieval vernaculars under the growing interest in agronomical literature. To further illustrate how late-medieval agricultural texts were shaped both by classical and contemporary literary culture, I then narrow my focus to text on tree-grafting (§3.3). In §3.3.i I discuss the current scholarly discourse surrounding classical agronomical literature and its inherent literariness, and argue its implications for the study of grafting treatises, as they ultimately derive from classical antecedents. Furthermore, in order to explore to what extent treatises on arboriculture and tree-grafting should be considered as literary texts, I discuss the literary context surrounding the subject of grafting in §3.3ii.

It has long been established that agricultural texts were in high demand among the gentry,

but precisely how this group incorporated such works in their daily lives has remained a matter of speculation. Therefore, in the fourth chapter, *Husbandry books and the gentry*, I explore in what ways husbandry books may have contributed to gentry self-fashioning. First (§4.1), I provide an overview of recent scholarly contributions to the area of gentry studies, before outlining the typical (reading) interests of the late-medieval gentry (§4.2). I also introduce the concept of ‘literary gentrification’ and the parameters associated with this process (§4.3), in order to trace the influence of the gentry on the spread of husbandry books. Since adopting a certain social identity entails (self-)education, the next section (§4.4) is dedicated to didactic works and schooltexts that circulated in a gentry context, and reflects on the husbandry tradition as part of the gentry’s education. The educational motivations behind the collection of husbandry books among the gentry are explicated in a set of two case studies (§4.5.i-ii) each of which highlights different aspects of gentry life and book ownership. In the first case study I consider the function of a poem about the dangers of landownership in a manuscript that was owned by an Essex family during the Tudor reign. The manuscripts that feature in the latter case studies were produced and used in an urban setting; they will be discussed in the light of agricultural education of gentry members whose primary occupation was not related to landownership.

In the fifth and final chapter, *Grafting treatises and the gentry*, I argue that the manuscript context of treatises on tree grafting suggests that medieval readers were appreciative of the genre’s openness. Having previously established the cultural context in which grafted trees should be located (§3.3), I turn my focus towards two Middle-English grafting treatises and the manuscript networks in which these texts circulated (§5.3), in order to find out what constitutes the attraction of these texts among gentry readers. One aspect of grafting literature which, I argue, is particularly key to its success during the later Middle Ages is its affinity to Aristotelian natural philosophy and the associated literary tradition concerned with natural secrets. My approach in the final paragraphs of the fifth chapter is, perhaps, counter-intuitive: by first looking at the compilation of Early Modern works (§5.4), I trace the evolution of the literature of secrets back to the Middle Ages and

assert how, prior to the age of print, grafting treatises found their way into esoteric and utilitarian compendia (§5.5).

# Chapter 1: Husbandry texts and related literature

## 1.1 Introduction

In order to provide a historical, theoretical, and methodological background to my ensuing analysis of husbandry literature and its sociocultural context, this chapter covers the history and development of husbandry books that were produced up until the sixteenth century. It starts with a brief overview of the early beginnings of agronomical literature from the Mediterranean region to the works that circulated in the medieval West. In the second half of this chapter, which deals with the critical appraisal of husbandry books from the nineteenth century to the present, I reflect on the work that is yet to be undertaken within the field, and express the necessity to reassert the cultural significance of agricultural literature in medieval Britain.

## 1.2 Primary texts

### *1.2.i Classical agronomy*

Since premodern cultures were by and large dependent on agriculture, a vast body of agronomical writings started burgeoning in areas surrounding the Mediterranean Sea around the eighth century BCE. These Latin works clearly left their mark on agricultural texts that circulated in medieval England: via early medieval scholars such as Isidore of Seville (c. 566 – 636 CE), ancient agricultural works were translated and embedded into the medieval European written tradition. For medieval agricultural writers, Virgil (70 – 19 BCE), Columella (4 – c. 70 CE), Pliny (23 – 79 CE) and Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus Palladius (4<sup>th</sup> C CE), were the chief authorities, but the majority of medieval treatises also hinges on the (pseudo-)Aristotelian tradition. For instance, one of the main sources of information on the subject of tree grafting in the Middle Ages, Pietro de' Crescenzi (c. 1230 – c. 1320), based his writings on Albertus Magnus (c. 1193 – 1280), whose work was in turn indebted to both Palladius and Aristotle.<sup>28</sup> Other early works that underlie the medieval husbandry tradition

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<sup>28</sup> Steven Epstein provides an overview of grafting in premodern literatures in *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*,

include the tenth-century Byzantine collection *Geoponika*, which indirectly influenced European writers after it had been translated by Islamic agronomists based in Mediterranean countries and the Near East.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.2.ii Arab agronomy

Several agricultural works that form the basis of late-medieval productions were written in Arabic between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, and no original works produced in the European West rival the breadth and length of the so-called “Books of Filāḥa”. They survive in 240 extant manuscripts, which is a vast number compared to agricultural texts that were produced in European vernaculars.<sup>30</sup> Many of these Arabic texts are built upon Byzantine, Roman, Carthaginian, Greek and Chaldean agronomical theory, and were disseminated from translation centres in Al-Andalus, the Islamic parts of the Iberian Peninsula. As Karl Butzer has shown in a comparative analysis of Arab agronomical texts, the subjects of arboriculture and grafting comprise the largest share of the contents of the works of late-classical and early medieval writers, such as Pliny, Ibn Wahshiyya (9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> CE), Ibn Bassal (b. 1085), and Ibn Al-‘Awwam (late 12<sup>th</sup> CE).<sup>31</sup> Viticulture—the cultivation and grafting of vines—on the other hand, makes up the lion’s share of two other main influences on medieval agronomy: Columella’s *De re rustica* and the *Geoponika*.<sup>32</sup> Since horticulture is the main tenet of the works of Arab agriculturists, it is unsurprising that this branch of agronomical literature came to be particularly well-represented in the medieval west. One reason for the particular focus on grafting among Arab scholars can be found in the *Muqadimmah* of the Arab historian Ibn Khaldûn (1332–1406). According to Khaldûn, Arab scholars dismissed ancient Greek works on agriculture (in particular a now-lost translation known as the *Nabataean Agriculture*) because of their

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(Cambridge: University Press, 2012), pp. 30-31.

<sup>29</sup> For the impact of the *Geoponika* on the medieval agricultural tradition, see Jan C. Zadoks, *Crop Protection in Medieval Agriculture: Studies in Pre-modern Organic Agriculture* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2013), pp. 20-23.

<sup>30</sup> These Arabic texts have partly been digitised as part of the *Filaha Texts Project*, <http://www.filaha.org/>.

<sup>31</sup> Karl W. Butzer, “The Islamic Traditions of Agroecology: Experience, Ideas, and Innovations”, *Cultural Geographies* 1.7 (1994), 7-50, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Butzer, “Islamic Traditions”, p. 19.

metaphysical and astrological treatment of plants; this, he argues, was akin to sorcery, which was forbidden by Islamic law.<sup>33</sup> For this reason, Khaldûn writes that those Arab scholars before him

restricted themselves to the part of the book [i.e. *Nabataean Agriculture*] dealing with plants from the point of view of their planting and treatment and the things connected with that. They completely banished all discussion of the other parts of the book. Ibn al-‘Awwam abridged the [*Nabataean Agriculture*] in this sense. The other part of it remained neglected. [...] There are many books on agriculture by recent scholars. They do not go beyond the discussion of the planting and treating of plants, their preservation from things that might harm them or affect their growth, and all the things connected with that.<sup>34</sup>

Indeed, the works of Ibn al-‘Awwam suggest that secularising the treatment of grafting and planting was necessary to relieve it from any unwanted magical connotations.<sup>35</sup> Yet, while Butzer notes that medieval Arab scholars are known for their empiricism, writers such as al-‘Awwam did not verify their horticultural writings by running experiments themselves.<sup>36</sup> Since various practical texts that circulated in the medieval West are in part reliant on the works that were translated by Arab scholars, incongruencies and fictionalised horticultural techniques described by ancient agronomists bled into the European tradition, which had serious implications for the genre, as I will further explain in Chapters 3 and 5.

### *1.2.iii Agricultural literature in medieval Britain*

The first written treatises of an agricultural nature that were produced in Britain are *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* and *Gerefa*. They were composed during the Anglo-Saxon period (410–1066), and thus not likely to have been influenced by Arab productions. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxon treatises do not strictly belong to the agronomical tradition, as they focus on the management of farming estates rather than tillage.<sup>37</sup> The arrival of Norman settlers in the twelfth and thirteenth

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<sup>33</sup> Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqadimmah* Vol. 3, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: UP, 1980), p. 152.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Khaldûn, *Muqadimmah*, trans. Rosenthal, p. 152.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn al-‘Awwâm, *Kitab al-Filaha* Vol. 1, trans. Josef A. Banqueri (Madrid: Imprenta Real: 1802), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Butzer, “The Islamic Traditions”, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Between roughly 950 and 1250, the so-called Medieval Warm Period began, and inhabitants of the British Isles would have felt the consequences of the rising temperatures. Even though these climatic changes would require the



centuries saw the rise of Anglo-French managerial literature, such as *Seneschaucie*, Walter of Henley's *Husbandry*, an anonymous treatise on Husbandry, and Robert Grosseteste's *Rules*.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the twelfth century witnessed the production of estate-management treatises that were both useful for the education of adults and children, such as the pseudo-Bernardian householding tract *De Cura rei famularis*,<sup>39</sup> and agricultural vocabularies directed at children Adam of Balsham's *De Utensilibus* (ca. 1150) Alexander Neckam's *De Utensilibus* (ca. 1190), and Walter of Bibbesworth's *Tretiz de Langage* (ca. 1250).

Original Middle English treatises which are frequently considered agricultural are, strictly speaking, horticultural. To illustrate: the *Manual* includes Nicholas Bollard's *Craft of Grafting*, a horticultural poem *The Feate of Gardening*, attributed to a certain Jon Gardener, an anonymous text called *The Craft of Graffynge & Plantynge*, and miscellaneous grafting and planting treatises. Surely, "farming" is a misnomer for texts on the cultivation of herb gardens, arbours, and hedges, as these activities were performed both in an urban setting and in rural surroundings.<sup>40</sup> Gardening produce, moreover, did not necessarily contribute to the economy of a farm, as the largest share of the harvest was consumed within the household.<sup>41</sup> Only the surplus of a medieval orchard would go to market, predominantly in liquid form, as cider and perry were durable and thus more profitable than apples and pears.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the importance of medieval estate gardens is minimal in terms of market value, as the total profits of medieval orchards and vegetable gardens amounted to 2% of total production.<sup>43</sup> In sum, the main body of medieval "agricultural literature" does not reflect the core tasks of a medieval farming estate.

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people to adapt their agricultural operations, there is no surviving literature to suggest that they recorded how to cope with the new situation, as Debby Banham and Rosamond Faith explain in *Anglo-Saxon Farms and Farming* (Oxford: UP, 2014), p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Dorothea Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and Other Treatises on Estate Management and Accounting* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> This text features more prominently in my discussion of managerial education in §4.4.v.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Dyer, "Gardens and Garden Produce in the Later Middle Ages", in *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, eds. T. Waldron, D. Serjeantson and C.M. Woolgar (Oxford: UP, 2006): 27-40, p. 40.

<sup>41</sup> Dyer, "Gardens", p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> Dyer, "Gardens", p. 34.

<sup>43</sup> See Christopher Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2001), p. 113.

Fast-forwarding to the late-fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, all-encompassing reference works for gentlemen, known as “husbandry books” (sometimes referred to in scholarship by its related German word *Hausväterliteratur*) came to fruition concurrent with the growing employment of the printing press.<sup>44</sup> It is, moreover, no coincidence that one of the first Greek texts that was published in the English language is a householding tract: Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos*, translated into Latin by Cicero as *Oeconomicus*, again translated as *Xenophon’s Treatise of Householde* (1542).<sup>45</sup> Also worth noting is that, while reprinting was not common during the incunable period, one of the few texts to appear in several reprints during this time was Pietro de’ Crescenzi’s *Ruralia commoda*, which was first published by Johann Schüssler in Augsburg in 1471. The high status of this work can be illustrated by the fact that one copy fell into the possession of King Henry VIII after the death of one of his chaplains.<sup>46</sup>

### 1.2.iv Husbandry literature in Early Modern Britain

Both the style and content of medieval treatises influenced writers and publishers throughout the Early Modern period, and the first critical responses to premodern agricultural literature also started to appear in the sixteenth century. Several early printed books were appended with medieval items, such as Anthony Fitzherbert’s *Book of Surveying*, which preserves a thirteenth-century statute known as *Extenta Manerii*.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the poem “Whoso wyll be ware of Purchasyng” appears in Barnabe Googe’s *Foure Bookes of Husbandry* (1577), and medieval horse-lore such as leechcraft and a

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<sup>44</sup> See Lynette Hunter, “Books for Daily Life: Household, Husbandry, Behavior”, in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, eds. John Barnard, Maureen Bell, D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: UP, 2008), 514-532. On the German tradition see Manfred Lemmer, “Haushalt und Familie aus der Sicht der Hausväterliteratur”, in *Haushalt und -Familie in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Trude Ehler (Thorbecke: Sigmaringen, 1991), pp. 181-191.

<sup>45</sup> Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), pp. 80-81.

<sup>46</sup> This printed tract is now known as Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 1057436 (ic00969000). It has been suggested that inspiration for the royal garden at Whitehall Palace was drawn from the *Ruralia commoda*. However, apart from a glimpse into what the garden might have looked like in a dynastic portrait, there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that Henry VIII directly used the book for the design of his garden, as proffered by Ben Miller in “Henry VIII’s gardening manual “shines new light” on King and lost royal garden”, *Culture24*, 28 January 2015, <http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/royal-history/art515224-henry-tudor-gardening-manual-shines-new-light-on-king-and-lost-royal-garden>.

<sup>47</sup> See H.C. Darby, “The Agrarian Contribution to Surveying in England”, *The Geographical Journal* 82 (1933): 529-535, p. 530.

mnemonic for choosing a good horse are included in Fitzherbert's *Boke of Husbandry* (1523), *The Manere of Hawkynges & Huntynge* (Wynkyn de Worde's edition of Dame Juliana Berner's hawking manual of 1496) and *The Propyrties and Medicynes for Hors* (ca. 1497).<sup>48</sup> It is remarkable that the above-listed items are the sort of texts that were previously added onto pastedowns or written onto flyleaves of medieval manuscripts. This raises the suspicion that printers sourced these texts from what was close at hand and appended them to thematically linked printed books, where they were promoted to the main body of printed text.

Nonetheless, the frequent inclusion of medieval items in printed books also suggest that Early Modern printers and writers attached some authority to them. This is exemplified by the works of the agricultural writer, playwright, and equestrian expert Gervase Markham (ca. 1568–1637), which betray a nostalgic approach to agricultural literature. Markham's low esteem of contemporary agricultural writers, such as Antony (or John) Fitzherbert,<sup>49</sup> Thomas Tusser (1524–1580), and especially Barnabe Googe (1540–1594),<sup>50</sup> who vernacularised classical and continental tracts despite their inefficiency for use in England, stands in stark contrast with his reverence for the Anglo-French writer Walter of Henley and his fellow admirer William Lambarde.<sup>51</sup> By contrast, one of his contemporaries, Leonard Mascall, is outspokenly critical of medieval agricultural sources: in *A Boke of the Arte and Maner, Howe to Plant and Graffe All Sortes of Trees* (1572) he disputes the accuracy of his Dutch exemplar with a heartfelt “ye may beleue if ye will, but I will not”.<sup>52</sup>

The surge in the production of agricultural works seems to have met the demand from Early Modern gentlemen, some of whom were avid collectors of husbandry books. A sixteenth-century compilation catalogued as Oxford, Bodleian Library, 70 c. 103, for instance, binds together

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<sup>48</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, listings 440 and 445.

<sup>49</sup> The problem of identifying which of the Fitzherbert brothers composed the *Boke of Husbandry* is discussed by Reginald H. C. Fitzherbert in “The Authorship of the ‘Book of Husbandry’ and the ‘Book of Surveying’”, *The English Historical Review* 12.46 (1897), 225-36.

<sup>50</sup> Gervase Markham, *Farwell to Husbandry* (London: 1620), Chapter 1, pp. 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> Markham, *The Inrichment of the Weald of Kent* (London: 1625), 2, 3, 11. The antiquarian William Lambarde (1536–1601), best known for his *Perambulation of Kent* (1576), had an interest in agricultural and manorial practises of England's past societies and Kentish history, and translated Henley's *Husbandry* into English in a personal notebook.

<sup>52</sup> See W.L. Braekman, *De Vlaamse Horticultuur in de Vroege 16<sup>e</sup> Eeuw* (Brussels: Omirel, 1989), p. 21.

several printed tracts on householding and husbandry: *A Glasse for Housholders* (1542), Fitzherbert's *Husbandry* (ca. 1534), Anthony Fitzherbert's *Surveyinge* (1546), and *Order of the Courte Baron & a Lete* (1544). On the basis of the patronyms noted down in this Welsh volume it is likely that its owners belonged to the Welsh gentry or nobility. Moreover, Googe's *Four Books of Husbandry*, a translation of an agronomical work by the German reformist Konrad Heresbach, appears among the substantial book collection of Francis Russell, the second Earl of Bradford (c. 1527–1585).<sup>53</sup> In this work, Heresbach adapted the social commentary inherent in Columella's *De agricultura* to fit his humanist worldview. He denounces the exuberant banquet tables described by Columella, and instead rewrites the history of orcharding and gardening as though it was a necessity for the poor people who lived on a modest diet. As Rebecca Weld Bushnell notes, Heresbach's book purported an image of the "virtuous bourgeois country gentlemen" whose orchards conformed to a modest rather than luxurious lifestyle.<sup>54</sup> This would certainly have appealed to a nobleman such as Russell, an "outspoken supporter of a vigorous evangelical Protestantism" who actively corresponded with continental reformers.<sup>55</sup> A final example of a nobleman's interest in rural activities and associated literature is the book collection of Sir Hamon Le Strange (1583–1654), which comprised Julia Berner's *Hawking, Hunting and Fishing* (1586), W. Lawson's *A New Orchard and Garden* (1618), H. Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* (1627), and Markham's *English Horseman* (1607).<sup>56</sup>

After a lapse in the production of new agricultural works in the seventeenth century,<sup>57</sup> gentleman's periodicals started to burgeon. The *Modern Husbandman*, which ran from 1744 to 1750, offered detailed instructions on animal husbandry and agriculture, and functioned as a forum for

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<sup>53</sup> See M. St. Clare Byrne and Gladys Scott Thomson, "My Lord's Books' The Library of Francis, Second Earl of Bedford, in 1584", *The Review of English Studies* 7: 28 (1931), 385-405.

<sup>54</sup> Rebecca Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 43-44.

<sup>55</sup> Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Russell, Francis, second earl of Bedford (1526/7–1585), magnate", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004, *Oxford University Press*.

<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth Griffiths, "A Country Life: Sir Hamon Le Strange of Hunstanton in Norfolk, 1583-1654", in *Custom, Improvement and the Landscape in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Richard W. Hoyle (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 203-234, p. 214.

<sup>57</sup> Lynette Hunter, "Books for Daily Life: Household, Husbandry, Behaviour", *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume 4: 1557–1695*, ed. John Barnard, D. F. McKenzie, Maureen Bell (Cambridge: UP, 2002): 514-532, p. 514.

landowners, allowing them to engage in letter conversations and write responses to articles. Another (albeit short-lived) periodical, *The Practical Husbandman or Planter* (1733–4), did not only dedicate attention to agrarian innovations but, as its frontispiece advertises, also proffered “observations on the ancient and modern husbandry, planting, gardening &c. ... interspersed with notes etymological, philosophical, and historical”.<sup>58</sup> The preface to the September 1734 issue states ancient authors “chalk’d out much better Rules for us ... than any of us moderns have”. In what he calls “a parallel account between ancient and modern husbandry”, the writer of the preface juxtaposes calculations based on ‘old’ husbandry as recorded by Palladius and the ‘new husbandry’ of this own day and age. While medieval sources evidently had lost momentum in the eighteenth century, ancient authors were still the subject of critical evaluation. Expectedly, the list of subscribers of the *Practical Husbandman* attests that the magazine was read by gardeners who were employed by the nobility, as well as a large number of their masters: lords, dukes, and esquires. This is reflected in a 1733 copy of the *Practical Husbandman*, which contains a 23 page long “Advertisement to the Nobility and Gentry”.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, the magazine also reached subscribers from different walks of life, including a schoolmaster, merchants, attorneys, and a painter.<sup>60</sup>

### 1.3 Critical appraisal of medieval husbandry books

#### 1.3.i Nineteenth-century scholarship

The appreciation of medieval agricultural texts in anglophone manuscripts took a turn with the development of philology in the Victorian era. Philology started off as a text-centred discipline that functioned primarily as an “outlet for reporting discovery” and a means to generate “evidence for working lexicographers”.<sup>61</sup> It is, therefore, unsurprising that the first scholarly editions of an ‘English’ agricultural text concerned the Middle English translation of Palladius’ agronomical

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<sup>58</sup> *The Practical Husbandman or Planter* VI (London: S. Switzer, 1733).

<sup>59</sup> *The Practical Husbandman*, pp. 13-36

<sup>60</sup> *The Practical Husbandman*, pp. 5-12.

<sup>61</sup> Ralph Hanna discusses the origins of philology in “Middle English Books and Middle English Literary History”, *Modern Philology* 102.2 (2004) 157-178, p. 159.

compendium known as *Opus agriculturae*, which was prepared for Duke Humphrey of Gloucester in the fifteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Just as other Middle English texts, the translation of Palladius was mined by philologists to enrich the understanding of the English language. Viewed through a philological lens, the appeal of the rhyme-royal agronomical tract is evident: the consistent use of rhyme royal provides clues as to pronunciation, while the length of the work and the specificity of its subject was bound to reveal additions to the English word-hoard that were thus far unknown. To illustrate: the first scholarly edition of this text, published in 1873 under the title *Palladius on Husbandrie From the Unique Ms. of about 1420 A.D. in Colchester Castle*,<sup>63</sup> supplied lexicographers and phonologists with an extensive glossary and “ryme index”. In addition, the second edition of the same text, published in Germany as *The Middle-English Translation of Palladius De Re Rustica* in 1896, is also rooted in philological thought. Its editor, Mark Liddell, deems the poem to be “of little literary interest” but notes that it “possesses a philological importance which can scarcely be overstated”.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, medieval agricultural texts were edited to feed another Victorian interest: the dialectology of Middle English. For this purpose, an edition of Thomas Tusser’s *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie* was published by the English Dialect Society, in 1878.<sup>65</sup> Thomas Tusser, who, besides an agricultural writer, was also a poet and singer, composed a husbandry manual that was first published in 1557. The nineteenth-century editors William Payne and Sidney Hertridge rendered Tusser’s work as visually identical to the original imprints as possible, seemingly intending to produce an authoritative version of the *Five Hundred Pointes* that was in line with the rationale of nineteenth-century diplomatic editions—staying as close to the *urtext* as possible. The editors also included Tusser’s biography, which was based on the poet’s autobiography and a copy of his last will. While the addition of such a biography seems to signal an interest in the historical person

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<sup>62</sup> D.R. Howlett tentatively dates the translation to the year 1442 or 1443 and presumes that the poet and alchemist Thomas Norton (d. 1513) was its translator, see “The Date and Authorship of the Middle English Translation of Palladius’ *De Re Rustica*”, *Medium Aevum* 46.2 (1977): 245-252, p. 248.

<sup>63</sup> Barton Lodge, *Palladius On Husbandrie*, EETS OS 52 (London: Trübner & Co., 1873).

<sup>64</sup> Marc Harvey Liddell, *The Middle English Translation of De Re Rustica*, (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1896), p. VII.

<sup>65</sup> W. Payne and Sidney J. Hertridge, *Five hundred pointes of good husbandrie. The ed. of 1580 collated with those of 1573 and 1577. Together with a reprint from the unique copy in the British Museum, of A hundreth good pointes of husbandrie, 1557* (London: Trübner & Co, 1878).

behind the work, it is also likely that the editors deemed it relevant to the study of Tusser's idiolect and dialect: Tusser is known for his propensity to migrate across the country, and the fact that he spent his life in Essex, Berkshire, Cambridge, Ipswich, Norfolk, and London would make him an interesting linguistic case study.<sup>66</sup>

As well as a cog in the supply-chain for linguistic or historical study, collecting and editing texts written in medieval vernaculars also became a nationalistic pursuit during the Victorian age. Symptomatic of the development which Hanna calls an “uneasily emulative Teutonicism” is John Donaldson's *Agricultural Biography*, which was printed in 1854.<sup>67</sup> While Donaldson notes that “it has been often observed that nations are very considerably advanced in civilization before they commit to writing records or memorials of any kind”, he simultaneously expresses the belief that Britain was unenlightened and failed to record any agricultural advancements until the fifteenth century.<sup>68</sup> His chronological list of agricultural writers thus starts in the fifteenth century with Thomas Lyttleton, who is hailed as the first agricultural writer despite the fact that his *Tenures* are of legal rather than agricultural merit. Paradoxically, Donaldson also includes a biographical entry for Robert Grosseteste, who composed managerial works in Latin and Anglo-French in the twelfth century, probably because an English translation of his *Rules* appeared in print around 1500.

### 1.3.ii Twentieth-century scholarship

Fifty years after Donaldson, Donald McDonald, in his 1908 anthology *Agricultural Writers from Sir Walter of Henley to Arthur Young, 1200–1800*,<sup>69</sup> suggested that the English agricultural written tradition started after the Norman conquest with Walter of Henley, whom he hails as a knight. In his introduction, McDonald reflects upon a growing tension in national politics, as he discusses the

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<sup>66</sup> Andrew McRae, “Tusser, Thomas (c. 1524-1580), writer on agriculture and poet”, *ODNB*, retrieved 15 November 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Hanna explains the influence of nationalist sentiments on the study of philology in “Middle English Books”, 158.

<sup>68</sup> John Donaldson, *Agricultural Biography: Containing a Notice of the Life and Writings of the British Authors on Agriculture, From the Earliest Date in 1480 to the Present Time* (London: 1854), p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Donald McDonald, *Agricultural Writers: From Sir Walter of Henley to Arthur Young, 1200-1800: Reproductions in Facsimile and Extracts from Their Actual Writings, Enlarged and Revised from Articles Which Have Appeared in “the Field”, from 1903 to 1907: to Which is Added an Exhaustive Bibliography* (London: Cox, 1908).

need to look at England's agricultural past in order to become a self-sufficient nation: "[a]n agricultural country," he argues, "has within itself the necessaries of life, and to maintain these there will never be wanting a host of patriotic men".<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, he notes that while the operations and implementation of husbandry have not changed much since the Middle Ages, the corpus of agricultural literature is scant, echoing Donaldson's claim that

[i]t required a very advanced state of the arts and of literature to produce in those days a treatise on any one practical subject exclusively, and the simpler and more common the arts the less they are noticed in the early literature of a nation, and there would seem to be no other means of tracing the progress of husbandry than by the manuscripts of the monks who troubled to record the experiences of their labours.<sup>71</sup>

Clearly, the purpose of McDonald's efforts of retracing the manuscripts of the supposed medieval monks who wrote about agriculture is to glorify the British nation: "these old writers have never been given the justice they deserve in the story of the progress of Agriculture in Great Britain".<sup>72</sup> In his quest for the nation's major agricultural writers, Donaldson reinstates a number of misattributions, ascribing the poem on purchasing land (see after) to John Fortescue, Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* to Robert Grosseteste, and *Epistola de Cura rei famularis* to St Bernard of Clairvaux. These medieval misattributions show how *auctoritas* was induced by adding the name of a valued contemporary scholar, and the fact that *fin de siècle* scholars uncritically reproduced the names of alleged authors suggests that they still measured the relevance of an agricultural work by the presence of a named authority.

During the First World War, Dorothea Waley Singer attempted to unite the full corpus of medieval factual prose in her "Hand-list of Scientific MSS. in the British Isles Dating from Before the Sixteenth Century", which was printed in 1917.<sup>73</sup> Waley Singer's supposition that no manuscript

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<sup>70</sup> The first paragraph of Donaldson's introduction reappears word-for-word in Cuthbert W. Johnson's *The Farmer's Encyclopedia: And Dictionary of Rural Affairs; Embracing All the Most Recent Discoveries in Agricultural Chemistry* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1844), p. 33, albeit without reference to the original text.

<sup>71</sup> McDonald, pp. B-B1.

<sup>72</sup> McDonald, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Dorothea Waley Singer, "Hand-list of Scientific Mss. in the British Isles Dating from Before the Sixteenth Century", *Transactions of the Bibliographic Society* XV (1917): 185-199.



collection of a single country is more favourable than that of Great Britain, which she claims is due to the “comparative exemption from operations of war on [British] soil”, suggests that her efforts may have been motivated by preservationist reasons.<sup>74</sup> Also illustrative of the link between medieval culture and building a national identity are the articles written by Constance M. Villiers that were published in the American *Lotus Magazine* in 1917, in which the author traces European gardening trends back to their medieval origins.<sup>75</sup> In effect, Villiers’ harkening back to prior agricultural writings in an attempt to develop a nation’s agricultural history is in itself recursive of what happened during the premodern period. By comparison, the translation of Palladius that was prepared for Duke Humphrey in the fifteenth century conveys prosperity through scientific development, in the same way as the Roman colonising strategy depended in part on the propagation of their agricultural innovations by means of agronomical literature.

During the first half of the twentieth century, wartime nationalism necessarily influenced the appreciation of medieval agricultural and horticultural literature, and this did not end in the interbellum years. Just ahead of the Second World War, the Czech scholar Gerhard Eis prepared the first edition of a vernacular translation of *Godfridus super Palladium* (henceforth *GSP*), a text on grafting fruit trees originally prepared in Latin by a Franconian monk. Eis, who at that time was a member of the NSDAP, published his edition under the title *Gottfried’s Pelzbuch* in 1944, and believed the Middle High German translation of the text to be the most widespread and thus most important variant of this text. The propagandist intent behind this publication is evident from the following lines:

... as the first systematic text about pomology and viticulture, [Gottfried’s book] should be given a prominent position in the history of German horticulture, and as trailblazer of the progress of the areas that are opened up by the German *Ostsiedlung* [German eastward expansion], it deserves to be at the forefront of the cultural history of the *Ostforschung*

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<sup>74</sup> Waley Singer, “Hand-list”, 95.

<sup>75</sup> Constance M. Villiers-Stuart, “Nationality in Gardening”, *The Lotus Magazine* 8.8 (1917): 339–348, and “Nationality in Gardening (Continued)”, *The Lotus Magazine* 8.9 (1917): 387–396.

[Studies of the East].<sup>76</sup>

Clearly influenced by contemporary politics, Eis maps expansionist language onto his medieval source text, presenting Gottfried, a monk from Franconia who roamed the Mediterranean in search of agricultural knowledge, as a pioneer in “kulturgeschichtliche Ostforschung”. As David Cylkowski rightly notes, “Eis was apparently unaware of the English manuscripts of the treatise” and of Gottfried’s connection to the English monk and horticultural writer Nicholas Bollard.<sup>77</sup> The scholarly interest into the Middle High German version of Gottfried’s text seems to have been subdued until 1970, when Roswitha Ankenbrand’s PhD dissertation on the treatise was published.<sup>78</sup> Successively, Willy Braekman, a specialist in practical literature from the Low Countries, prepared editions of the Middle English version of Gottfried’s and Nicholas Bollard’s grafting treatises.<sup>79</sup> In 1994, Cylkowski provided a new scholarly edition of the Middle English *GSP*.<sup>80</sup> The Iberian and Romance translations of *GSP* were edited more recently, by Maria Antònia Martí Escayol and Thomas Capuano.<sup>81</sup> In addition, Stephen Shepherd prepared an edition of a Middle English text that is in part related to Nicholas Bollard and Gottfried von Franken, which was published in a 2016 article.<sup>82</sup> As of yet, not all medieval European vernacular versions of *GSP* have been edited which, again, demonstrates the amount of ground there is still to be gained in the study of this text.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> “...als erste systematische Schrift über Obst- und Weingärtnerie gehört es [Gottfried’s *Pelzbuch*] in den Mittelpunkt der Geschichte des deutschen Gartenbaus, und als Wegbereiter des Fortschritts in den durch die deutsche Ostsiedlung erschlossenen Gebieten muss ihm die kulturgeschichtliche Ostforschung einen vorderen Platz einräumen” see Gerhard Eis, *Gottfried’s Pelzbuch* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1944), p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> David G. Cylkowski, “A Middle English Treatise on Horticulture”, in *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England*, ed. Lister M. Matheson (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1994), 301-331; 304.

<sup>78</sup> Roswitha Ankenbrand, *Das Pelzbuch Des Gottfried Von Franken*, (PhD Dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1970).

<sup>79</sup> W.L. Braekman, “Bollard’s Middle English Book of Planting and Grafting and its Background”, *Studia Neophilologica* 57.1 (1985): 19-39 and *Geoffrey of Franconia’s Book of Trees and Wine* (Brussel: Omirel, 1989).

<sup>80</sup> Cylkowski, “A Middle English Treatise”, pp. 301-331.

<sup>81</sup> Maria Antònia Martí Escayol, “Two Iberian Versions of Gottfried of Franconia’s *Pelzbuch*”, *Sudboffs Archiv* 95.2 (2011): 129-57; Thomas Capuano, “The Romance Translations of Geoffrey of Franconia’s “*Pelzbuch*”” *Mediaevistik* 24 (2011): 175-217.

<sup>82</sup> Stephen H. A. Shepherd, “A Scribe-Grafter at Work: Middle English Horticultural Notes Appended to a Wycliffite New Testament”, *Notes and Queries* 63 (2016): 1-7.

<sup>83</sup> In recent years, the German version of *GSP* has received more attention from scholars. For an overview of recent publications and an updated list of manuscripts containing *GSP* (in Latin, German, Czech, and English) see Martina Giese, “Das ‘Pelzbuch’ Gottfrieds von Franken: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung”, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 134.3 (2005): 294-335.

Research into the Anglo-French group of managerial texts also intensified at the turn of the twentieth century. The corpus of Anglo-French accounting treatises was first edited by Elizabeth Lamond in the late nineteenth century, whose edition comprises Walter of Henley's *Husbandry*, the anonymous *Husbandry*, the anonymous legal text *Senechaucie*, and Robert Grosseteste's *Rules*.<sup>84</sup> Lamond provided an English translation of these works in order to grant the members of the Royal Historical Society and students of history access to this text. In the earliest edition of these texts, Lamond explicated that, while she did not intend to offer a critical edition that would avail the study of language or literature, it was not her aim to altogether neglect "the literary interest which attaches to these", and expressed hope that a critical edition of the texts would be made in the future.<sup>85</sup> Surely enough, in 1934, Eileen Power presented a paper "on the need for a new edition of *Walter of Henley*" as, according to P.D.A. Harvey, "Lamond's edition was an imperfect guide" to these Anglo-French works.<sup>86</sup> Power's call to action was finally answered in 1971, when Dorothea Oschinsky's edition *Walter of Henley and other Treatises on Estate Management and Accounting* was published.<sup>87</sup>

### 1.3.iii Contemporary scholarship

Oschinsky's exhaustive edition of Anglo-French and Latin manorial accounting treatises proved vital in the development of the scholarly discourse on practical literature. For one of the most influential medievalists, Michael Clanchy, these Anglo-French treatises signified the development of practical literacy in medieval Britain.<sup>88</sup> More recent contributions to the study of these four Anglo-French texts include Louise Wilkinson's chapter on Grosseteste's Anglo-French *Rules* from

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<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, Together with an Anonymous Husbandry, Senechaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules* (London: Longmans, 1890), p. VIII.

<sup>85</sup> Lamond, *Husbandry*, p. VIII.

<sup>86</sup> P.D.A. Harvey, "Agricultural Treatises and Manorial Accounting in Medieval England", *The Agricultural History Review*, 20. 2 (1972): 170-182, p. 170.

<sup>87</sup> In his review of Oschinsky's edition, Harvey correctly predicted that "we may be certain that forty years hence we or our successors will have no reason to meet for a discussion 'On the need for a new edition of Walter of Henley', as no attempt has been made since, see Harvey, "Agricultural Treatises", p. 180.

<sup>88</sup> See Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066 – 1307*, third edition (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

2003,<sup>89</sup> and Alexander Falileyev's edition of a Middle Welsh and an Early Modern Welsh translation of *Walter of Henley* (2006), which provides a valuable addition to and a critical re-evaluation of Oschinsky's edition.<sup>90</sup>

Further contributions that are of note regarding the historiography of British agriculture include the monumental series *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, which was published between 1967 and 2001. The fourth and fifth volumes of the *Agrarian History* (printed in 1967 and 1984, respectively) concern medieval agriculture and were published under the general editorship of economic historian Joan Thirsk.<sup>91</sup> Like many twentieth-century histories of agriculture, however, *Agrarian History* is not concerned with literary implications of agricultural texts per se, but focuses on economic history and archaeological research from specific regions of medieval England and Wales. The 1980s also saw the publication of two essay collections that have been seminal in the study of Middle English utilitarian literature: A. S. G. Edwards' *Middle English Prose* (1984) and Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall's *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475* (1989). Both contain articles on medical prose and scientific manuscripts (Linda Ehrensam Voigts in Edwards 1984), and utilitarian and scientific prose, by Laurel Braswell (in Griffiths & Pearsall, 1989). In the same decade, Linne R. Mooney completed a PhD dissertation called "Practical Didactic Works in Middle English: Edition and Analysis of the Class of Short Middle English Works Containing Useful Information", which unfortunately remains unpublished. Her subsequent publications include important contributions to the field of practical literature, including astrology, medicine, almanacks and various other practical writings.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Louise J. Wilkinson, "The Rules of Robert Grosseteste Reconsidered: The Lady as Estate and Household Manager in Thirteenth-Century England", in *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe, c. 850-c. 1550: Managing Power, Wealth, and the Body*, ed. C. Beattie, A. Maslakovic, and S. Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 294-306.

<sup>90</sup> Alexander Falileyev, *Welsh Walter of Henley* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 2006).

<sup>91</sup> As Christopher Dyer notes in his obituary for Thirsk, she managed to convey that "many books on farming and household management [...] were an important means of spreading ideas" rather than mainly historical artefacts, see "Joan Thirsk obituary", *The Guardian*, 15 October 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/oct/15/joan-thirsk>

<sup>92</sup> Mooney's publications include "A Middle English Text on the Seven Liberal Arts," *Speculum* 68.4 (1993): 1027-1052, "English Almanacks from Script to Print" in *Texts and their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. John Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 11-25; "Editing Astrological and Prognostic Texts" in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, ed. Vincent P. McCarren and Douglas Moffat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), "Chaucer and Interest in Astronomy at the Court of Richard II" (1999), and "Manuscript Evidence for

Standing out against more narrowly focused historical works on agriculture, Mauro Ambrosoli's 1992 book, translated in English under the title *The Wild and the Sown: Botany and Agriculture in Western Europe, 1350-1850* pays particular attention to the rise of agricultural literature in the medieval west. Notably, Ambrosoli dedicates one chapter to the legacy of Palladius, Pietro de' Crescenzi, and Xenophon in medieval English literature. However, his language is flowery and abounds in generalisations. Ambrosoli states, for instance, that Nicholas Bolland's treatise survives "in unskilled, often quite illegible lettering",<sup>93</sup> and that readers of this work were "enthralled by the magical world of links with the moon" and fascinated by fruit trees.<sup>94</sup> Nonetheless, despite a tendency to Disneyfy, Ambrosoli adequately outlines the pan-European traditions in medieval agricultural writing, and stresses the importance of their classical origins.

In 1998, a full comprehensive sourcebook on medieval agricultural literature became available with the publication of the tenth volume of *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English: Works of Science and Information* which allowed scholars for the first time to access and analyse this corpus of writings. Keiser's own familiarity with the corpus in the *Manual* resulted in several contributions to the study of practical texts, which I will refer to in my discussions of practical works.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, following the publication of this volume of Keiser's *Manual*, research into agricultural literature came full circle with a revival of interest into the Middle English translation of Palladius' *De Re Rustica*. Needless to say, scholars writing in the late-twentieth century approached this Middle English translation from a very different angle than their Victorian predecessors. As Keiser wrote in the early 2000s, "writings that had once seemed marginal and deserving of concern only for their philological value are now being shown to be central to an understanding of literary, social, intellectual, political, and cultural history".<sup>96</sup>

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the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts" (2004).

<sup>93</sup> Mauro Ambrosoli, *The Wild and the Sown: Botany and Agriculture in Western Europe* (Cambridge: UP, 1997), p. 33.

<sup>94</sup> Ambrosoli, *The Wild and the Sown*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>95</sup> Keiser's publications include "Through a Fourteenth-Century Gardener's Eyes: Henry Daniel's Herbal" (1996), "Practical Books for the Gentleman" (1999), "Scientific, Medical and Utilitarian Prose" (2004), "Rosemary: Not Just for Remembrance" (2008).

<sup>96</sup> George Keiser, "Scientific, Medical, and Utilitarian Prose" in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004): 231-248, p. 242. To illustrate, A. S. G. Edwards, Alessandra Petrina, and Daniel Wakelin

## 1.4 Conclusion

This brief review of scholarly publications on the subject of medieval agricultural literature has portrayed a development in the appreciation of utilitarian texts from being viewed as containers of historical or linguistic evidence to being considered as full-bodied literary products. Moreover, it has sketched a move towards situating agricultural texts in a global, rather than a nationalistic, context. Despite a growing appraisal of agricultural texts among literary scholars, however, many publications on this type of literature remain influenced by pervasive notions that practical texts are de facto non-literary. While ideas about authorship shifted in the last decades of the twentieth century, anonymous texts, whether they be literary or ‘utilitarian’, have been routinely neglected in favour of texts written by established authors, and the results of this skewed interest in literary works are still felt today. While repositories such as Keiser’s *Manual* has become indispensable to scholars of medieval utilitarian literature, they have nonetheless straitjacketed the corpus of Middle English factual works into unwieldy categorisations. Increasingly, however, scholars have come to appreciate the discursive openness of medieval literature: a single text, regardless its genre, may have been read for both leisure and edification, and it may appeal to audiences from different social and professional backgrounds. For texts that are perceived as literary, such as romances and hagiographies, textual openness seems obvious, while the multifaceted qualities of non-literary texts are frequently overlooked. Yet, as I will argue in the following chapter, the boundaries between the literary and non-literary are not so straightforward as the *Manual* would have us believe, and a careful consideration of practical literature and their origins is required to retrieve how these text may have served their readers in different ways.

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regard Humphrey’s translation not as a practical work of limited literary merit but highlight its importance in the context of fifteenth-century politics and humanism, see Edwards, “The ME Translation of Claudian’s *De Consulatu Stilichonis*”, in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 267-278, and Edwards, “Duke Humphrey’s Middle English Palladius Manuscript” in *The Lancastrian Court: Proceedings of the 2001 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Jenny Stratford (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003): 68-78; Alessandra Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature, 1430-1530* (Oxford: UP, 2007).



# Chapter 2: Husbandry books: production and readership

## 2.1 Introduction

As I have shown in the literary review in the previous chapter, the role of agricultural literature in the daily lives of late-medieval readers has thus far not received a great deal of scholarly attention. This chapter will therefore provide a closer look at the different contexts in which husbandry books were read, both in terms of the manuscripts into which they were copied and the social context in which they circulated.

## 2.2 Reader engagement with husbandry texts

### 2.2.i *Written responses*

A seemingly reliable way of tracing the reader reception of practical literature is to look for reader engagement with a text, such as written responses, marginal notes, manicules or notae signs, fingerprints, or censorship. Yet, as Julie Orlemanski experienced when she hunted down written responses to medical texts, written responses are hard to come by: even though the genre of medical writings witnessed the most spectacular surge of interest in the fifteenth century, it nonetheless “generated relatively little ‘meta-discourse’—that is, little theoretical or polemical comment on the spread of medical information and expertise”.<sup>97</sup> Occasionally, compilers of agricultural texts incorporated their criticisms in the texts they copy, such as the French nobleman who compiled a manuscript for his young wife, which has become known as *Le Ménagier de Paris*. This scribe added the note “this I do not believe” to a recipe for restoring the colours of a faded fabric, but even though he seems to have been quite convinced of the inadequacy of the instruction, the verb ‘believe’ implies that he apparently did not test the instruction to disprove it empirically.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Julie Orlemanski, “Thornton’s Remedies and the Practices of Medical Reading” in *Robert Thornton and his Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, edited by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014): 235-257, p. 240.

<sup>98</sup> Eileen Power, *The Goodman of Paris (Le Ménagier de Paris)*, (London: Folio Society, 1992), p. 141.



Moreover, in the sections which he copied from the treatise of Nicholas Bollard which, as I will discuss in Chapter 3, are arguably even more incredible than the colour-restoring mixture, the French nobleman did not voice his scepticisms.

In fact, none of the manuscripts containing agricultural texts which I have been able to view contain any critical remark or sign to assume that medieval readers experimented with their contents and (dis)agreed with them. This is not to say that medieval readers did not voice their opinions on practical texts: a note of approval, for instance, was added to medical compendium Cambridge, Trinity College R. 14.52: “This boke of medecynes is provid & tryede to be true you may be well assurydt that every kynd of medecyne ys wonderfull good for the desease hit sprakth of as any be in all the worlde”.<sup>99</sup> By contrast, a reader of another medical and practical multi-text manuscript, Cambridge University Library Ee.1.13 (34), was decidedly less impressed by its contents. This fifteenth-century manuscript, which consists of the Middle English herbal *Macer floridus*, astrological texts and images, various medical recipes and charms, and various later additions relating to medicine and cookery, has been supplied with the note “This booke is littell worthe / so saithe Tome Trothe” on an empty space between a medical and a culinary recipe.<sup>100</sup> It seems to have been written by an early modern reader, who apparently deemed the entire volume to be quite useless.

In addition to the responses written privately by copyists and readers, literary works written for a wider audience may offer some insight into the reception of utilitarian literature in the later Middle Ages. Geoffrey Chaucer, for instance, appears sceptical of reading classical texts with the purpose of obtaining practical knowledge. As Lisa Cooper observes, the characters in Chaucer’s *Squire’s Tale* are presented as a group of readers who are proficient in the practical texts written by

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<sup>99</sup> In her forthcoming article “This is a good treatment”: Placebo and Meaning Responses in Early Medieval English Medicine”, Rebecca Brackmann argues that self-affirmative claims about the success of medical recipes Old English leechbooks have the capacity to bring about a placebo-effect.

<sup>100</sup> Tom (Tell-)Truth is a stock character who makes his first appearance in Langland’s *Piers Plowman* as Tomme Trewe-tonge-telle-me-no-tales, see George Latimer Apperson and Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Proverbs* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007).

ancient *auctores*, but unskilled practitioners of their own professions.<sup>101</sup> When faced with paraphernalia such as a potent healing sword and fortune-telling mirror, they are largely unable to fathom the meaning of these objects despite their cursory knowledge of medicine and glassmaking. According to Cooper, the characters' "discursive knowledge" of the practical arts is "limited, [...], precisely *because* it is no more than discursive" and does not equate to a profound understanding of the world.<sup>102</sup>

Many books that were produced in the sixteenth century were marketed as equally edifying and entertaining, following the Horatian principle of *dulce et utile*. As Tusser writes in the poem quoted in the introduction to this chapter: "What looke ye for more in my booke? / Things nedefull in tyme for to come? Else misse I of that I do looke, / If pleasant thou findest not some".<sup>103</sup> A tongue-in-cheek note on a sixteenth-century printed tract of Xenophon's *Rules for Householders* also indicates that husbandry literature could have been read for entertainment. Based on the Greek text *Oeconomicus*, Xenophon's household regimen provides a series of dialogues between Socrates and a number of opponents.<sup>104</sup> According to Fiona Hobden, the *Oeconomicus* is primarily concerned with *learning* to become a householder: Xenophon supposes that knowledge can be obtained simply through observation.<sup>105</sup> This is evident in a section in which Isomachus and Socrates debate the "science of husbandry".<sup>106</sup> Socrates states that learning about husbandry is similar to learning a language. Even if, at a certain point, learners do not understand the meaning of individual letters, they have to learn them in order to learn a language. Similarly, a person who wants to practise husbandry must learn to understand the appropriate mechanics, although he can never be sure how to employ them without having obtained first-hand experience. In return, Isomachus argues that

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<sup>101</sup> Lisa H. Cooper, "The Poetics of Practicality" in *Middle English*, ed Paul Strohm (Oxford: UP, 2007): 492-506, p. 494.

<sup>102</sup> Cooper, "The Poetics of Practicality", p. 494.

<sup>103</sup> Tusser, *A Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandry* (1570), *STC* 2373.

<sup>104</sup> Fiona Hobden, "Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon*, ed. Michael A. Flower (Cambridge: UP, 2017): 152-173.

<sup>105</sup> Translated by Fiona Hobden in "Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*", p. 167.

<sup>106</sup> Gentian Hervet, *Xenophons Treatise of Housholde*, (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1532), p. 47 (*STC* 26069, *EEBO* scanned image no. 48). This copy of the printed tract is now kept at the Bodleian Library.

farming is unlike other sciences: one need not invest much time, pain, nor labour in it. Husbandry, he continues, can be learnt partly by looking at labourers, and partly by hearing about it. A person who has learned the practice through osmosis, Isomachus posits, may even teach others about husbandry. Good husbandmen, unlike other artificers, do not hide their trade secrets: even the best tree-planter would be happy to have others look at his work and copy his ways. Intriguingly, the sixteenth-century owner of the translated *Oeconomicus* uses the image of an experienced husbandman who teaches others, and subverts it *per antiphrasis*:

I send thys boke to you that hathe noe nede there of yn exsperians but to loke there on for your plesure: to se the fowlyssnes of my selfe: & tham that neuer wold lerne to be gud husbandes.<sup>107</sup>

This note suggests that the addressee is already an experienced householder who may simply read the book for pleasure. The reason why Xenophon's book should be enjoyable to this person is not directly obvious: reading the book may interest a householder because of its ethical discourse on estate-management, but this would not necessarily amuse him. Instead, the sender claims that by reading Xenophon, the addressee may see the foolishness of those people who will never learn to be good farmers, the sender included. Most likely, however, the writer of this note does not consider himself to be foolish at all: he employs the humility-topos, styling himself as a Socratic figure who stays humble despite being the most knowledgeable opponent. As the *Oeconomicus* makes clear, learning to be a good householder is not done by reading, but by looking and listening. The sender's note, nonetheless, exemplifies the texts' flexibility: it shows that there is an interest in garnering practical (agricultural) advice from texts that may simultaneously be viewed as entertaining.<sup>108</sup>

While it is relatively easy to deduce the multiple uses of early modern books by their frontispieces, the possible recreational qualities of medieval texts are usually not signposted by their

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<sup>107</sup> Hervet, *Xenophon's Treatise of Housbolde*, frontispiece.

<sup>108</sup> Early Modern printed tracts can be seen as a form of 'edutainment' *avant la lettre*, i.e. "an activity or product (esp. in the electronic media) intended to be educational as well as enjoyable; informative entertainment" (*OED*, s.v. 'edutainment, n.').

scribes. This does not mean, however, that practical texts in manuscripts were not also read for leisure: as Cooper argues, “the appeal of the how-to texts in later medieval England is something that literary critics have yet fully to grasp; [...] in exploring the genre’s intricate marriage of form and content, [...] we may find much more ‘work’ to do”.<sup>109</sup> Answering to this call, the following section intends to clarify the socio-cultural importance of agricultural texts that circulated during the later Middle Ages. By means of exploring the intellectual networks and the manuscripts in which these texts circulated, it aims to establish the various motivations readers could have for the collection, composition, and consumption of husbandry books.

### 2.2.ii Husbandry literature in multi-text manuscripts

Middle English works on cultivation, landownership, estate-management and animal husbandry are almost exclusively found in manuscripts that proffer a wide-ranging variety of contents. Such manuscripts containing more than one textual unit are most commonly known as composite manuscripts, (household) miscellanies, anthologies, and commonplace books.<sup>110</sup> Each of these terms implies a slightly different purpose and they cannot, therefore, be used interchangeably. Composite manuscripts, for instance, are usually made up of multiple codicological units, such as booklets, which may have circulated independently before the manuscript was bound. Therefore, a manuscript containing a single text—say, for instance, the *Canterbury Tales*—plus an added paste-down (a piece of parchment or paper) containing the last couple of verses (for instance because the scribe had run out of space), can technically be classified as a composite manuscript. While a useful term to describe the codicology of a manuscript, ‘composite’ does not provide any information about the contents of a manuscript: it is neutral, but also empty. The term says very little about the actual contents of a work: a manuscript containing a long text and a shopping list is

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<sup>109</sup> Cooper, “The Poetics of Practicality”, p. 504. Also, in her 2011 book *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late Medieval England*, Cooper further discusses practicality as a literary construct.

<sup>110</sup> See Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards, “Towards a Taxonomy of Middle English Manuscript Assemblages” in *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain*, eds. Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (Oxford: University Press, 2015), 263-280.

just as much of a composite manuscript as a codex containing separate booklets on a similar subject.

Several of the manuscripts that form part of my research are classified by Derek Pearsall as “late medieval English manuscripts of apparently miscellaneous content”,<sup>111</sup> also known as ‘miscellanies’. However, as opposed to ‘composite’, the term ‘miscellany’ is problematic precisely because it is *not* neutral: its connotation with miscellaneousness implies a haphazard organisation or selection of contents. According to Pratt et al., the term miscellany is frequently used to “describe homogenetic manuscripts with varied contents, [while] others use it to describe any manuscript of miscellaneous content, whether homogenetic or composite”.<sup>112</sup> The concept of ‘homogeneity’ derives from J.P. Gumbert’s terminology of what he calls “the stratigraphy of the non-homogeneous codex” and refers to manuscripts of which the contents were sourced within the same circle or milieu. Gumbert’s typology further defines two different kinds of codices based on the circumstances of their production: the first, *monogenetic* codices, are written by a single scribe and the second, *allogenetica* codices, contain units (booklets) that are imported from elsewhere.<sup>113</sup> Yet in spite of their apparent miscellaneity, manuscripts are necessarily influenced by sociocultural factors, and their compilation can, therefore, not be considered as truly arbitrary. Even more unwieldy, moreover, is the term ‘household miscellany’, which is commonly used to describe manuscripts that belonged to a family and which contain a variety of texts that may have been useful in daily life, such as recipes for rat poison and cures for the common cold. Since almost all people are at some stage part of a household, anything relevant to them may be considered relevant to the household, too. Classifying a manuscript on the basis of a ‘household purpose’ can thus be misleading and may result in misinterpretations of its use: as Pearsall argues, “[a]ny manuscript can

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<sup>111</sup> Derek Pearsall, “The Whole Book: Late Medieval English Manuscript Miscellanies and their Modern Interpreters” in Stephen Kelly, John J. Thompson, eds., *Imagined Histories of the Book: Current Paradigms and Future Directions* (Leiden: Brepols, 2005), 17-29.

<sup>112</sup> Karen Pratt, Bart Besamusca, Matthias Meyer, Ad Putter, eds., *The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript: Text Collections from a European Perspective*, (Göttingen: V&R, 2017), p. 13.

<sup>113</sup> J. Peter Gumbert, “Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogeneous Codex”, *Il codice miscellaneo. Tipologie e funzioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale*, Edoardo Crisci and Oronzo Pecere eds., *Segno e Testo* 2 (2003), 17-42.

be used for any purpose, even lighting the fire, but it would not be useful to include flammability as a feature that needs to be taken account of in our definitions”.<sup>114</sup> Stressing that the compilers of manuscripts were often not free to choose what went into their manuscripts Pearsall argues that we must focus on “circumstances of production” instead. Medieval compilers included items because they were at hand or because they had only had access to an exemplar for a limited amount of time. Because of this so-called ‘exemplar poverty’, they transferred a hodgepodge of unrelated and related items into their own manuscripts. Sometimes these items were organised in single, although not textually unified, gatherings or booklets.<sup>115</sup> A (household) miscellany is thus never truly miscellaneous: as soon as a compiler chooses not to copy a text from an exemplar, they are already involved in a process of selection.

In addition, the term ‘anthology’, a volume featuring texts that are linked by their author or theme, is also controversial as a codicological description: it connotes perceived homogeneity while an anthology may also be compiled out of booklets that were (re-)bound at a later stage.<sup>116</sup> To avoid confusion on the specific mode of compilation of a manuscript, Pratt et al. argue for the use of the neutral term ‘multi-text codex’ when referring to manuscript compilations consisting of more than one text, and I agree that this term is preferable to the other available options. Yet in spite of their resolution to use neutral terminology, Pratt et al. do suppose that “some truly miscellaneous books” exist; they are manuscripts comprising “‘factual’, practical material alongside works of religious devotion”.<sup>117</sup> Thus, Pratt et al. reason that utilitarian texts are less likely to end up in a homogenetic manuscript than, for instance, the short verse narratives that feature in their essay collection. The assumption that devotional texts in multi-text manuscripts are more often added out of anthologising intentions than collections of practical texts, however, strikes me as tenuous: medieval compilers did, in fact, commission practical and devotional texts as part of

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<sup>114</sup> Pearsall, “The Whole Book”, p. 24.

<sup>115</sup> Pearsall, “The Whole Book”, p. 25.

<sup>116</sup> Pratt et al., *Dynamics*, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> Pratt et al., *Dynamics*, p. 14.

cohesive, organised manuscripts.

An example of a monogenetic multi-text manuscript anthology of practical literature is London, Wellcome Library, MS 8004 (186), a late-medieval manuscript containing a wealth of scientific information alongside a supposedly unique pilgrimage itinerary. Because it is more lavishly outfitted than most medical manuscripts, and since it is written in the vernacular, the codex was most likely commissioned by a guild of barber-surgeons or an affluent individual who was interested in (personal) health-care. It is decidedly not a haphazard collection of materials but a bespoke manuscript with clear organizing principles, as the manuscript features two large illustrations that serve as accompaniments to the texts: a phlebotomy- or vein man, which is used for reference on bloodletting, and a so-called zodiac man showing the relation between astrological signs and parts of the body. Both of these images are stylistically non-standard and seem to have been inspired by the religious iconography used for private devotion.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, the mise-en-page of the manuscript is pre-planned: the word ‘ymago’ on fol. 19<sup>r</sup> indicates where the scribe left room for an illustration, and there are many in-text references to their respective diagrams that affirm the interrelation between text and image. To modern readers, the pilgrimage text may stand out among the medical and astrological contents, and attempts have been made to signal a medical interest in the pilgrimage text.<sup>119</sup> Yet the inclusion of the itinerary is not as wayward as it may seem: medieval readers may have sought to cure a physical ailment or cleanse their soul of sin through devotional reading or by going on an actual pilgrimage. Instead, when viewing the manuscript as a compendium that promotes the maintenance of both physical and spiritual health, the pilgrimage itinerary and the medical texts evidently serve a complementary function. Despite containing factual prose and a devotional text, MS 8004 is neither miscellaneous nor haphazard, nor the result

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<sup>118</sup> See Sara Öberg Strådal, “A Closer Look at the Zodiac and Phlebotomy Men in Wellcome MS 8004”, *Mittelalter: Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, 8 October 2016, a blog post which can be found at <https://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/8919>.

<sup>119</sup> On the basis of a partly illegible owner mark, Francis Davey maintains that the manuscript was copied by a physician called Richard of Lincoln, but I reckon that there is not enough evidence to uphold this hypothesis, see Davey, *Richard of Lincoln: A Medieval Doctor Travels to Jerusalem* (Exeter: Azure Publications, 2013), *passim*.

of exemplar poverty. Manuscripts such as these signify that presuppositions regarding the homogeneity and heterogeneity of a manuscript based on the genre of texts appearing in these manuscripts should be avoided, for they might lead to misunderstandings.

The process of anthologising seems, to me, not confined to literary pieces, but may also apply to utilitarian works. As Kelly and Thompson contend, medieval books are “artefacts [that] offer themselves as vestiges of a much broader, deeper, and more complex material culture than the simple fact of their survival to modern times as textual witnesses to the past might initially suggest”.<sup>120</sup> In their view, manuscripts and the narratives, idioms and figurative expressions within, are reflective of communal self-identification.<sup>121</sup> Following this reasoning it would be wrong to distinguish between literary texts and ‘practical’ works, especially since medieval readers did not maintain rigid boundaries between the texts that they read. Therefore, in this dissertation, I focus on a number of multi-text manuscripts containing both ‘practical’ and literary works, and explore in which ways these texts reflect the identity of their users.

### *2.2.iii Paratextual elements and signs of use*

In his chapter “Practical Books for the Gentleman”, Keiser provides a survey of medieval and early modern “technical manuals” on hawking, hunting, gardening, husbandry and courtesy, and argues that such utilitarian texts, which are often present in manuscripts owned by the medieval gentry, “addressed both the practical needs and the aspirations of their early owners”.<sup>122</sup> However, the ‘aspirational’ quality of a text is difficult to prove: for example, is it possible to tell whether the owner of a Middle English text about pomegranates aspired to grow this exotic fruit? One way of trying to answer the question of whether medieval readers had non-utilitarian motives for collecting practical literature is to assess methodologies that have been successfully used to prove that texts

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<sup>120</sup> See Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson, “Imagined Histories of the Book: Current Paradigms and Future Directions” in *Imagining the Book*, ed. Kelly and Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), p. 11.

<sup>121</sup> Kelly and Thompson, “Imagined Histories”, p. 9.

<sup>122</sup> Keiser, “Practical Books”, p. 474.



were put to practice, and look out for practical texts in manuscripts that fail to meet these criteria. In the following paragraphs I will, therefore, assess two key publications about the practical applications of the texts in medieval manuscripts: “Scientific, Medical and Utilitarian Prose” by Keiser (2004) and “Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts” by Mooney (2004).

Keiser’s article is based on the premise that the scribes who copied practical works, even long texts “with more complex and sophisticated forms and structures, [...] meant for them to serve utilitarian purposes”.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, Keiser maintains that evidence of textual utility manifests itself in the finding devices that were added to manuscripts:

Agricultural treatises would seem obviously intended for practical purposes, and the frequent presence of tables in manuscripts of *Godfridus super Palladium* attests to that. The reader in search of information about the growth and grafting of trees, cultivation of fruits and vegetables, and viniculture would have an easy time finding the desired material within this fairly short treatise, even without the aid of the table.<sup>124</sup>

Keiser’s phrasing, “would seem obviously intended”, is ever so slightly contradictory: while he goes on to admit that an apparatus is redundant when it has been added to a short and easily navigable text like *Godfridus super Palladium*, he nonetheless assumes it is there to facilitate reference to horticultural information. However, the presence of a table or finding aid in a manuscript does not prove a practical purpose; it may also betray a scribe’s intention to make information more presentable, authoritative and empirical, or simply indicate the presence of a table in the exemplar. What is more, the organisation of information in indices is by no means an exclusive feature of practical texts. For instance, a lavishly illuminated manuscript of John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* was supplied with an alphabetical yet, according to Derek Pearsall, “rather useless” index.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Keiser, “Utilitarian Prose”, p. 232.

<sup>124</sup> Keiser, “Scientific, Medical and Utilitarian Prose”, p. 236.

<sup>125</sup> Derek Pearsall, “The Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower’s Works”, in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. Siân Echard (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), 73-98; 96. The manuscript discussed is Pierpont Morgan MS M.126, see further Martha Dana Rust, *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books: Exploring the Manuscript Matrix* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 133.

Moreover, Keiser states that the addition of indices to the managerial tract Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* signals its functionality for farmers in the late-medieval period.<sup>126</sup> Yet the contents and form of the *Husbandry*, which I will further explore in §3.2.ii, render such an assumption doubtful. Henley's treatise is composed as a sermon written from the perspective of a father teaching his son about good husbandry and the moral duties of a demesne farmer. Perhaps, as later readers would look for practical know-how among Henley's obsolete information about the demesne system, the index would be useful to skip outdated information and go straight to the relevant sections. In addition, readers did not necessarily value the text for its practical information: the redactor of a late-medieval Welsh translation, who revised the *Husbandry* and stripped it of its homiletic aura, altered the text but did not improve its relevance to contemporary agriculture. Rather than writing "a definitive tract on husbandry", Falileyev argues, he produced a "literary and moralising tract of instruction".<sup>127</sup> It thus seems as though a text like Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* was valued for its moralising prose, and not strictly read for its practical information about estate-management.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, we cannot assume that readers of the *Husbandry* would use an index to find Henley's chapters on accounting; instead, they may have valued its moral and didactic lessons for landowners and navigated towards these chapters or memorise its contents.<sup>129</sup>

A final example of an agricultural text supplied with an index, which Keiser considers to be a "particularly eloquent testimony to the concern for the practical value of [agricultural] treatises", is the Middle English rhyme royal version of Palladius' *Opus Agriculturae*, translated for (and perhaps

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<sup>126</sup> Keiser, *Works of Science and Information*, p. 3689.

<sup>127</sup> Falileyev, *Welsh Walter*, p. xxi.

<sup>128</sup> There is an intriguing hypothesis that a famous later reader of the *Husbandry* may have consulted the treatise for non-managerial purposes: David Stone has suggested that Chaucer may have looked at Henley's treatise for source material on his description of the Reeve in his "General Prologue" in the *Canterbury Tales*. As Stone explains, both Chaucer and Henley describe a malpractice among reeves: they would calculate the amount of grain in the storage barn with level measuring scoops, while the threshers in the granary would measure the grain in heaped measures. Based on Chaucer's use of the French *gerner* (granary) instead of the Anglicised *garner* (or even *byrne*, barn), Stone suggests that Chaucer may have used a French source for his characterisation of the Reeve, with Henley's *Husbandry* as the most likely contender, see "The Reeve" in *Historians on Chaucer: The 'General Prologue' to the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Alistair Minnis and Stephen Rigby (Oxford: UP, 2014), 309-420, p. 409.

<sup>129</sup>As Kate L. Walter demonstrates, indices were also added to (religious) texts for mnemonic purposes, see her chapter "Reading Without Books" in *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin, eds., (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 115-131.

under the supervision of) Duke Humfrey of Gloucester.<sup>130</sup> Contrary to Keiser's view, Edwards posits that Duke Humfrey evidently did not order this work for its practical content; he certainly had the means to order bespoke texts on the subject if he had the mind to do so.<sup>131</sup> Rather, Humfrey's choice is motivated by humanist collectorship and political tactics. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Duke Humfrey d.2 (229) is the original manuscript containing the Middle English translation of Palladius from the Duke's personal library. According to Edwards, it is the only Middle English verse translation commissioned and owned by the Duke, and possibly even the oldest translation of a classical text into Middle English.<sup>132</sup> In addition, Edwards discusses the relation between the Duke of Gloucester's copy of Palladius and Richard, Duke of York's commission of a translation of Claudian's *De consulatu Stilichonis* and concludes that Humfrey ordered the presentation copy to boost his public image.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, a second copy of the Middle English *Palladius*, Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 104 (62), was likely a presentation copy that was also never intended to be used practically.<sup>134</sup> The manuscript contains a visually identical rendition of the original manuscript, its rich illuminations indicating that it was intended for an affluent patron.<sup>135</sup> A third copy, now catalogued as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Add. A.369 (201), contains an incomplete copy of the Middle-English *Palladius*. The text is accompanied by an alphabetical index which refers to the original foliation of the manuscript, and has been provided with Latin glosses (marginal glosses in red and interlinear glosses in black).<sup>136</sup> Keiser claims that the apparatus attached to this manuscript facilitated navigation to each chapter, evidently rendering it a reference work; however, the index may simply have improved the look and feel of the text rather than

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<sup>130</sup> DIMEV 1071; Keiser, *Works of Science and Information*, listing 3689.

<sup>131</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, "Duke Humfrey's Middle English Palladius Manuscript", in *The Lancastrian Court: Proceedings of the 2001 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Jenny Stratford (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003): 68-78, p. 74.

<sup>132</sup> Edwards, "De Consulatu Stilichonis", p. 277.

<sup>133</sup> Edwards, "De Consulatu Stilichonis", p. 277.

<sup>134</sup> See Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, p. 44.

<sup>135</sup> John Young & P.H. Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1908), 108-109. Wakelin suggests that the second intended reader might have been Duke Humphrey's nephew, Henry VI, see Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, p. 45.

<sup>136</sup> Richard W. Hunt & Falconer Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford Which Have Not Hitherto Been Catalogued in the Quarto Series: With References to the Oriental and Other Manuscripts* Vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1851-1935), p. 657.

provided any real practical use.<sup>137</sup> The codex contains two sixteenth-century owner's marks on f. 122v, Thomas Nevet and William Nevet, which may refer to members of the noble Knyvett family.<sup>138</sup> If this manuscript was indeed owned by one of these Knyvetts, it is unlikely that these noble readers would have used *Palladius* for actual gardening; rather, I follow Wakelin's hypothesis that later readers were those who emulated the literary interests of the 'imaginary reader' of the text, the Duke of Gloucester. All things considered, judging the practicality of texts based on the presence of finding aids is tenuous: just as a practical text lacking a finding aid may have been utilised intensively, so may a literary work attain an air of applicability just by the addition of an index. As paratextual elements do not offer compelling evidence that a text was used for reference or even practical use, proof of manuscript usage has to be sourced in different ways.

Mooney, on the other hand, states her research question more tentatively, asking "whether any concrete evidence survives to demonstrate that these texts containing scientific or utilitarian instruction were actually used by the late medieval and early modern owners of the manuscripts in which they are preserved".<sup>139</sup> Mooney divides instructional manuscripts into three different categories: the first type, unbound quires or booklets, focus on a single subject, are cheap and easy to carry around, and quick to consult.<sup>140</sup> Several of these booklets remained unbound until the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries and are now, misleadingly, part of larger volumes. The second category comprises collections of scientific and utilitarian texts that would have been commissioned or written by somebody with a professional interest in these works. Mooney

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<sup>137</sup> Keiser, "Practical Books", p. 484.

<sup>138</sup> See *Summary Catalogue Vol. 5*, pp. 657-8. The identity of the two Nevets who signed their names cannot be ascertained for certain, but there are some possible contenders. For instance, Sir Thomas Knyvett (1482-1515), a courtier of Henry VIII, who was the grandson of Sir William Knyvett (c. 1440-1515). Their family also includes a number of Thomases, (b. 1523), (b. 1539), (b. 1545), (b. 1558). If the manuscript was owned by two successive generations of Knyvetts, the most likely contenders are William Knyvett of Fundenhall, Norfolk (1535-1612) and his son Thomas (1563-1595). Another Thomas Knyvett (c. 1539-1618), who was High Sherriff of Norfolk in 1579-80, is known for his large manuscript and printed book collection, but Add. MS. A369 does not appear among the manuscripts listed in D.J. McKitterick, *The Library of Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe* (Cambridge: UP, 1978). Thomas Knyvett of Norfolk did own a copy of Columella's *De Re Rustica* (Paris, 1543) and ten books attributed to Anthony Fitzherbert (though not his *Boke of Husbandry*).

<sup>139</sup> Linne R. Mooney, "Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts" in *Interstices: Studies in Late Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A.G. Rigg*, Richard Firth Green and Linne R. Mooney, eds., (Toronto: UP, 2004), 184-202, p. 185.

<sup>140</sup> Mooney, "Manuscript Evidence", p. 186.

provides examples of medical practitioners whose collections include (medical) recipes, astrological texts and prognostications, herbals, and instructions for leechcraft and uroscopy. It should be noted, however, that medical volumes form an exceptionally cohesive category of manuscripts among all compilations of practical works. The third and also most diverse category comprises multi-text manuscripts that, beside utilitarian texts, often contain historical, narrative, and devotional literature.<sup>141</sup> One way of telling which instructional manuscripts were not meant for daily use, Mooney explains, is to get a sense of the expense of production and to assess its current state: some luxury manuscripts include the same texts as cheaper productions, but their pristine appearance is a clear indicator of non-use compared to the wear and tear seen in the manuscripts that were actively utilised.<sup>142</sup>

To separate “the merely useful from the actually used” Mooney subjects each manuscript to the following five questions: are owner’s or scribe’s additions related to their occupation? Is the form of the manuscript designed for use? What kind of annotations or additions are added by its owner(s)? Is there physical wear caused by intensive use? Is there material evidence of use?<sup>143</sup> Only the last three questions, Mooney admits, can offer conclusive evidence as to the manuscript’s actual usage, and helped her identify several medical volumes and booklets, folding maps, calendars and almanacks that all displaying signs of their owners’ use. Her survey ends with a discussion of Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.506 (249), a practical compendium that contains plant material and the remains of an insect, which indicates that the manuscript was taken outside.<sup>144</sup> Overall, Mooney’s findings suggest that the practical books showing the most conclusive evidence of daily use were those owned by medical practitioners. Apart from Rawlinson C.506, a manuscript to which I will return in Chapter 5, Mooney has not found any manuscript containing agricultural or horticultural information that suggests direct engagement with its contents.

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<sup>141</sup> Mooney refers to these manuscripts as miscellanies or commonplace books. For the sake of terminological consistency, I refer to these books as multi-text manuscripts, in accordance with my previous section on methodology.

<sup>142</sup> Mooney, “Manuscript Evidence”, p. 187.

<sup>143</sup> Mooney, “Manuscript Evidence”, p. 187.

<sup>144</sup> The manuscript and its owner will be discussed in more detail in §4.4.iv.

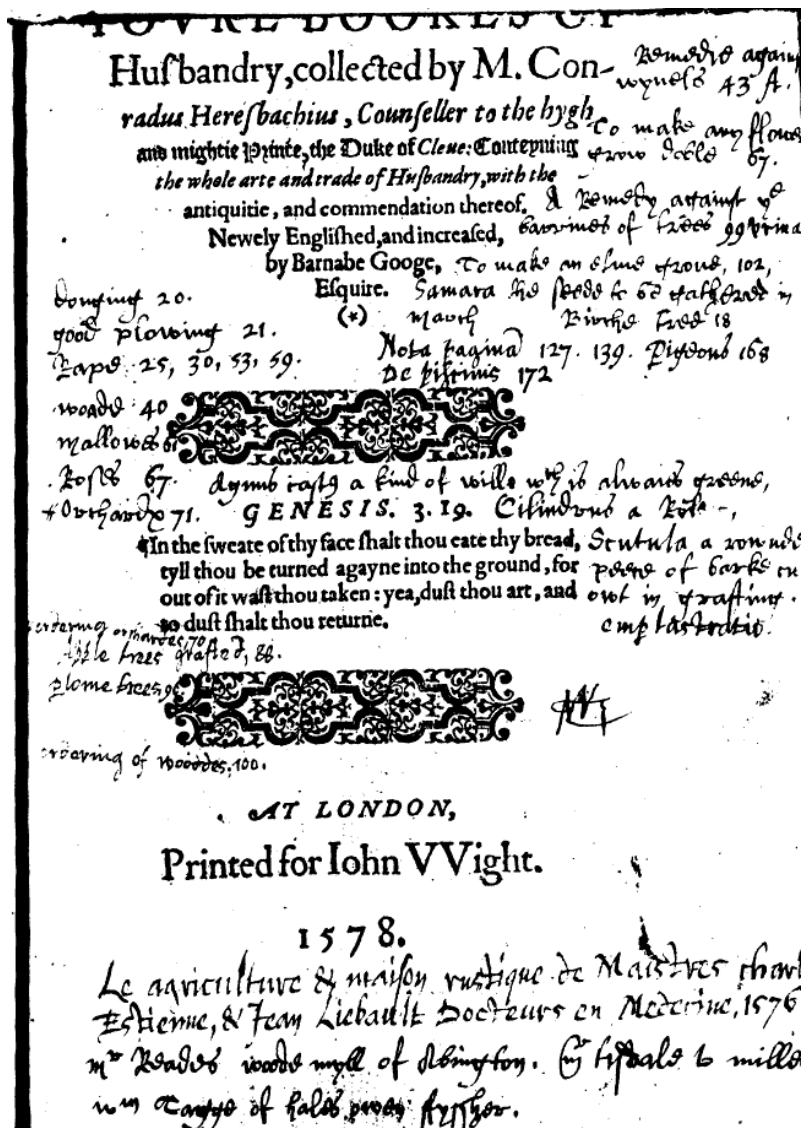


Figure 1: An annotated copy of Barnabe Googe's *Four Bookes of Husbandry* (STC, 26069)

Early modern printed books, on the other hand, are more frequently annotated. A copy of Googe's *Four Bookes of Husbandry*, shown above, contains a title page that is crammed with references to chapters that were apparently of interest to its annotator,<sup>145</sup> such as pigeon-keeping, fishponds, good ploughing, growing rapeseed and roses, making any flower grow double, and grafting apple and plum trees in the orchard. Moreover, the reader added a reference to a French husbandry book (*L'agriculture & maison rustique* by Charles Estienne and Jean Liébault),<sup>146</sup> and some explanations of

<sup>145</sup> The title page contains references to "Reades woode myll of Abington", Tisdale, and "W[il]iam Hagge of Halesowen fyssher". On the basis of these notes, it is possible that the annotator lived in the vicinity of Birmingham.

<sup>146</sup> Charles Estienne (1504–1564) notably authored educational texts for children, such as the botanical vocabulary *De re Hortensi Libellus*.

Latin terms (for instance: “agnus castus a kind of willow which is always greene” and “scutula: a peece of barke cut owt in grafing. emplastratio”).<sup>147</sup>

### 2.3 From manuscripts to networks

Multi-text manuscripts owned by members of the gentry or gentry families containing agricultural or horticultural texts and, when traceable, the circumstances of their production, provide a wealth of information on the social role of husbandry books. Through an analysis of the manuscript context of medieval agricultural literature, combined with the use of network visualisations, I aim to provide a clearer overview of overarching trends in the distribution of texts in medieval Britain. Before turning to a discussion of the links between conduct literature and the discursive flexibility of practical works, however, I will first introduce and explain the rationale and methodology for my selection of texts and use of network visualisations.

Recent years have seen a growth in publications on the distribution of Middle English texts in manuscripts. For example, the 2008 essay volume *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, edited by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney, contains six essays that are dedicated to textual distribution and development of manuscripts, which focus in particular on methodologies of mapping manuscripts and texts in order to make the process of their compilation more transparent.<sup>148</sup> Yet, although the editors stress that “the mapping of production and dissemination has much to tell us about late medieval texts, their scribes, their audiences and the literature culture that produced and consumed [...] manuscripts”,<sup>149</sup> only one of the six contributors uses visualisations in their presentation of data.<sup>150</sup> Since the publication of *Design and Distribution*, the discipline of digital humanities started to emerge, and it has become increasingly

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<sup>147</sup> *STC* 13197, digitised by *EEBO* from a copy kept at the Huntington Library.

<sup>148</sup> Margaret Connolly, Linne R. Mooney, eds., *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008).

<sup>149</sup> Connolly and Mooney, *Design and Distribution*, p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> In “The Middle English Prose *Brut* and the Possibilities of Cultural Mapping”, Michael G. Sargent discusses the survival rate of manuscripts and its relation to the amount of vernacular texts produced in the late Middle Ages, see *Design and Distribution*, pp. 205-245.

more common to visualise historical data as part of a network structure.<sup>151</sup> Network diagrams are useful for the visualisation of all sorts of social or professional connections; for example, it would be fairly straightforward to produce a network out of a database of texts copied by a scribal network, such as the scribal community surrounding John Shirley, for instance, the administrative scribes working in London,<sup>152</sup> or the specialist network of scribes who copied medical literature in an East-Midlands dialect.<sup>153</sup> The nodes in this network would be the scribes, and the links between them would show who exchanged exemplars with whom. The downside of such networks, however, is that they can only display bilateral relations—people are either related or acquainted, or unrelated and unfamiliar.

Network analysis has the capacity of advancing our thinking about the circulation of texts within a specific socio-cultural context. However, as texts in multi-text manuscripts cannot have the same reciprocal relations as human beings (they are inanimate, for one), a more complex structure is required. In addition, there is another major complicating factor in establishing a network that accurately reflects how texts were originally situated in their manuscripts: the temporality of collation. This can be illustrated with the following example. Say, for instance, that there are two manuscripts, MS 1 and MS 2, that have three texts in common, which are respectively titled *Text A*, *Text B*, and *Text C*. On the basis of their contents, these two manuscripts could possibly be connected to each other through a shared exemplar. In addition, there is also a third multi-text manuscript, MS 3, which counts *Text B* among its contents. At first glance, this manuscript does not appear to be related to MSS 1 and 2, but it may have derived *Text B* from the same exemplar (see Figure 2 on the left).

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<sup>151</sup> Angela Bennett Segler, for instance, created the *Digital Piers Plowman* project, which uses all kinds of visualisation methods to map the distribution of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* across manuscripts, see <http://www.angelabennettsegler.net/dissertation>. In addition, the *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon* project visualises an early modern social network in which all relationships ultimately connect to Francis Bacon: [http://www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/?ids=10000473&min\\_confidence=60&type=network](http://www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/?ids=10000473&min_confidence=60&type=network). At the same time, the open source philosophy behind the project allows users to peruse the mechanics behind the interactive network in order to obtain the raw data on which it was built.

<sup>152</sup> See Mooney, "John Shirley's Heirs", *The Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003), 182-198.

<sup>153</sup> See Irma Taavitsainen, "Scriptorial 'House-styles' and Discourse Communities", in Päivi Pahta and Irma Taavitsainen, eds., *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English* (Cambridge: UP, 2009): 94-114.



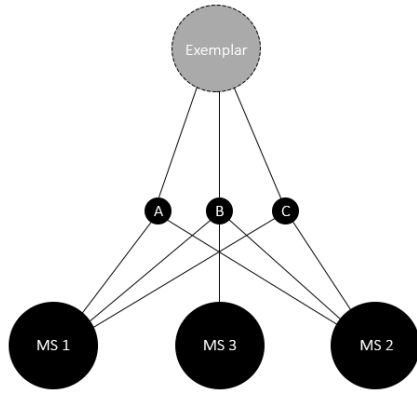


Figure 2

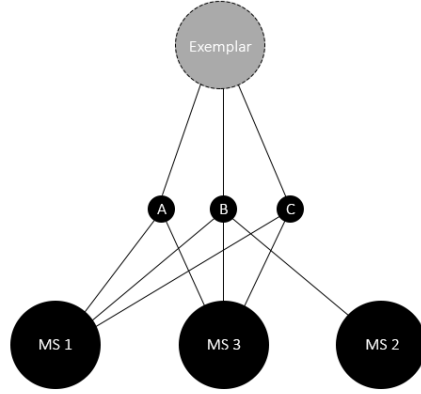


Figure 3

The composition of manuscripts is notoriously unstable, however, as they may have been rebound and reorganised during different stages in time. This problem can only be solved by paying close attention to the collation and paleography of a manuscript, which requires viewing these manuscripts *in situ* or consulting secondary sources on the composition of a manuscript. For example, paleographical analysis could point out that two texts that are currently part of MS 2 (A and C) may have originally belonged to MS 3. It is entirely possible that the original composition of the three manuscripts looked like the situation presented in Figure 3, on the right. Now, it would thus appear that MSS 1 and 3 originally contained A, B, and C (and may thus have shared a common source), while MS 2 originally contained only *Text B*. A network visualisation of the current composition of MSS 1, 2, and 3 (Figure 2, left) is, therefore, not an adequate means of presenting the original collation of these manuscripts, but it does provide an insight into later “usage phases”, which is in itself just as worthy of analysis.<sup>154</sup>

To complicate things further, putting a date to multi-text codices is particularly thorny, as we cannot always distinguish at which point a scribe or owner added or removed (part of) a text or codicological unit. Different production units or booklets may have had independent circulation before being bound into a codex. Often, multi-text manuscripts contain what Kwakkel calls

<sup>154</sup> See Erik Kwakkel, “Towards a Terminology for the Analysis of Composite Manuscripts”, *Gazette du livre médiéval* 41 (2002): 12-19, p. 15.

“extended production units”: quires or booklets that at the moment of their completion had one or more blank pages, which were filled over the course of time.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, Kwakkel makes a distinction between physical production units and more abstract “usage units”, which relate to the manner in which a production unit was used in relation to other components of the codex. While there are codicological and paleographical grounds for establishing the make-up of a production unit, it is often impossible to ascertain the number of usage units in a manuscript, let alone put a date to usage phases.

Illustrative of this complexity is Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Eng. 938 (65) a fifteenth-century manuscript containing horticultural texts, as well as handwritten notes that suggests a merchant ownership. The damage on f. 1r, which contains the first part of an incomplete version of Nicholas Bollard’s grafting treatise (ff. 1r-1v), is so severe that it seems to have been an outer leaf before the book received its final binding. The text ostensibly circulated as a separate booklet, of which the first part is now missing. Ruled in two columns and written on soiled leaves, this booklet disaccords with the remainder of the manuscript, which consists of an illuminated and neatly organised Sarum calendar and an anonymous Middle English translation of Nicholas Trevet’s Anglo-French chronicle. The verso side of the second folio is ruled but unwritten, except for some user marks, such as alphabet practice and the names “Rychard”, “Walter Wren”, and the note “me John gaydon merchand of vitre this vy dd with seyde zamen writtynge this 20 daye of october in anno 1443”, which indicates that this owner was a merchant dealing in glassware.<sup>156</sup> The fact that the owner marks appear on the final page of the first booklet seems to point at a separate circulation of Bollard’s treatise among at least one merchant reader. Yet, it is unclear at what point this booklet was bound together with the remainder of the volume, as there are no other user marks in the latter part of the manuscript to suggest that it was already bound when it was in the hands of these fifteenth-century owners. For a manuscript such as MS Eng 938, network diagrams may

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<sup>155</sup> Kwakkel, “Terminology”, p. 14.

<sup>156</sup> Transcribed from the digital facsimile provided by Harvard Library, available at [https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:7765002\\$1i](https://iif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:7765002$1i)

generate misleading results, since they depict the latest “usage phase”.<sup>157</sup> I wish to stress, therefore, that my network visualisations only serve as an initial vantage point for further analysis; yet, despite the obvious drawbacks of this method, the major benefit of these network visualisations is that they quickly reveal what kinds of texts were commonly read by a certain audience, which could point at parallel transmission or the sharing of exemplars among gentry readers.

## 2.4 Corpus

As a basis for my network diagram I created a database of husbandry texts (see the list of manuscripts in the Appendix) in Anglo-French and Middle English. Since it is my aim to analyse the reading interests of secular landowners belonging to gentry and merchant circles, and not all members of the urban and rural gentry were trained in Latin, I chose to focus on vernacular husbandry literature. Furthermore, as managerial texts written in Latin are mainly preserved in manuscripts that belonged to monastic estates, the visualisations would be needlessly obfuscated. The corpus of husbandry literature that forms the basis for the visualisations in this chapter expands on a rudimentary inventory of manuscripts which I compiled for my Master’s dissertation *Imagined Estates and Armchair Agriculture* in 2014. The current corpus includes the following Anglo-French texts: Grosseteste’s *Rules*, instructions for estate-management translated from monastic guidelines; *Senechaucie*, a book for the surveyor or seneschal of a manorial estate; *Walter of Henley*, an estate-management written in the style of a sermon, told by a father to his son; *Husbandry* (anonymous), an estate-management text that is seen as a supplement to *Walter of Henley*; *Husbandry Homily*, an anonymous verse text that is supposedly an introduction to a prose treatise on husbandry.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, the Middle English husbandry literature in my analysis comprises: *Godfridus super Palladium (GSP)*, a text on the growing of Mediterranean fruits and plants and the

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<sup>157</sup> “Usage phase” is coined by Kwakkel in “Terminology”, p. 15.

<sup>158</sup> Ruth J. Dean and Maureen B. M. Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts*, (listings 392, 393, 394, 395, 396), pp. 218-219.

storing of wine; *Nicholas Bollard*, a grafting treatise that often serves as a supplement to *GSP*; *John the Gardener*, a verse on gardening, which includes tree grafting and a long list of herbs that are native to Ireland; *On Hosbonderie*, the Middle English translation of the classical agronomical treatise of late-classical author Palladius, initially prepared for Duke Humfrey of Gloucester; *Rules for Purchasyng*, a short didactic verse on the perils of buying a plot of land; *De Cura Rei Familiaris* (both the Middle English and Middle Scots version) a set of moral distichs for young landowners. Besides these main texts, the selection for my network includes a number of Middle English texts that might have been of interest to landowners in some way or form, such as notes on fruit growing and preservation, as well as aphorisms on landownership or hunting.<sup>159</sup> In addition, my database incorporates other texts that cohabit the manuscripts of my core corpus of agricultural works, including several works by John Lydgate, courtesy tracts (John Russell's *Boke of Nurture*, *How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter*, *The Little Children's Book*)<sup>160</sup>, and school texts (*Parrus Cato* and *Cato Major*).

The lists of contents of manuscripts that form the basis of my database have been derived from library catalogues and repositories such as the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* (DIMEV), and the *Middle English Compendium*, which present their own set of issues.<sup>161</sup> First of all, the corpus only exists of currently extant manuscripts, and does not represent the original amount of manuscripts in circulation. Catalogue entries, especially those created in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are not always reliable. They may contain misattributions or unidentified works which may have been identified since, or omit items that were considered to be of lesser importance. Unfortunately, as a result of the philological bias which I discussed in my literary survey, notes made by medieval readers of a manuscript are rarely included in manuscript

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<sup>159</sup> DIMEV, 211, 666, 1664.

<sup>160</sup> IMEV, 1920.

<sup>161</sup> As some of the manuscript catalogues are nineteenth-century productions, they may contain outdated views or unidentified texts. I have not been able to ascertain the contents of all the manuscripts in my database through private viewing, as the sheer number of items exceeds the scope of this project.

catalogues.<sup>162</sup> To remedy this issue, I have viewed several manuscripts containing the texts in my corpus to confirm the presence of these respective texts and to find out whether these manuscripts contain any additional relevant elements, in particular marginalia, *notae*, and drawings.

In order to visualise the networks surrounding the aforementioned texts, I uploaded a datasheet into the open source software Palladio, developed by Stanford University.<sup>163</sup> This resulted in a densely populated diagram (see Figure 4) in which shelf-marks are represented by a light-coloured, small node, and texts by darker-coloured nodes, their sizes dependent on the amount of times a text is listed. It is evident that the manuscripts in my database circulated in two different contexts: a network of Middle English texts is shown on the left, while manuscripts containing Anglo-French managerial texts are clustered on the right. There are no connections between the two clusters, signifying that manuscripts containing Anglo-French texts on estate-management were not, during later usage phases, supplied with thematically similar material in Middle English.<sup>164</sup> Nonetheless, some late-medieval manuscripts containing a Middle English translation of Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* do connect to other texts within the Middle English cluster, as can be seen in Figure 5, in which I merged the Anglo-French and Middle English manuscripts of *Walter* into a single node.

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<sup>162</sup> For a discussion of the limitations of manuscript catalogues, see Ralph Hanna, "Manuscript Catalogues and Book History", *The Library* 18.1 (2017), 45-61.

<sup>163</sup> Accessible via <http://hdlab.stanford.edu/palladio/>. My method is based on a blog post by Brendan Hawk, in which he explains how to create a spreadsheet suitable for Palladio, see Brendan W. Hawk, "Visualising Networks of Anglo-Saxon Apocrypha", a blog post published on 3 October 2017, <https://brandonwhawk.net/2017/10/03/visualizing-networks-of-anglo-saxon-apocrypha/>.

<sup>164</sup> Later translations of Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* include a Middle English and Welsh translation of c. 1800, but the manuscripts containing these later translations do not feature other managerial literature.





Zooming in on the network of Anglo-French texts, some thematic connections appear, as can be seen in Figure 6, below. As this network visualises, the texts (represented by dark-coloured nodes) *Senechaucie*, Walter of Henley's *Husbandry*, the anonymous *Husbandry*, the *Rules* of bishop Grosseteste, and *Husbandry Homily* (an anonymous homily on husbandry) are shared among several Anglo-French multi-text codices. Walter of Henley's treatise is by far the most numerous, and thirteen manuscripts containing this text also preserve one or more estate-management texts. On the left, eight manuscripts are shown containing both *Walter* and *Senechaucie*. One of these manuscripts, Cambridge, University Library Hh.3.11 (40), also includes the anonymous *Husbandry*.

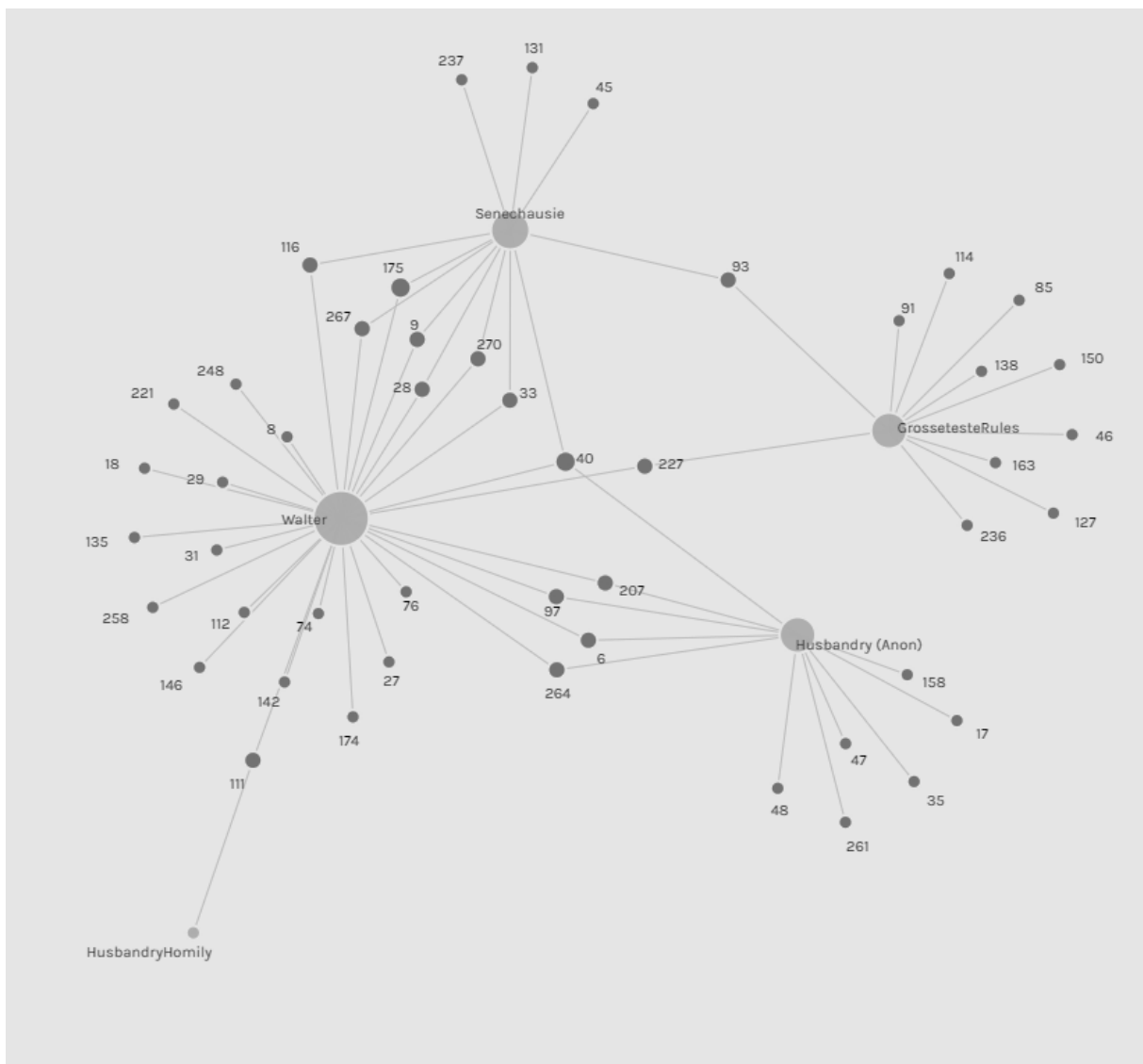


Figure 6: Network diagram showing the connections between Anglo-French managerial texts.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>167</sup> Permalink to this image: <https://perma.cc/M3SP-PZ2N>



Another four manuscripts, shown in between *Walter* and *Husbandry* (*Anon*) attest a parallel transmission of this anonymous text and *Walter*. Furthermore, one manuscript, London, British Library, Egerton 3724 (**111**) is the unique witness of a homily on husbandry, which was likely composed as a supplement to Henley's 'sermon'.<sup>168</sup> There is, in addition, one manuscript containing both Grosseteste's *Rules* and *Walter*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 98 (**227**). Overall, the network shows an orderly distribution of texts across manuscripts because the dataset only includes texts with a similar focus. Beside the observation that, because of the many co-occurrences of these texts, most compilers seem to have had an interest in estate-management, not much else can be gleaned from this network. In order to derive more information about the parallel transmission of the Anglo-French texts, the network would have to be enhanced with codicological information, such as the stemmata provided by Oschinsky, and the other texts that are contained within these manuscripts. Such an extensive analysis, however, would extend beyond the purview of my current research. Therefore, I have chosen to leave the Anglo-French corpus for now, and expand the cluster of Middle English texts.

## 2.5 Case study: Husbandry books and Lydgate's *Dietary*

Ideally, in order to arrive at the best possible overview of what instances of thematic overlap and textual connections exist between late-medieval manuscripts, all Middle English texts in all extant manuscripts should be included in a network. However, this would result in a dense and incomprehensible graph and disentangling it would be counterproductive for my present research. To derive useful information about thematic clustering, I had to be selective from the start, and therefore I collected my data based on the following set of parameters: a text must occur in more than one manuscript, and it must touch upon subjects that are relevant either to the interests of the gentry or that have a practical focus. Thus, I scanned manuscripts and databases for texts that

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<sup>168</sup> Oschinsky, *Walter*, pp. 21-2.

possess educational or utilitarian qualities, promote a gentry or bourgeois ethos,<sup>169</sup> reflect upon social ambitions, or serve to acquaint the reader with aspects of genteel lifestyle (including those texts known as ‘gentry romances’, which I will further address in Chapter 4). Furthermore, I included scholarly or encyclopaedic works of information, information on the medicinal properties of herbs, crops, and wine. This selection process yielded a representative corpus of Middle English texts that function as flags or markers for a gentry readership, or signal an educational or scholarly interest in agricultural knowledge.

To illustrate the rationale behind my methodology, I will now focus on one of the texts which I use to pinpoint a gentry readership, John Lydgate’s health regime-cum-behavioural guide known as the *Dietary*, and discuss the importance of viewing practical texts in their manuscript context. As one of the most-read works of the fifteenth century—it is witnessed in fifty-seven manuscripts and several printed books—the *Dietary*, moreover, offers a starting point for analysing the possible relation between conduct literature and husbandry books.<sup>170</sup> The chameleonic quality of the *Dietary*, which allows it to function in a variety of manuscript contexts, is constituted by the way in which it subverts the idea of a medical text as a repository of ailments and cures. Instead of addressing professional physicians, it addresses a lay, middle-class readership, who are aimed to take their health into their own hands. In the absence of a barber-surgeon, “If it be do that lechis do fayle” (l. 9) or a physician “If fisyke lake” (l. 16), Lydgate advises his readers to “make this [i.e. the *Dietary*] thi governaunce” (l. 16). Moreover, as Julie Orlemanski explains, Lydgate distances himself from the literature spread by learned medical professionals who offered their patients tailored advice on their humoural makeup: by stating that “Thys resate is of no potykary, / Of

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<sup>169</sup> Felicity Riddy coined the term “bourgeois ethos”, a shared ethos of burgesses, citizens or freemen, a heterogeneous group that nonetheless held common values. According to Riddy, “[i]n the bourgeois ethos the household seems to have represented a distinctive complex of values—stability, piety, hierarchy, diligence, ambition, and respectability”, see Felicity Riddy, “Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text,” *Speculum* 71.1 (1996): 66-86, p. 67.

<sup>170</sup> George Shuffelton, “31, The Dietary”, in *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS, 2008), p. 528.

mayster Antony ne of master Hew/ 'To all deserent it is Dyatary" (ll. 78-80), he presents an anti-authoritarian health guide for the masses.<sup>171</sup>

Living in moderation is the fundamental policy of Lydgate's *Dietary*, and therefore it is really only relevant to those readers who are already used to an above-average standard of life. Claire Sponsler reckons that the *Dietary*'s main audience are "urban or provincial householders of some substance", who are "arrivistes rather than aspirants to socioeconomic success".<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, as Sponsler points out,

the prosperous householder of Lydgate's poem is not encouraged to follow food consumption patterns associated with elites, but instead is offered a new way of eating, one which allows him to escape direct competition with aristocratic privilege by retreating into the enclosed space of private consumption whose value rests less on public approbation than on individual health and happiness.<sup>173</sup>

The fact that the advice proffered in the *Dietary* is tailored to a readership of bourgeoisie and gentry individuals signifies that practical prose works can be subject to gentrification: it promotes a communal and personal sense of self in a way that resembles other gentrified forms of literature, as I will address in §3.3. Thus, as *Dietary* meets the criteria of a text promoting a gentry identity through differentiation from elite culture, while at the same time stimulating autarky and self-professionalisation, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the manuscripts in which it appears and to focus on their readership.

The manuscript network surrounding the *Dietary*, as visualised in Figure 7 on page 62 indicates that the text was read in several different contexts. In spite of its usefulness as a conduct manual, the medical content of the work certainly also mattered to a number of compilers. A first glance at the network diagram reveals certain clusters of manuscripts containing works that were

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<sup>171</sup> Julie Orlemanski, "Thornton's Remedies and the Practices of Medical Reading" in *Robert Thornton and his Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, edited by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnson (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014): 235-257, p. 254.

<sup>172</sup> Claire Sponsler, "Eating Lessons: Lydgate's 'Dietary' and Consumer Conduct," in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Robert L. A. Clark, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001): 1-22, p. 9-11.

<sup>173</sup> Sponsler, "Eating Lessons", p. 16.

written by Lydgate, such as *The Horse, The Goose and the Sheep*, *Fabula Duorum Mercatorum*, *A Dyte of Womenhis Hornys*, and *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, texts which were typically consumed by middle and upper class audiences.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, the network around the *Dietary* shows that nine codices containing Lydgate's treatise also contain school texts. Seven of these nine manuscripts contain *Cato Major*,<sup>175</sup> and four manuscripts contain *Parvus Cato*, pseudo-Catonian moral guides by Benedict Burgh which will be further addressed in section 4.4.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, there is one manuscript containing *Cato Major* that contains another piece of conduct literature that is primarily aimed at children, *The Boke of Nurture* by John Russell.<sup>177</sup> Based on these co-occurrences, we may assume that Lydgate's *Dietary* was also used in an educational setting.

Finally, most relevant to a discussion of the manuscript context of husbandry books is the fact that the *Dietary* is also found in two manuscripts containing horticultural literature (see figures 7 and 8). The aforementioned two manuscripts are London, Society of Antiquaries MS 101 (**182**), which comprises both *Godfridus super Palladium* and Nicholas Bollard's treatise on grafting, and London, Wellcome Library, MS 406 (**183**), which includes the poem *John Gardener*. The combination of the *Dietary* and the texts on horticulture in these manuscripts may be explained through an interest in herbs and their medicinal uses. Yet, this is not the only possibility: since the *Dietary* is so clearly aimed at a middle-class audience, the compiler of this manuscript may have had other compilatory interests, such as obtaining information about (human) nature as an enrichment of his or her knowledge. To obtain a clearer idea of the compiler's interest, a full survey of these

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<sup>174</sup> For the audiences of *The Horse, The Goose and the Sheep*, see below. The *Fabula Duorum Mercatorum* (Tale of Two Merchants) occurs in manuscripts that were owned by the gentry, such as the manuscript of Sir John Paston (d. 1504), a member of the Norfolk gentry, see G. A. Lester, "The Books of a Fifteenth Century English Gentleman, Sir John Paston." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 88 (1987), 200–17, 202. In the poem *Against Womenhis Hornys*, also known as *Horns Away!*, Lydgate satirised horn-like headdresses worn by women in the fifteenth century, as he considers them to be un-feminine. For an analysis of this poem in the context of medieval gentry households, see Anthony P. Bale, "'House Devil, Town Saint': Anti-semitism and Hagiography in Medieval Suffolk", *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, and Meanings*, ed. Sheila Delaney (New York: Routledge, 2002): 185-210. For a discussion of the bourgeois audience of *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, see George Shuffelton, "Stans Puer ad Mensam: Introduction", in *Codex Ashmole 61*, pp. 441-2.

<sup>175</sup> Cambridge, Jesus College, Q.G.8 (**12**); Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 259 (**63**); London, British Library, Arundel 168 (**101**); London, British Library, Harley 2251 (**124**); London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xlvi (**153**); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.48 (**250**); Rome, English College, AVCAU MS 1405 (**266**).

<sup>176</sup> Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 259 (**63**); London, British Library, Arundel 168 (**101**); London, British Library, Harley 2251 (**124**); Rome, English College, AVCAU MS 1405 (**266**).

<sup>177</sup> Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 8009 (**189**).

manuscripts' contents is in order. Confusingly, however, the contents of MS Society of Antiquaries 101 point at a medical interest, while its provenance seems to indicate a late-medieval gentry readership. Before the texts in the codex were rearranged and rebound in the sixteenth century, the manuscript opened with a health regimen from the medical school of Salerno, which was followed by a copy of *Godfridus super Palladium* and Nicholas Bollard's treatise.<sup>178</sup> In addition to these works, the manuscript contains the *Secreta Secretorum*, medical remedies (three of which are cures against the plague) as well as an equestrian treatise (the *Marchalsy*), historical chronicles, religious texts, political songs and prophecies, and recipes for wine and gunpowder. The texts in the manuscript were copied by a number of hands. Up to 1459, the manuscript belonged to Thomas Wardon, who made several annotations in the book. Wardon was a member of the Wharton family of Westmorland, whose estate, Wharton Hall, was located on the bank of the river Eden. According to Karen Mura, Wardon was not a nobleman himself, but an influential gentry landowner.<sup>179</sup> The horticultural texts that are included in the manuscript suggest that Wardon was interested in medicinal plants and their medicinal properties: *Godfridus super Palladium* and Bollard's treatise were copied during Wardon's ownership, and the manuscript contains herbal remedies and a Latin-English glossary of herbs, which are copied in Wardon's own hand.<sup>180</sup> After Wardon's ownership, the manuscript was owned by a member of the Wyggestons of Leicester, a middle-class family whose members had climbed the social ladder as a result of their involvement in the burgeoning wool business in and around Leicester and Coventry.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Details about the compilation of this manuscript are retrieved from *The National Archives*, Online Catalogue, SAL/MS/101, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/8e7c91c8-2e37-4123-ba66-a1a68f2281d1>.

<sup>179</sup> Karen Elizabeth Mura, *Thomas Wardon's Book: A Study of Fifteenth-century Manuscript, Text, and Reader (Society of Antiquaries of London MS 101)*, PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1990), p. 11.

<sup>180</sup> Mura, *Thomas Wardon*, p. 67.

<sup>181</sup> Fol iv. contains a fragment of a letter written in the late fifteenth century by R. Shipden to a member of the Wyggeston family, who were connected to the Cely family. Other owner marks include the names of Thomas S[u]mner on fol. 42r and Bartho[lo]mew Belleheade on fol. 67v, and a William Langton (1529) is mentioned on fol. ii. Lesley Ann Coote posits that William Wyggeston the Younger (ca. 1457-1536) may have been the owner of this manuscript, see *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (York: Medieval Press, 2000), p. 236. Coote further notes that members of this family "occupied the mayoralty nine times between 1448 and 1499". The location of their family tombs also indicates a high social position.



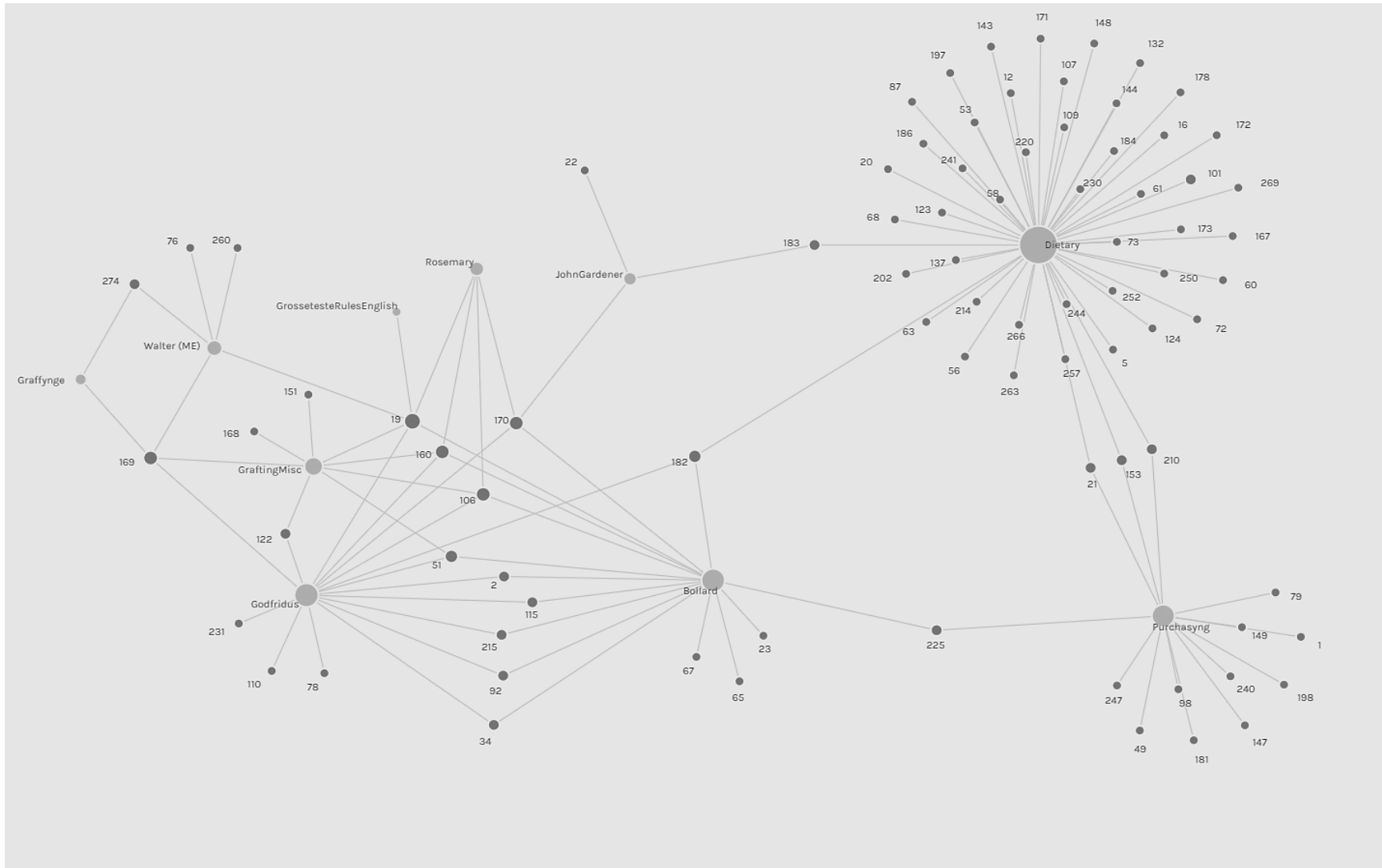


Figure 8: Filtered network diagram showing the links between Lydgate's *Dietary* and Middle English agricultural texts.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Permalink to this image: <https://perma.cc/878D-5RR8>

Conversely, the other fifteenth-century manuscript containing both the *Dietary* and husbandry literature, MS Wellcome 406 (183), has a clear medical and herbal interest: the poem *John the Gardener*, which covers ff. 14r-20v, is the longest text in this manuscript, which further encompasses texts on bloodletting, charms, herbs (including a popular Middle English verse version of a text on rosemary) as well as medical recipes.<sup>184</sup> The *Dietary* was added during a later usage phase, in a late-sixteenth century hand under the title “Antidotari of helth”.<sup>185</sup> Clearly, the *Dietary*’s medical qualities were still considered to be valid in the sixteenth century, as the later owner added it to an already quite extensive collection of medical works. The manuscript’s ownership is revealed by an inscription on f. 24r: “Est liber smerthwaytt tenet palmer [?] / lamberd lond[ini ?] scutcinuyre[?].<sup>186</sup> Wrytten / and fynsychd the ere of owre lord / MCCCCC and XI yn / the rayne of King hary the viiith / the iiii yere / the xvii day of Januer”. The dating of 1511/12 could indicate that the Smerthwaytt in question is John Smerthwayte, a barber-surgeon from London.<sup>187</sup> On ff. 25v-26v we find a list of herbs which was apparently composed by Smerthwayte, as the text on f.25v ends with the words “Finis quod Smerthwaytt tenet palmer [?] londini”.<sup>188</sup> So, while both Wardon’s manuscript and MS Wellcome 406 share the *Dietary* and an interest in herbal remedies, their compilation attests how their owners read these texts for different purposes. Both MS Society of Antiquaries 101 and MS Wellcome 406 contain texts on bloodletting, a medical procedure which is usually not performed on oneself, but on a patient. The presence of household remedies in Wardon’s manuscript, however, suggests that Wardon likely included the *Dietary* for personal use. It is, nonetheless, likely that the contents of these manuscripts were sourced in exemplars with a medical focus.

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<sup>184</sup> See Keiser, “Rosemary”, p. 201.

<sup>185</sup> The text has not been previously identified as the *Dietary*; Moorat’s catalogue only lists it as “Antidotari of helth”.

<sup>186</sup> ‘Scutcinuyre’ may be an alternative spelling of ‘(e)scutcheoner’, i.e. somebody who made escutcheons or lock-plates, see the entry for “scochoun”, (n) and the alternative spellings listed in the *MED*.

<sup>187</sup> Legal records attest that a barber-surgeon named Smerthwayte was involved in legal disputes in the 1530s, see National Archives Kew, C 1/888/19 and C 1/900/22.

<sup>188</sup> Information about this manuscript has been retrieved from the digital catalogue of the Wellcome Library, which is based on S.A.J. Moorat’s *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library* (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1962-1973).



Next to didactic courtesy tracts and medical literature, the *Dietary* also occurs in manuscripts containing narrative prose and poetry, such as romances and hagiographies. This is striking, as medical literature (with the exception of the ‘folk recipes’ that are often added to white spaces and flyleaves) and romance literature do not usually cohabit the same codices.<sup>189</sup> For this and other reasons, MS Ashmole 61 (210), the aforementioned multi-text manuscript containing conduct literature, popular verse, romance literature, and religious material, stands out. While MS Ashmole 61 appears to have been roughly organised by theme, the *Dietary* does not appear among the cluster of conduct material that makes up the first part of the manuscript, but is placed amidst a sequence of religious pieces near the end. George Shuffelton argues that the placement of the *Dietary* in this manuscript is somewhat surprising and postulates that the compiler of the manuscript must have found his exemplar of the *Dietary* after he had already copied the first set of didactic texts into his codex.<sup>190</sup>

Yet, despite the cursory thematic organisation, there is an overall concern with moderation that runs throughout the manuscript, thus uniting texts that are codicologically unconnected. The romance *Sir Isumbras*, for instance, forewarns against excessive living in the same way as the *Dietary* advocates moderation; both act, in Rory Critten’s words, as “a prophylactic against deadly sin”.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, Critten argues, when viewed in light of bourgeois ethics, the co-occurrence of romances and conduct texts such as the *Dietary* and *How the Good Wife Taught her Daughter*, suggest that

the users of this manuscript could think outside the rules established in the conduct poems, that they could conceive of good conduct as a shifting idea whose correct manifestation might change from one situation to the next and whose reward might not be universally available or self-evident.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Orlemanski, *Walter*, p. 247.

<sup>190</sup> Shuffelton, *Ashmole 61*, p. 529.

<sup>191</sup> Rory G. Critten, “Bourgeois Ethics Again: The Conduct Texts and the Romances in Oxford: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61”, *The Chaucer Review* 50.1-2 (2015): 108-133, p. 119.

<sup>192</sup> Critten, “Bourgeois Ethics”, p. 124.

Aside from offering a discourse on moderation, constituted by romances and conduct texts, Ashmole 61 simultaneously extends into an exposition of both spiritual and bodily health. Furthermore, Ashmole 61 is of interest because it comprises a virtual pilgrimage itinerary written in verse in a way that is reminiscent of MS Wellcome 8004 (186), the medical manuscript which also combines the *Dietary* and a pilgrim's guide (see §2.2.ii). Again, I wish to stress that, while a text on pilgrimage may seem out of place among a manuscript with a medical focus, and the *Dietary* may stand out among a cluster of devotional texts, the borders between physical and spiritual health were not so rigid during the Middle Ages as they may appear to a modern reader. Consider, for instance, the following lines from the *Dietary*:

Thus in two thyngys stondys thi welthe  
Of saule and of body, who lyst them serve:  
Moderate fode gyffes to man hys helthe,  
And all surfytyes do fro hym remeve.  
Charyté to thy saule it is full dewe.<sup>193</sup>

In this section, Lydgate purports that two things are responsible for one's wellbeing: moderation of food takes care of bodily health and nourishment of the soul, which can be achieved by ruminating upon religious texts. Such a nutritious text for the soul follows the *Dietary* in MS Ashmole 61: an abridged version of *The Prick of Conscience* known as the *Stimulus Consciencie Minor*.<sup>194</sup> The *Stimulus* further explores the relation between the body and the soul as defined in the *Dietary* and is mainly concerned with preventing bodily corruption through sin. In effect, the *Stimulus* sketches the worst-case-scenario for those who fail to follow the *Dietary*'s rules: negligence will cause a body to rot and reduce it to a sack, a lump of stinking slime that is concealed underneath a cover of skin (ll. 362-364).<sup>195</sup> Sin, the text continues, will separate soul from body, and if they should

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<sup>193</sup> *The Dietary*, ll. 73-77, edited by Shuffelton in *Ashmole 61*, p. 279.

<sup>194</sup> *DIMEV*, 422

<sup>195</sup> *Stimulus Consciencie Minor*, edited by Shuffelton in *Ashmole 61*, pp. 310-329.

ever be reunited, the soul would rather the body were left to rot, than return to its decrepit host (ll. 561-563). Thankfully, all this can be prevented: according to the *Stimulus*, grace and charity will nurture one's soul back to health. Notably, the notion of nourishing the soul occurs twice in the *Stimulus*. Lines 614-615 discuss how to keep one's soul healthy by virtue and how it feeds upon a delight in God, echoing an earlier stanza:

Afterwerd, thinke in thi thought  
What grace may do that schall not feyle,  
And vertues doth throw grace wrought,  
And what god werke may thee aveyle.  
When thou hast thus in thi mynd sought,  
With them thi saule thou schall vytayle.  
And of all the synnes that ever thou wrought,  
Make amendys be gode conseyle.<sup>196</sup>

Contemplating and meditating on virtues and good works will “vytayne” (l. 590) one's soul and cleanse it of past sins.

When reading the *Stimulus* as a ‘dietary’ for the soul, the placement of the *Dietary* alongside religious texts does not seem like an eccentric choice any longer. In fact, looking more closely at the devotional texts in Ashmole 61, it is evident that most texts are either concerned with the body or the soul. For example, the last devotional item in the manuscript, a text known as *The Wounds and the Sins*,<sup>197</sup> also connects the physical body of Christ to the reader's spiritual body. The text ends with a prayer to Christ, asking him to protect those “that this lesson wyll rede / And therwith ther saulys fede” (ll. 29-32). This reiteration of the spiritual nourishment motif that was first offered in the *Stimulus* wraps up the sequence of devotional texts, thus reinforcing the interrelation of bodily and spiritual nutrition. At this point, the readers of Ashmole 61 are reminded that they share a

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<sup>196</sup> *The Wounds and the Sins*, ll. 585-592, edited by Shuffelton in *Codex Ashmole 61*, pp. 395-386.

<sup>197</sup> *DIMEV*, 6744.

bodily connection to Christ, and they are encouraged to ruminate on what they have read, feeding their souls in doing so.

To further explore the different manuscript contexts of Lydgate's *Dietary*, I turn to the manuscript Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91 (69), which was owned and compiled by Robert Thornton, a member of the Yorkshire gentry. Besides a large number of romances—the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, *Octavian*, *Sir Isumbras*, *The Earl of Tolous*, *Sir Degrevant*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *The Awvntys of Arthure*, and *Sir Percyvelle of Galles*—the manuscript also contains hagiographical and medical texts. Next to the *Dietary* it features another medical text known as the *Liber de Diversis Medicinis*, a treatise which apparently perplexed Thornton as he made numerous errors while copying it from his exemplar.<sup>198</sup> The *Liber* can be considered a remedy collection, a genre that particularly flourished during the fifteenth century and is distinct from other medical writings. According to Orlemanski, remedy collections were influenced by other branches of factual prose, such as culinary recipes, managerial tracts and conduct literature: remedy collections exhibit a “porousness”, she notes, which “meant that they sometimes lost their focus on healing in the process of their transmission”.<sup>199</sup> Thornton's decision to include a remedy book in his manuscript is not a result of a limited availability of literature, as he was able to access a large number of texts. Instead, “the broad swathe of contents would seem to have less to do with any erratic austerity of textual circulation and more to do with a specific vision for the scope of knowledge a codex might hold”.<sup>200</sup> Orlemanski supposes that Thornton's copy of the *Liber* functioned as a “self-contained textual object” as it appears on an outsize quire and the rubrications and *mise-en-page* are distinct from the literary and devotional parts of his codex.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Julie Orlemanski, “Thornton's Remedies and the Practices of Medical Reading” in *Robert Thornton and his Books: Essays on the Lincoln and London Thornton Manuscripts*, edited by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnson (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 235-257, p. 237.

<sup>199</sup> Orlemanski, “Thornton's Remedies”, p. 244.

<sup>200</sup> Orlemanski, “Thornton's Remedies”, p. 246.

<sup>201</sup> Orlemanski, “Thornton's Remedies”, p. 241.

While Thornton clearly distinguished the *Liber* from the manuscript's other contents, the *Dietary*, on the other hand, is not treated as an isolated unit as it matches the mise-en-page of the remainder of the manuscript. According to Orlemanski, the manuscript contexts of Lydgate's *Dietary* prove the "discursive instability" of medical writings in late-medieval England: it was "sometimes [read] as medicine, sometimes as moral exhortation, [and] sometimes as literary art[;] textual forms [which] were available to be read and understood along alternative vectors of reception simultaneously".<sup>202</sup> While the whole body of medical writings appears to have been open to different interpretations, the *Dietary*'s particular ability to circulate a variety of contexts can perhaps be more readily explained: John Lydgate was, after all, the best-read didactic poet of his age and knew a loyal readership among his clientele, which mainly comprised the gentry and urban bourgeoisie. However, since the *Dietary* is frequently unattributed in the manuscripts in which it appears, Lydgate's reputation seems to have had little bearing on the popularity of the work. According to Orlemanski, the *Dietary*'s ubiquity is best explained by its lack of differentiation between treatments of the body and of the soul, and the way in which it blends "commodified medical knowledge" into more accessible vernacular discourse, a quality which Orlemanski dubs 'generic flexibility'.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Orlemanski, "Thornton's Remedies", p. 252.

<sup>203</sup> Orlemanski, "Thornton's Remedies", p. 255.

## 2.6 Conclusion

At the start of this chapter, I discussed possible ways of tracing how medieval readers engaged with their books. In my evaluation of scholarly approaches towards this problem, I signalled that concrete evidence of reader engagement with agricultural literature is not abundant. Since written commentary to husbandry books is scarce, reader engagement has to be sourced in different ways. One way we might get closer to understanding why medieval compilers obtained agricultural literature is by looking at the larger picture of manuscript ownership. As a first step in this process, I mapped out texts with known gentry interest, by using network visualisations. The resulting graphs provided insight into the possible connections between similarly-themed manuscripts, which will be further analysed in the ensuing chapters. Moreover, the networks facilitated an overview of the manuscript context of a ‘non-literary’ work, Lydgate’s *Dietary* which, despite its medical character, easily blends into different literary genres. In the next chapter, I will further address Orlemanski’s notion that practical texts, such as the *Dietary*, possess a ‘generic flexibility’ which allows them to function within various manuscript contexts. This idea gives rise to further enquiry, such as the question of whether this quality is unique to vernacular medical texts or whether other genres, such as agricultural treatises, are equally malleable. Moreover, it is worth exploring in what ways agricultural texts were shaped to suit the tastes and demands of the late-medieval gentry. Before returning to the role of the gentry on agricultural literature in chapters four and five, however, I will first explore the various literary aspects of husbandry books and treatises on grafting in the following chapter.



## Chapter 3: Husbandry books and grafting treatises

### 3.1 Introduction

In order to test the assumption that husbandry books also possess the flexibility to operate across the boundaries of genre, as I proposed in the previous chapter, I will now discuss the literariness of texts which, for a long time, have been considered as one-dimensional, practical works. To start, I will briefly address the earliest works on landownership that were produced in medieval Britain before returning to late-medieval texts on husbandry and grafting. I address these two strands of agricultural literature separately for the sake of cohesion; however, by making this distinction I do not mean to imply that husbandry books and grafting treatises should be seen as two unrelated traditions. While the influence of classical literature is more prominently felt in Middle English treatises on grafting than husbandry books, there is a great deal of overlap in the origin, composition and audiences of these kinds of literature.

### 3.2 The flexibility of husbandry books

#### *3.2.i Managerial texts in Old English*

The manuscript context of the two surviving Old English legal-cum-managerial texts known as *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* (henceforth: *RSP*) and *Gerefa* attests that these tracts, too, were closely related to other textual genres and could be read for purposes other than obtaining practical know-how. While both texts are clearly composed as managerial treatises, the *Gerefa* focuses specifically on the duties of a reeve, who supervised the work on an estate, whereas *RSP* outlines the whole hierarchy of an estate. The texts are not originally related, but they were collated in the early eleventh century, possibly by Bishop Wulfstan, and are now part of a volume of mainly legal material that is catalogued as Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 383 (henceforth: CCCC 383).<sup>204</sup> Because of the alliterative style and moralistic tone of the *Gerefa*, it would seem to have

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<sup>204</sup> See P. D. A. Harvey, "Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa", *The English Historical Review* 108.426 (1993), 1-22, p.7.



been influenced by classical agronomists such as Columella and Cato, and P.D.A. Harvey, therefore regards it as “a literary exercise rather than a didactic or administrative text”.<sup>205</sup> According to Harvey, the *Gerefa* belongs to the literary, cultural, and scholarly spheres of the glossaries and colloquies of Wulfstan, Ælfric, and Ælfric Bata.<sup>206</sup> Because of its alliterative style and long enumerative lists of agricultural tools the *Gerefa* is not simply a work of legal reference; instead, it has been expertly crafted to blend into the scholarly domain.

By comparison, *RSP* is written in a systematic and decidedly staid style, which led Stanley J. Lemanski to postulate that *RSP* should be read as “a moral treatise, in which the author presented the reader with a model estate”.<sup>207</sup> The text displays an openness when it aims to cater to readers from different regions: “forðam ealle landsida ne sy gelice” (since not all estate-customs are alike), “on suman landum gebyreð mare gafolræden” (on some estates additional tax-obligations apply).<sup>208</sup> Lemanski argues that, while the estate of the *RSP* might have once existed in reality, it was more important to the author to convey that “it was a just one, undergoing a limited nucleation and yet preserving the ancient rights and practices of the residents”.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, the manuscript context of both *RSP* and *Gerefa* supports the idea that these texts are meant to be studied for their moral values. According to Lemanski, CCC 383 is more than a legal volume: it has been compiled and designed specifically to meet the requirements of an “audience who actively engaged with the manuscript’s contents and focused extensively on the position, duties and values of the reeve”.<sup>210</sup> Overall, it can be said that both Anglo-Saxon managerial treatises are not hands-on manuals for reeves, but scholarly works that are informed by examples of multiple model-estates.

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<sup>205</sup> Harvey, “Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa”, p. 10.

<sup>206</sup> Harvey, “Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa”, p. 11.

<sup>207</sup> See Stanley J Lemanski, “The Rectitudines Singularum Personarum: a Pre- and Post-Conquest Text”, PhD Dissertation, University of Akron (2009).

<sup>208</sup> Translated from the German edition of the *Gerefa* by Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle an der Saale: Niemeyer, 1903-16), 454-5, pp. 447-8.

<sup>209</sup> Lemanski, “Rectitudines Singularum Personarum”, pp. 401-2.

<sup>210</sup> Lemanski, “Rectitudines Singularum Personarum”, p. 18.

### 3.2.ii *Walter of Henley's Husbandry*

The way in which the abovementioned Anglo-Saxon texts merge a literary, moralistic style with the secular subject of estate-management is similar to the managerial works that were produced in the Anglo-French period. *Walter of Henley's Husbandry*, as stated in §2.2.iii, is composed as a sermon. The narrator of the work is presented as an old man (*[un] pere en sa villesce*) who addresses his 'son' in the second person, asking him rhetorical questions and recounting old aphorisms.<sup>211</sup> This form undoubtedly shaped Henley's literary persona: in some manuscripts, the author is introduced as a newly initiated member of the Dominican order.<sup>212</sup> Even though Oschinsky sees this as confirmative evidence that Henley is a religious clerk, Harvey argues that the sermon form might be intentionally humorous. Henley's persona, he argues, is likely to be a literary construct: the notion of a mendicant friar employing his newly acquired homiletic skills to write a worldly treatise has a tinge of the bizarre.<sup>213</sup> If we view *Walter of Henley's* persona as intentionally parodic, we may ask the question of how seriously readers considered the manorial accounting tips of a senile mendicant friar. Notwithstanding, Henley's work continued to be influential during the late-medieval period and was translated into Middle English despite its obsolete information on demesne farms.

While the Anglo-French *Husbandry* mainly circulated in monastic institutions, the manuscript context of one particular redaction of the tract (known as the B-text) suggests that it knew a wider readership. For instance, in the manuscript London, College of Arms, MS Arundel xiv (174), *Walter's* treatise appears under the title 'dite', a noun that is usually associated with non-factual works. Because of this title, Oschinsky assumes that the compiler of the Arundel manuscript

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<sup>211</sup> The inclusion of an English proverb in an otherwise Anglo-French text appears to have been problematic to many of *Walter's* (presumably francophone) scribes, some of whom decided to omit the phrase altogether. The proverb which is currently in use as "stretching (one's) legs according to the coverlet" is recorded by Henley as "Ho se strechez forther than his whittel rechez, in the strau his fet he mot stretche" (Who stretches further than his blanket reaches, must stretch his feet in the straw, i.e. the mattress). The scribe of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmolean 1524 produced the following original variant of the proverb: "Wo so streketh hym ferthere than his fetere wil arache he ssal lygge in the strau" (E28) (Who stretches himself further than his ?fetter will pull, he shall lay in the straw).

<sup>212</sup> Oschinsky, *Walter*, p. 145.

<sup>213</sup> P.D.A. Harvey, "Agricultural Treatises and Manorial Accounting in Medieval England", *The Agricultural History Review* 20. 2 (1972): 170-182, note 2 on p. 173.

selected the *Husbandry* for its literary merits.<sup>214</sup> It is true that, in Middle English translations, ‘dite’ usually serves as the vernacular counterpart of the Latin word *carmen* (poem) and, therefore, it is possible that the title in London, College of Arms, MS Arundel xiv was influenced by the Latin version of the *Husbandry*, which introduces the work as “*carmen domini Walteri de Henleye quod vocatur yconomia sive housbundria*”.<sup>215</sup> However, the Latin word *carmen* and Middle English ‘dite’ do not just refer to a work of poetry, but the term also connotes a learned composition: ancient works of factual prose, such as those of Cicero and Aristotle, were known as ‘dites’, too.<sup>216</sup> Moreover, the manuscript context of MS Arundel xiv indicates that Walter of Henley’s ‘dite’ should be understood not just as any kind of literary composition, but as a work of authorial prose. The early-fourteenth century manuscript comprises several works that betray an interest in national history: a unique Anglo-French copy of Chrétien de Troyes’ romance of *Perceval le Galois*, Wace’s *Brut* chronicle, a continuation of the same historiography by Geoffrey Gaimar, followed by the *Lai de Haveloc*, Piers de Langtoft’s chronicle, and a list of Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings.<sup>217</sup> It is certainly possible that the compiler of this manuscript considered Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry* to be a supplement to these other works on the Matter of England: perhaps it was included to serve as a historiographic source text on the demesne system, one of the major social changes that took place during the Anglo-Norman period.

Similarly, the Welsh versions of Henley’s *Husbandry* also circulated in multi-text manuscripts with a historical focus.<sup>218</sup> Two different Welsh translations were composed before the eighteenth century: a Middle Welsh version, present in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Jesus College MS 111 (260,

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<sup>214</sup> Oschinsky, *Walter*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>215</sup> Oschinsky argues that the late-fourteenth-century compiler of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 147 may not have been familiar with the Anglo-French language, see *Walter*, p. 125.

<sup>216</sup> *MED*, s.v. ‘dite’ (n), sense d.

<sup>217</sup> Anon., *Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Arms* (London: S and R Bentley, 1829), 20-24. Because of its thematic cohesion, Rosalin Field typifies manuscript Arundel xiv as “an anthology of British history” in “Romance in England, 1066-1400”, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: UP, 1999): 152-176, p. 163.

<sup>218</sup> Two later Welsh versions exist: one occurs in the late-eighteenth century or early nineteenth century manuscript compilation Aberystwyth NLW 13126 A and another in British Library, Add. MS 15056, which was composed around 1800, see Falileyev, *Welsh Walter*, pp. xxv-xxvi; 54-6.

also known as the Red Book of Hergest) and the Early Modern Welsh version in Cardiff, Central Library, MS 2.621 (10, olim Hafod MS 8, also known as *Llyfr Sion Morfol*). The Red book of Hergest was compiled around 1400, and contains legal texts as well as a number of Welsh translations of secular literature, including courtly poetry, romance narratives, and historiographical texts such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*. The *Husbandry* is followed by the *Seven Wise Men of Rome*, a text that notably also occurs in a number of English gentry-owned manuscripts that feature in §4.5.<sup>219</sup> Moreover, the Red book of Hergest encompasses “triadic and other legendary, prophetic, and moral compilations, medical, geographical and utilitarian texts, and a copy of a bardic grammar”, effectively rendering the manuscript “a library of classical and contemporary Welsh literature and learning”.<sup>220</sup> Its contents reflect the erudition and ability “to draw on substantial material and literary resources” of its literary patron, Hopcyn ap Tomas ab Einion (ca. 1337–1408).<sup>221</sup> Hopcyn was a member of the Welsh gentry, who were also known as “uchelwyr” (meanng ‘superior men’ in Welsh) and typically invested in preserving their own cultural heritage.<sup>222</sup> It is perhaps for this reason that the English-sounding name of Walter of Henley, which is present in the Cardiff manuscript as ‘Gwallter o Henlai’, is lacking in the Red Book of Hergest.<sup>223</sup>

In addition, the Welsh *Husbandry* is present in the first part of Cardiff, Central Library, MS 2.621 (10), a manuscript which further consists of historiographical material that was gathered before 1561, as well as later additions, such as a dietary regimen and astronomical texts.<sup>224</sup> Two unique chapters have been added to the translation of Walter of Henley's treatise in the Cardiff manuscript, which do not appear in the Anglo-French original nor the Middle English translation. The first of these additions is a chapter on trees (blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, oak, apple, and

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<sup>219</sup> This text, also known as *The Seven Sages of Rome*, also appears in Oxford, Balliol College 354 (198) and British Library, MS Egerton 1995 (109).

<sup>220</sup> John W. Cousin, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, (London: Dent, 1910).

<sup>221</sup> Brynley F. Roberts, “Hopcyn ap Tomas ab Einion (fl. 1337–1408), literary patron”, *ODNB* (2004).

<sup>222</sup> See Helen Fulton, “Red Book of Hergest/ Llyfr Coch Hergest”, in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*, ed. Sian Echard, Robert Rouse, Jacqueline A. Fay, Helen Fulton, Geoff Rector (Wiley: Hoboken, New Jersey, 2017), p. 1575.

<sup>223</sup> Falileyev, *Welsh Walter*, p. xxi.

<sup>224</sup> Falileyev, *Welsh Walter*, p. xxi.

willow) and the second chapter deals with beekeeping.<sup>225</sup> As both apiculture and arboriculture belong to the classical agronomical tradition, it is possible that the redactor modelled his additions after classical examples. Judging by the fact that in both Welsh manuscripts, the *Husbandry* features alongside historical texts, it would seem that it was not necessarily copied for its agricultural merits, but for its historical significance.

There is further evidence that Henley's *Husbandry* was not just copied for legal or managerial reference: as Oschinsky notes, the treatise was also valued for "its scientific material and interest for the naturalist".<sup>226</sup> Three manuscripts attesting that *Husbandry* was flexible enough to function as a 'scientific' text are Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 394D (3); London, British Library, MS Sloane 686 (169), and Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.1.13 (19). Notably, these manuscripts all contain the Middle English translation of the work, which illustrates that the readership of practical texts in the later Middle Ages became more varied than it had been previously.

The first of these three manuscripts, MS Peniarth 394D, is particularly illustrative of the changing context in which Henley's treatise was read. This manuscript, which dates from the fifteenth century, also contains a collection of culinary recipes that is known as the "Forme of Cury",<sup>227</sup> more recipes under the heading *Diversa Servicia*, and another culinary compilation that is known as *The Booke of Keryng*.<sup>228</sup> It is worth noting that both this latter work and the Middle English translation of the *Husbandry* were printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the early sixteenth century.<sup>229</sup> Most likely, the texts in the Peniarth manuscript were copied from printed exemplars: just as Wynkyn de Worde's 1508 *Boke of Husbandry* incorporates a chapter starting with the incipit "here begynneth the plantynge of trees and of vynes", so is the explicit of *Walter* in the Peniarth

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<sup>225</sup> Falileyev, *Welsh Walter*, pp. 151-157. The use of the word 'kropo' is likely a borrowing from the English 'crop'; therefore, Falileyev notes, the chapter on trees was possibly copied from an English exemplar.

<sup>226</sup> Oschinsky, *Walter*, p. 124.

<sup>227</sup> *IPMEP*, 238. This recipe collection is also extant in London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. VIII (106).

<sup>228</sup> *IPMEP*, 665. Oschinsky mistakenly refers to this MS as Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 92 on p. 48.

<sup>229</sup> *STC*, 250007.

manuscript succeeded by the incipit “plantynge and Graffinge of alman[er] off trees & vynys”, even though the actual text is missing and was likely never copied.<sup>230</sup>

Secondly, in the quarto-sized manuscript Sloane 686, which besides agricultural material also contains a veterinary treatise, medicinal charms and recipes, the translation of Henley’s tract (wrongly attributed to “Mayster Groshe”, i.e. the scholar Robert Grosseteste who also composed the *Rules*, discussed in §4.4.i-iii) appears in two parts, that are interrupted by another text.<sup>231</sup> The version of the *Husbandry* contained in this manuscript also preserves additional information on sheep-shearing that is also found in another Latin translation of the text in Bodleian Library, MS Digby 147 (22), and a note on corn-stealing gleaners that is borrowed from either *Fleta* or *Senechaucie*, two other Anglo-French managerial texts.<sup>232</sup> The scribe copied the *Husbandry* onto the blank spaces of a booklet that at this point (presumably) already contained other texts, as he added a note indicating that the *Husbandry* would continue after these texts so as to avoid confusion about continuity.<sup>233</sup> Similar to MS Peniarth 394D, the printed version of Walter’s tract may have inspired the compilation of MS Sloane 686: just as the index to the printed edition of the *Husbandry* includes a seventeenth chapter in the form of Nicholas Bollard’s treatise on grafting, so does the Sloane manuscript contain an index that facilitates reference to the *Husbandry* and Bollard’s grafting treatise. As the index does not include the medical additions to the manuscript, it is likely that these notations were meant to be distinct from the *Husbandry*. Moreover, the fact that the other texts in the manuscript were copied into a second booklet by a later scribe had led Keiser to suggest that the first booklet knew an individual circulation prior to it being bound.<sup>234</sup> Furthermore, there is evidence of sixteenth-century ownership of the first booklet containing the *Husbandry*, which ends with the note “God saue my mester Ihon Peyton for euer & euer.” on f. 12r. According to Keiser,

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<sup>230</sup> See Elisabeth Salter, *Popular Reading in English, c. 1400-1600* (Manchester: UP, 2012), pp. 146, 170. Even though Salter acknowledges that the Middle English translation of Walter is probably misattributed to Robert Grosseteste, she continues to refer to the text as Grosseteste’s work.

<sup>231</sup> Oschinsky, *Walter*, p. 21.

<sup>232</sup> Lamond, *Walter of Henley*, p. xxxi.

<sup>233</sup> Salter, *Popular Reading*, p. 150.

<sup>234</sup> Keiser, “Practical Books”, p. 481.

it is possible that “the volume was owned at an early point by the Peytons—who were then becoming established in Doddington, Isle of Ely, before achieving some prominence late in the sixteenth century”.<sup>235</sup> Overall, the compilation of MS Sloane 686 suggests that this manuscript was designed to serve as a husbandry book tailored to the interests of a late-medieval gentry landowner.

The third manuscript, MS Trinity O.1.13, was compiled between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries and contains various sizes of paper quires filled by different scribes.<sup>236</sup> The first quire (ff. 1-82), which has a strong focus on herbal medicine and astrology, closes with the popular treatise on the herb rosemary. Quires II-IV consist of medical recipes, which are indexed at the beginning of quire V. This quire further comprises astrological information and Henley’s *Husbandry*, here again misattributed to Robert Grosseteste.<sup>237</sup> A brief instruction on creating an orchard in a small space appears on f. 154v.<sup>238</sup> The latter part of the fifth quire contains notes on the dukedoms of France, contemporary historical notes, a list of officers of Waltham Forest, *Godfridus super Palladium* (interrupted by an index), and ends with two final quires containing miscellaneous Latin and English notes. The grafting treatises in this manuscript are interspersed with medical entries, which suggests that the scribe copied the grafting text during a later usage phase, when the medical texts had already been written.<sup>239</sup> While there is no explicit mention of a ‘seventeenth chapter’ such as present in the Sloane and Aberysthwyth manuscripts, both *GSP* and Nicholas Bollard’s texts follow the *Husbandry* after three folios of medical recipes. It thus seems as though the compiler of MS Trinity O.1.13 was quite keen to own a *Husbandry*-plus-grafting guide, as every white space available was utilised for the copying of these texts.

In terms of thematic organisation, it is apparent that three manuscript versions of the

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<sup>235</sup> Keiser, “Practical Books”, p. 481.

<sup>236</sup> James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge: A Descriptive Catalogue* Volume 3 (Cambridge: UP, 1902), pp. 11-12.

<sup>237</sup> The misattribution of Henley’s *Husbandry* to Grosseteste during the later Middle Ages is unsurprising in light of their similar subject matter. Grosseteste was also a famed astrologer and scientist, so the grouping together of astrological and managerial texts may be explained through this association.

<sup>238</sup> The brief but incomplete note informs its reader how to make an orchard in a short space, see Braekman, “Bollard”, p. 25.

<sup>239</sup> Salter, *Popular Reading*, p. 151.

Middle English translation of Henley's *Husbandry*, as well as De Worde's printed rendition of this treatise and one Early Modern Welsh version all include additional material on tree planting. Arboriculture, it would seem, became of interest to readers who also collected didactic, historical, and medical literature. To further explore the role of grafting treatises among this readership, the next section on arboricultural literature will elucidate how, in the late-medieval period, obtaining reading matter about grafting became a gentry pursuit.

### 3.3 Grafting in a literary context

“Also, a peche-tre shal bring forth pomegarnettis yif it be wateryd with gotys milk thre dayes whan it beginne to floure” (*Godfridus super Palladium*, ll. 120-1).

Items in medieval manuscripts which do not have straightforward literary qualities, such as this instruction for growing pomegranates on a peach tree, are commonly perceived as ‘practical’ in the sense that they purport a reader to use written information in order to produce a physical result, even if the end-product is actually unattainable. Yet, since agricultural (and other practical) texts are literary products and thus inevitably influenced by the society that produced them, they may have been open to different interpretations in the minds of contemporary readers.<sup>240</sup> A question that has recurrently been asked by scholars of utilitarian literature in the last decades is how readers would use and apply the knowledge that they derived from a how-to text. This question presupposes that texts on crafts and occupations were read to obtain useful know-how, and thus overlooks other possible reasons for reading practical literature.

#### 3.3.i Grafting in agronomical texts

As noted in the first chapter, agricultural treatises that circulated in the Middle Ages were mainly concerned with the conditions for planting and growing fruit, and particularly dedicated to the

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<sup>240</sup> According to Strohm, “whether registered by direct acknowledgment, telling silence, symptom, or other distortion, the material world exerts a constant pressure on the text”, see Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text*, XV.



subject of grafting, an age-old technique that is necessary for the propagation of several varieties of (fruit) trees, such as apples, pears, stone fruit, vines, and roses. The procedure of grafting entails cutting into a rootstock of a host-tree, and inserting the scion or graft of another, related species of tree. Successful grafting depends on a multitude of factors, such as the compatibility of stem and graft, the weather, and the correct joining of plant tissue. If the match is successful, the process will result in a tree carrying the same genotype (and thus the same fruit) as the tree from which the graft was taken. Therefore, a tree that is propagated through grafting is technically not a hybrid, but a clone of the tree that provided the scion. Medieval writers do not usually make this distinction,<sup>241</sup> but it was evident that the practice required technical skill, as exemplified by the number of ancient tracts outlining the procedure of grafting that circulated in medieval Europe. Such texts on grafting appealed to medieval readers to such an extent that treatises on grafting soon appeared in vernacular translations.

Discourse on classical literature has already started to move into the direction of viewing practical texts as literary productions; however, a full appreciation of the literariness of practical texts is still a desideratum for the discipline of literary studies.<sup>242</sup> According to W. Jeffrey Tatum,

some classical authors have earned our unconscious credence, it would seem, merely by dint of their artlessness; we simply do not respect them enough to doubt them. A case in point: Varro's *De Re Rustica*, a remarkable ensemble of three dialogues, a highly literary work, yet one whose obvious inadequacies have distracted readers from its attempts at literariness and consequently have led them to take its veracity for granted.<sup>243</sup>

In addition, Marco Formisano writes that, while classicist scholars generally agree that Virgil's

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<sup>241</sup> See Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*, p. 24.

<sup>242</sup> During the finalisation of this dissertation, an important publication on the topic of practical literature saw the light: *Instructional Writing in English, 1350-1650: Materiality and Meaning* by Carrie Griffin. This book came to my attention after I had completed my dissertation and therefore I have not had the chance to integrate the arguments of Griffin, who takes a similar stance toward practical literature as I do in my dissertation. Griffin's discussion of London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287, which contains a Middle English version of the text *Walter of Henley*, corroborates my argument on manuscripts containing grafting texts, see Carrie Griffin, *Instructional Writing in English, 1350-1650: Materiality and Meaning* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 48-53.

<sup>243</sup> W. Jeffrey Tatum, "The Poverty of the Claudii Pulchri: Varro, *De Re Rustica* 3.6.1-2," *The Classical Quarterly* 42.1 (1992), 190-200, p. 190.

*Georgics* is not an agricultural manual, some of them are “generally unwilling to conclude that Columella’s or Palladius’s texts are not mere ‘agricultural handbooks’”.<sup>244</sup> He further argues that “a text can, of course, be read *and used* for the content it conveys [...], even though the transmission of technical knowledge is not the text’s primary function”.<sup>245</sup> Nonetheless, the agriculture Palladius presents in the *Opus agriculturae* is not a reflection of the actual practices of his day, but a product of an ‘epitomatory’ tradition, which renders it a preservationist and accumulative textual composition.<sup>246</sup>

Assumptions about the literariness of classical texts have led to misunderstandings within the field of textual scholarship on a much wider scale, therefore also affecting our understanding of later literary periods. As Formisano maintains: “[s]cholars typically trace the historical development of individual disciplinary discourses such as medicine or agriculture and [...] interpret [these works] from the perspective of the history of science and technology”, while instead, we should work towards “a more carefully focused study of these texts in their specifically late antique cultural and literary context, at the same time shedding light on their inherent literariness”.<sup>247</sup> This, I contend, is also true for the medieval works: without a consideration of the cultural context of these works and of their (classical) antecedents, the practical usefulness of utilitarian literature cannot be taken for granted. As Joris Reynaert argues, scholars of English and French literature typically use terminology that alludes to the supposed scientific character of practical texts (“scientific works”, “factual prose”, “utilitarian literature”, etc.) which, he claims, “inevitably affects the interpretation of these works and needs to be adjusted and corrected accordingly”.<sup>248</sup> As I will

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<sup>244</sup> Marco Formisano, “Literature of Knowledge”, in Scott McGill and Edward J. Watts, *A Companion to Late Antique Literature* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018): 491-504, p. 493.

<sup>245</sup> Formisano, “Literature of Knowledge”, p. 494.

<sup>246</sup> Formisano, “Literature of Knowledge”, p. 498.

<sup>247</sup> Formisano, “Literature of Knowledge”, p. 502.

<sup>248</sup> Translated from Dutch: “In Frankrijk en Engeland heeft men de stap naar de omschrijving(en) met artes (nog) niet gezet. Daar zijn nog steeds termen in gebruik die zinspelen op het ‘wetenschappelijk’ karakter van de beoogde literatuur, mét de onvermijdelijke problemen die daarbij meekomen én de nodige nuanceringen en bijstellingen verdienen”, Joris Reynaert, “Arteshandschriften”, in Orlanda S.H. Lie, Joris Reynaert, eds., *Artes in context: Opstellen over het handschriftelijk milieu van Middelnederlandse artesteksten* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004). Alternatively, Dutch-speaking scholarship usually categorises practical works as *artessliteratuur*—vernacular works that deal with the subject of the *artes liberales*, the *artes mechanicae*, and the *artes magicae*—a term that does not implicate an exclusively practical or scholarly purpose. Reynaert notes, however, that *artes* has become such a broad umbrella term that it runs the risk of becoming

discuss below, manuscript evidence attests that some readers did study practical literature and put what they read into practice, but there are other reasons for reading agricultural texts which have been explored only to a lesser extent.

As a result of the Roman agricultural inheritance, nearly all of the fruit trees and herbs that were cultivated in medieval England were essentially Mediterranean; so, logically, medieval writers turned to classical sources for information about these crops. Yet, the Late-Roman authorities who wrote about the technique were not so much concerned with practical grafting, as they were using grafting imagery to conjure alternative realities within their narratives.<sup>249</sup> As Paolo Squatriti argues, agriculturists would often “deploy agronomical advice for extra-agricultural ends”: Virgil, in his *Georgics*, for instance, includes “a catalogue of improbable or impossible hybridizations, suggesting an uninhibited free-for-all, which concludes with a tree being amazed by its own crop”.<sup>250</sup> Virgil’s grafting fantasies were embraced by his literary following, who subsequently conjured positive literary images associated with grafted trees: the influential agronomist Columella, for instance, describes the produce of grafted trees as “adopted fruits”.<sup>251</sup> In addition, his agronomical heir Palladius composed a poem *De Insitione* (“on grafting”), in which he conceptualises grafting as a marriage between two different trees, but also employs grafting metaphors in his discourse on hospitality, adoption, and consecration.<sup>252</sup> Notably, Palladius envisages the relation between rootstock and graft as symbiotic rather than parasitic. Imitating Virgil, he describes a grafted chestnut tree, astounded to find that its branches, which once engendered prickly urchins, suddenly bring forth the smoothest almond shells.<sup>253</sup> The union of the chestnut and the almond tree is, nonetheless, entirely fictitious, as they do not share a familial compatibility. In fact, nearly all of Palladius’ grafting combinations only work on parchment.<sup>254</sup> It can be assumed, nonetheless, that

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an empty concept.

<sup>249</sup> See Lowe, “Symbolic Value”, p. 468.

<sup>250</sup> Lowe, “Symbolic Value”, p. 462.

<sup>251</sup> Lowe, “Symbolic Value”, p. 480-1.

<sup>252</sup> Lowe, “Symbolic Value”, p. 481.

<sup>253</sup> Lowe, “Symbolic Value”, p. 482.

<sup>254</sup> Mudge, et al., “A History of Grafting”, pp. 457-8.

the audiences of Virgil and Palladius were aware of the incompatibility between certain trees, and understood that their works were meant to be interpreted allegorically. As Squatrini suggests, Palladius' grafted chestnuts should be understood as a commentary on xenophobia.<sup>255</sup> The author employs this metaphor to let his fourth-century readers ponder the compatibility between barbarian settlers in the Roman Empire and the new monotheistic religions that were, at this time, "implanting themselves on the old polytheistic stock".<sup>256</sup> In Squatrini's words, Palladius' instructions for grafting are in fact a "manifestation of the agronomist's fantasy world".<sup>257</sup> Yet, the *auctoritas* (authority) of ancient sources in the medieval West prevailed to such an extent that apparent facts about grafted trees were lifted from Palladius' and Virgil's imaginative writings. As a result, medieval works of a practical nature, especially treatises on grafting, are unreliable witnesses of contemporary practices.

### 3.3.ii *Grafting in Middle English literature*

Two treatises, *Godfridus super Palladium* and Nicholas Bollard's *Craft of Grafting*, mentioned previously in my discussion of manuscripts and printed tracts containing Walter of Henley's *Husbandry*, are the main Middle English texts concerning the subject of tree-grafting. Both texts were originally composed in Latin and imbued with information from a plethora of Mediterranean sources. Other works featuring grafting that circulated in medieval England are the rhyme royal translation of Palladius' *Opus Agriculturae* and an anonymous poem citing the words of a certain gardener named John, also known as the *Feate of Gardening*, briefly mentioned in Chapter 4.4.iv. In addition, miscellaneous and fragmentary pieces of grafting instructions are scattered across manuscripts.

Middle English grafting treatises have received moderate interest by scholars, who generally consider these texts as practical, utilitarian works, and while these texts provide a great deal of insight into medieval farming and gardening interests, it is easy to overlook the possibility that such

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<sup>255</sup> Squatrini, *Landscape*, p. 94.

<sup>256</sup> Squatrini, *Landscape*, p. 94.

<sup>257</sup> Squatrini, *Landscape*, p. 94.

texts fulfilled other roles for their readers, such as being entertaining or inspirational. As H. Frederic Janson argues, “grafting, not unlike falconry, had been an avocation of princes and nobles since the day of Cyrus de Great”, the founder of the first Persian empire (6<sup>th</sup> C BCE).<sup>258</sup> The elevated status of grafting doubtlessly influenced its late-medieval image. In fact, there is a vast body of premodern literature featuring grafts and grafting that attest to the ambiguous status of the grafted tree in cultural expression. Since, as I have argued before, medieval readers did not maintain strict borders between practical and literary works, I will now review a number of literary works dealing with the subject of grafting in order to show the wider connotations of grafted trees in medieval culture.



Figure 9:  
Vegetable Lamb of Tartary in *Mandeville's Travels*  
St. Gallen, Stiftsarchiv (Abtei Pfäfers),  
Cod. Fab. XVI, f. 84<sup>v</sup>



Figure 10:  
Barnacle geese in Gerald of Wales' *Topographia Hibernica*  
London, British Library, Royal MS B VIII, f. 8<sup>v</sup>

Medieval maps, bestiaries, and marginalia often feature human-animal crossbreeds, which portray hybridity as something Other and monstrous.<sup>259</sup> Yet the negative image towards hybridity seems to be limited to human-like beings, as the lines between flora and fauna are blurred without much concern: after all, atypical creatures growing from trees are represented in various forms of

<sup>258</sup> H. Frederic Janson, *Pomona's Harvest* (Portland: Timber Press, 1996), p. 63.

<sup>259</sup> On this topic see, for instance, the chapter “Humans as Animals” in Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 121-145.

premodern literature. Gerald of Wales' *Topographia Hibernica* and Mandeville's *Travels*, for example, respectively describe the Vegetable Lamb of Tartary and barnacle geese (see Figures 9 and 10) as curious but existing entities. Contrary to mythical animals, grafted trees are not portrayed as aberrations of Nature or Creation, nor as the results of divine intervention: instead, human creativity is the root of their existence.<sup>260</sup> As Steven Epstein notes, "[b]ecause grafting may be observed in Nature, it could be viewed as a morally neutral lesson and activity, and another way for people to exercise their rightful dominion over Nature".<sup>261</sup> Even 'unnatural' tampering with fruit trees described by ancient agronomists, such as growing gemstones and pearls inside an apple and nut kernels in place of peach stones, were copied in medieval texts without much hesitation. The popularity of medieval grafting treatises that promise such marvellous results suggests that the eagerness to explore the limits of hybridity was not impeded by moral obligations.<sup>262</sup> Ardis Butterfield adds that the ubiquity of grafting imagery in the Middle Ages demonstrates a "cultural fascination with the transitional and the hybrid".<sup>263</sup> More specifically, she argues that the "idea of grafting articulates a medieval obsession with the key creative practices of splicing new material into old, or of reworking the fragmentary into new structure".<sup>264</sup>

Illustrative of the omnipresence of grafted trees in medieval literature, the Middle English chronicle *Cursor Mundi* (extant in at least nine manuscripts) details that the most conspicuous tree in Christian history,<sup>265</sup> the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, was also a grafted (or at least a hybrid) tree, as it brought forth seeds of pine, cedar, and cypress.<sup>266</sup> In scriptural history, these seeds take on a pivotal role: upon discovery of the healing powers of this tree's rods, Moses takes them

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<sup>260</sup> The association between hybridity and the monstrous was already firmly established in Roman thought, see Dunstan Lowe, "The Symbolic Value of Grafting in Ancient Rome", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 140.2 (2010), 461-488, p. 464.

<sup>261</sup> Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>262</sup> By contrast, within the Talmudic Jewish tradition, grafting is not kosher, see Mudge *et al.*, "A History of Grafting", p. 451.

<sup>263</sup> Ardis Butterfield, "'Enté': A Survey and Reassessment of the Term in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Music and Poetry." *Early Music History* 22 (2003): 67-101, p. 72.

<sup>264</sup> Butterfield, "'Enté'", p. 72.

<sup>265</sup> For the manuscripts of the 'core version' of the Middle English *Cursor Mundi*, see John J. Thompson, ed., *The Cursor Mundi: Poem, Texts and Contexts* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1998), p. 23.

<sup>266</sup> David L. Jeffery, *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 780.

with him on his journeys before planting them at his deathbed.<sup>267</sup> Thereafter, King David comes to retrieve the rods with the intention of bringing them home to Jerusalem; yet, before he could do so, he found that the branches naturally grafted together into a single tree.<sup>268</sup> Because the tree had already taken root, it remained at Moses' burial site in the Temple, until, years later, it was felled for the purpose of becoming the most important piece of wood in biblical history: Christ's cross.<sup>269</sup> Eventually, in the biblical Book of Revelation, the tree reappears: when an angel shows John a vision of New Jerusalem, he tells him that "[i]n the midst of the street of [the city], and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations".<sup>270</sup>

Aside from the chain of typological prefigurations, the Bible contains more grafted tree imagery: Romans 11:16-24 details how non-Jewish Gentiles were allied with Israel like wild branches to a cultivated tree: they are grafted on this metaphorical tree after its 'natural branches', the Israelites, were broken off by God as a punishment for their unfaithfulness. These verses clearly outline that the compatibility of the Israelites and the Gentiles lies in their allegiance to Christ, the root of their faith. Grafted onto the same tree, both peoples engage in a symbiosis in which all branches, grafted or natural, function as a single entity. Examples such as these illustrate the complicated relation between humans and the grafted tree: in the episode of the Gentiles, the grafted tree symbolises harmony through faith, while the Tree of Knowledge, later to become the Tree of Life, provided a leitmotif in salvation history precisely because of its instability of form.

The Bible attests that grafting was already a well-known practice in early agricultural history. Yet, while the imagery surrounding grafting was described in scriptural literature, no other form of contemporary literature originating from the Middle East specifies the way in which humans acquired the skill of grafting for themselves.

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<sup>267</sup> Jeffery, *Biblical Tradition*, p. 780.

<sup>268</sup> Jeffery, *Biblical Tradition*, p. 780.

<sup>269</sup> Jeffery, *Biblical Tradition*, p. 780.

<sup>270</sup> Revelation 22.2 (King James Version).





Figure 11: The tree of life bearing different kinds of fruits and nuts, depicted on an embroidery dated to the first half of the seventeenth century (but was probably created earlier), currently kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (item no. 64.101.1305). Photograph by Cristina Balloffett Carr.

Information about the adoption of grafting techniques in Europe, however, can be reconstructed by means of the archaeological record. When Roman settlers invaded Britain, they introduced many new varieties of fruit and nut trees, including apple, fig, grape, mulberry, olive, peach, date, pomegranate, pear, sour cherry, plum and cherry plum, damson, walnut, pine nut, almond, and chestnut. In addition, they brought the herbs and spices that were used in Roman cuisine, such as black pepper, coriander, dill, parsley, anise, summer savory, marjoram, mint, horehound, black cumin, rue, white mustard, and lovage; vegetables such as rape, leek, cucumber, and lettuce as well



as seeds and pulses. As soon as the Romans had found out that some of these species would not adapt to the British soil and climes, however, they started importing these foodstuffs, as they were vital ingredients in the Roman diet.<sup>271</sup> With the introduction of all of these new crops into Britain, the Roman settlers also brought with them the knowledge required to increase production for market, as was common in Mediterranean countries.<sup>272</sup> This generated a surge in the cultivation of plum, damson, apple, pear, cherry, walnut, leaf beet, cabbage, and turnip, all of which were adopted in rural Britain with lasting success.<sup>273</sup>

While the native species of apples and plums that grew in Britain before the Romans arrived could reproduce without human intervention, the newly introduced varieties of fruit trees all required grafting in order to be propagated. It is unclear precisely how the technique of grafting was introduced in Roman Britain, but archaeobotanical evidence confirms that trees which require multiplication through grafting were introduced later in the course of the Roman rule than those species that reproduce naturally.<sup>274</sup> Van der Veen et al. sketch some possible scenarios: scions could have been imported and then grafted onto the rootstocks of local varieties or, perhaps, rootstocks were shipped to Britain, ready to be engrafted.<sup>275</sup> It is also likely, they suppose, that the market for foreign fruit trees was particularly lucrative: as several hundred apple pips were recovered from late-Roman sites it appears that “some individuals may have identified a niche in the market and recognised an opportunity to make money” by shipping trees from the Mediterranean to Northern Europe.<sup>276</sup> Although we have no evidence how the native Briton learnt to graft, it seems very likely that Roman cultivation methods continued to be practised after their rule had ended, and that their ways of grafting remained to be practised in medieval Britain.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> The list of crops that were introduced by the Romans has been obtained from Marijke van der Veen, Alexandra Livarda, and Alistair Hill, “New Plant Foods in Roman Britain – Dispersal and Social Access”, *Environmental Archaeology* 13 (2008): 11-36, p. 13.

<sup>272</sup> See Van der Veen, et al., “New Plant Foods,” pp. 11-36.

<sup>273</sup> See Van der Veen, et al., “New Plant Foods,” pp. 11-36.

<sup>274</sup> See Van der Veen, et al., “New Plant Foods,” pp. 11-36.

<sup>275</sup> See Van der Veen, et al., “New Plant Foods,” pp. 11-36.

<sup>276</sup> See Van der Veen, et al., “New Plant Foods,” pp. 11-36.

<sup>277</sup> Evidence that grafting was practiced in Carolingian estates is found in the *Capitulare de villis*, which was composed c. 771-800. In this idealised documentation of the management of a royal estate, it is written that the steward, in his

Medieval sources, nonetheless, envisage grafting as a gift from above. Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies*, for instance, features a scene in which the goddess Isis teaches the Egyptians both to cultivate their trees and write in hieroglyphs.<sup>278</sup> There are two Middle English illuminated manuscripts containing the *City of Ladies* that portray Isis, respectively, as a Marian figure grafting trees herself, and as a noblewoman instructing peasants to graft (see figures 31 and 32). These depictions illustrate that arboriculture was viewed as an ancient craft, a pillar in the process of civilisation akin to the introduction of written language. Moreover, the notion that a godly representative teaches humans to graft can be seen as an origin myth that symbolises a top-down process of civilisation and cultural cultivation. De Pizan's envisioning that techniques such as grafting and the ability to codify a language were bestowed upon a people parallels the introduction of grafting and the Latin language in Northern Europe as a result of the Roman expansion.



Figure 12: British Library, Harley 4431, f. 107v



Figure 13: British Library, Add. MS 20698, f.85r

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annual statement, must list all income garnered from the fruits, nuts, and graftings obtained from trees. The document ends with a desideratum of trees for royal orchards: “As for trees, it is our wish that they shall have various kinds of apple, pear, plum, sorb, medlar, chestnut and peach; quince, hazel, almond, mulberry, laurel, pine, fig, nut and cherry trees of various kinds. The names of apples are: gozmaringa, geroldinga, crevedella, spirauca; there are sweet ones, bitter ones, those that keep well, those that are to be eaten straightaway, and early ones. Of pears they are to have three or four kinds, those that keep well, sweet ones, cooking pears and the late-ripening ones” (*Capitulare de villis*, translated by H.R. Loyn and J. Percival, *The Reign of Charlemagne. Documents on Carolingian Government and Administration Documents of Medieval History 2* (London: Arnold, 1975), 64-73 via *Carolingian Polyptyques*, available at <https://www.le.ac.uk/hi/polyptyques/capitulare/site.html>).

<sup>278</sup> De Pizan uses Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* as a source, see Jane Chance, “Re-mem-bering Herself: Christine de Pizan's Refiguration of Isis as Io”, *Modern Philology* 111:2 (2013): 133-157, pp. 141, 146-7.

When discussing the subject of grafting imagery in premodern literature it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the Middle English words for grafting—“impen”, “grafting”, and “enten”—as they obtained multiple meanings over time.<sup>279</sup> “Impen”, for instance, was also used in falconry for engrafting feathers to improve the flight of a hawk.<sup>280</sup> In addition, scribes added *enté* (“grafted”) to signal when a new line of poetry was inserted into an existing text, or a new refrain into a piece of music or lyric.<sup>281</sup> Furthermore, grafting became part of the conceptual domain A FAMILY IS A TREE, in which different elements of a tree represent family structures and relations. For example, when Thomas Hoccleve addresses the future Henry V in his *Regiment of Princes* as “kynges ympe and princes worthynesse” (l. 5442), he uses the noun “impe”, a shoot or graft, to denote the natural offspring of a noble family.<sup>282</sup> It was during the sixteenth century that the word “imp” obtained the negative connotation of a malign spirit, as it became a derogatory term to denote bastard-children. For example, one of the 1536 *Acts of Parliament*, effected under the reign of Henry VIII, condemned “Dyvers sedicious ... persones, being impes of the said Bisshopp of Rome”, presenting Catholics as illegitimate offspring of the pope.<sup>283</sup> In the same vein, ‘imp’ referred to all sorts of unnatural children produced by malignant entities, such as the devil or witches. In the seventeenth century, “imp” retained its negative meaning and was no longer used to denote “graft”. Still, grafting metaphors were frequently employed in order to symbolise the introduction of foreign, malicious material into a body, human or otherwise.<sup>284</sup> To illustrate, when the character Buckingham in Shakespeare’s *Richard III* resents that “the noble isle’s ... royal stock [is] graft with ignoble plants” (3.7.125-7), the relation between graft and rootstock is imagined as parasitic rather than

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<sup>279</sup> ME “impen” is etymologically linked to Modern German “impfen” (to vaccinate) and ME “enten” to the Modern Dutch word “inerten” (to vaccinate, orig. to graft). In Dutch, the common horticultural term for grafting has become “enten”, while “inerten” is now solely used for vaccination.

<sup>280</sup> OED s.v. *imp* (v) 3, available at <http://www.oed.com.proxy-ub.rug.nl/view/Entry/92032> (date accessed 20 March 2017). The early dictionary *Promptorium Parvulorum* records two alternative forms of “imped”: “pynson” or “graffyd”, suggesting that these adjectives were used interchangeably.

<sup>281</sup> Butterfield, “Enté”, p. 67.

<sup>282</sup> Thomas Hoccleve, *Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth, *TEAMS Middle English Text Series* (Kalamazoo, MI: 1999).

<sup>283</sup> OED Online, s.v. “imp (n.)”, 3b”.

<sup>284</sup> OED Online, s.v. “imp (n.)”, 4a”.

synergetic.<sup>285</sup> Nevertheless, the image of a grafted family tree occurs in a drawing of the royal lineage of Britain, in which James IV is represented as a thistle grafted onto the rootstock of the Tudor rose by virtue of his union with Margaret Tudor.<sup>286</sup> This symbolic representation of familial grafting implies that James takes on the disposition and nature of the rose stem. His daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, is consequently represented as a rose, affirming that the grafting was successful and that James was successfully integrated into the Tudor tree.<sup>287</sup>

Medieval examples of negative imagery concerning imps and grafts are scarce, though not entirely absent. For instance, in a text that frequently features in gentry-owned manuscripts, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, an ‘imp’ forms the subject of a sequence about a young offshoot that usurps an old pine tree’s place in the sun, symbolising how a ‘knave’ (a young man) may appropriate his master’s place.<sup>288</sup> Furthermore, in William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, the character Wrath uses a grafting metaphor to describe how he spread lies and falsehoods to please his lords:

- Now awaketh Wrathe, with two white eighen,  
And nevelyng with the nose, and his nekke hangyng.
135. “I am Wrathe,” quod he, “I was som tyme a frere,  
And the coventes gardyner for to graffen impes.  
On lymitous and listres lesynges I ymped,  
Til thei beere leves of lowe speche, lordes to plese,  
And sithen thei blosmede abroad in boure to here shriftes.
140. And now is fallen therof a fruyt—that folk han wel levere  
Shewen hire shriftes to hem than shryve hem to hir persons.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Recent archaeological findings confirm that “a false-paternity event had occurred within the last four generations” prior to Richard III’s birth, see Turi E. King, Gloria Gonzalez Fortes, Patricia Balaesque, Mark G. Thomas, David Balding, Pierpaolo Maisano Delser, Rita Neumann, et al. “Identification of the Remains of King Richard III”, *Nature Communications* 5. 5631 (2014): 1-8, p. 2.

<sup>286</sup> See Paul Raffield, *The Art of Law in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2017), 116.

<sup>287</sup> Raffield, *The Art of Law*, pp. 116-7.

<sup>288</sup> See Killis Campbell, ed., *The Seven Sages of Rome* (Boston: Ginn, 1907), pp. 21-4, ll. 619-704.

<sup>289</sup> William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. A.V.C. Smith (London: Dent and Dutton, 1978), B-Text, Passus V, ll. 133-141. Translation:

- Wrath now awakens, with two white eyes,  
With his nose sniveling and his neck hanging, he said:
- 135 “I am Wrath, I was a friar once,  
And the convent’s gardener, to graft imps.

In this scene, the act of grafting represents verbal deceit, while the result of Wrath's effort is symbolised as a fallen fruit—a direct echo of the Devil's involvement in the Fall of Mankind.<sup>290</sup>

Further negative connotations to grafting can be found in London, British Library, Add. MS 17492, which is also known as the Devonshire Manuscript. This Tudor collection of courtly love lyrics contains several short poems featuring arboricultural symbolism. For example, the poem “Now fare well love” (fol. 75r), attributed to Thomas Wyatt, is written from the perspective of a lover who is entangled in “baytid hookis” (l. 2) from which he eventually manages to free himself: “me liste no longr rottyn bowes to clime” (l. 14). If Wyatt's poem is an allegory for the Tudor court, the “rottyn bowes” he refuses to climb may be interpreted as the branches of the Tudor rose. This sentiment is made more evident in another poem featuring similar imagery, which appears on f. 47v of the same manuscript:

This rotyd greff will not but growe  
to wether away ys not ys kynde  
my teris of sorowe fulwell I know  
which will I leve will not from mynde  
T. H.<sup>291</sup>

Because the poem is signed with the initials T.H., which also recur elsewhere as “T. How”, this poem has been attributed to Lord Thomas Howard, courtier to Henry VIII. Howard's name is also linked to other love poems in Add. MS 17492, in which unrequited love is envisaged as entanglement by a rotten bough.<sup>292</sup> The speaker of the poem imagines his love as a ‘greff’, a foreign

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I grafted falsehoods on mendicant friars and lectors,  
Until they bore leaves of servile speech, to please their lords,  
And since then they blossomed abroad in (lady's) bowers to hear confessions.  
140 And now a fruit has fallen thereof—that people had much rather  
Tell their confessions to them than confess to their parsons.

<sup>290</sup> The tree imagery in Langland's description of Wrath was likely inspired by a common diagram found in medieval manuscript: the Tree of Vices (or Virtues), see Katharine Breen, “Reading Step By Step: Pictorial Allegory and Pastoral Care in *Piers Plowman*,” in *Taxonomies of Knowledge: Information and Order in Medieval Manuscripts*, Lynn Ransom and Emily Steiner, eds., (Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 123-4.

<sup>291</sup> The poem “This Rotyd Greff Will not But Growe” was edited as part of *A Social Edition of the Devonshire MS (BL Add. MS 17492)* by Raymond Siemens et al. (2014): 97, published online at <https://dms.itercommunity.org/this-rotyd-greff-will-not-but-growe>.

<sup>292</sup> See Siemens et al., *A Social Edition* (online).

stalk that was planted by the object of his desire, which continues to grow as his tears of sorrow keep flowing. If Thomas Howard was indeed the writer of the poem, the grafting imagery may have a deeper connotation, as he was secretly engaged to Margeret Douglas, who was of Scottish descent. The fact that his love is here represented as a ‘greff’ rather than a ‘bough’ may be significant as Douglas, like James IV in the aforementioned family tree, was grafted unto the royal stock. While ‘greff’ and ‘bowes’ can both be interpreted as natural branches, ‘rotyd’ can also be interpreted as rooted, in which case ‘greff’ is more likely to denote a sapling that has taken root. Furthermore, ‘greff’ is also interpretable on multiple planes: its first meaning is ‘graft’, but it simultaneously connotes grief through phonetic proximity.<sup>293</sup> If we read ‘rotyd’ as ‘rotten’, the overall tone of the poem becomes decidedly more pessimistic.<sup>294</sup> The poem is thus highly ambiguous: it presents a graft or grief that is at once firmly rooted in the speaker’s mind, rotten, yet unlikely to wither away.<sup>295</sup>

The poems in manuscript Add 17492 tap into the genre of romance literature, in which love-longing is typically idealised. Incidentally, medieval romances are also the most prolific source of grafting imagery in medieval literary culture. A preoccupation with hybrid trees is particularly manifest in the enigmatic ‘impe tre’ that forms a recurrent thread throughout medieval romances, for instance in *Sir Orfeo* and *Tydorel*, in which the grafted tree forebodes a supernatural event.<sup>296</sup> As Seth Lerer has argued, the grafted tree represents a mix between nature and artifice, and therefore acts as a portal to the fairy realm, a liminal place that is at once natural and supernatural.<sup>297</sup> The thirteenth-century *Roman de la Poire* by Tibaut, Ardis Butterfield explains, is both literally and structurally built on grafting imagery: the episode in which a lady presents a pear to her lover, who

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<sup>293</sup> “grief, n.,” *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/81389>. Compare, for instance, “My deep rootid grief were remedied Souffissantly (l. 83) in Thomas Hoccleve’s *Regiment of Princes*, via *MED*, “rōten, v. (3)”.

<sup>294</sup> See the entries for “rōten, v. (1)” and “rōten, v. (3)” in the *MED*.

<sup>295</sup> Cf. “root, v.1” and “rot, v.,” *OED Online*. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/167365> (accessed February 12, 2019); Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/254475> (accessed February 12, 2019).

<sup>296</sup> Butterfield, “Enté”, 71. For a discussion of the etymology of “ympe-tree” and the classical sources that may have influenced the tree imagery in *Sir Orpheo*, see Vicente López Folgado, “The meaning of ‘ympe-tree’ in *Sir Orfeo*”, *Alfinge* 15 (2003), 57-65.

<sup>297</sup> Seth Lerer, “Artifice and Artistry in *Sir Orfeo*,” *Speculum* 60.1 (1985), 92-109.

then takes a bite, is an obvious parallel to the forbidden fruit from Genesis.<sup>298</sup> As the pear is the fruit of a grafted tree, the reader is left to guess its true nature: it is just a fruit or does it conceal a hidden agenda? Another example of a Middle English romance that is structured around the theme of on grafting is *Fresne*, a translation of Marie de France's *Lay Le Freine*, which is extant in the romance anthology Edinburgh, National Library of Schotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1, better known as the Auchinleck manuscript. In this manuscript the lay shares a prologue with another of De France's romances featuring the 'impe tree', *Sir Orfeo*. While the lay of *Fresne* itself does not feature an 'impe tre' per se, it heavily relies on arboreal symbolism.

The lay starts with a woman who, after slandering her neighbour by proclaiming that her twins were sired by two different fathers, becomes pregnant with twins herself. In avoidance of becoming the subject of ridicule herself, she abandons one of her daughters, Le Fresne (the Middle French word for Ash tree), underneath an ash tree, where the girl is found by a nun who takes her home and raises her in a nunnery. Her sister La Codre (Hazel), meanwhile, enjoys a noble upbringing. Just as the trees after which the girls are named are taxonomically unrelated, the girls are portrayed as polar opposites.<sup>299</sup> Le Fresne has a masculine name, and is implied to be barren (as the ash is traditionally thought to have been), while the feminine La Codre is likened to the fruitful hazel.<sup>300</sup> Fresne's sterility effectively renders her a dead branch of her biological family tree, and through her adoption into the convent, moreover, she is now grafted onto an artificial family that exists solely of sisters. One day, when Fresne falls in love with the knight Gurun, she cannot marry him for her social inferiority and infertility, after which he sets off to marry her biological sister. Eventually, the plot culminates into the revelation that both girls are in fact twins sired by the same father. This instantly raises the lowly Fresne to the upper echelons of society, making her

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<sup>298</sup> Besides featuring a grafted tree, Butterfield argues that the aforementioned *Roman de la Poire* is created through textual grafting: "structurally it is built around refrains that similarly both cut into and generate its text", see Butterfield, "Enté", p. 71.

<sup>299</sup> According to modern taxonomy, the trees after which Fresne and Codre are named belong to different families, Oleaceae and Betulaceae, and even to different orders, Lamiales and Fagales, which underlines that they are genetically unrelated.

<sup>300</sup> See Rupert T. Pickens, "Anomaly and Ambiguity in Marie France's *Fresne*" in *"Moult a sans et valour": Studies in Medieval French Literature in Honor of William W. Kibler* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 305-314, pp. 311-12.

a suitable wedding partner to Gurun. La Codre's status is not affected by this event, as she marries another nobleman. The use of tree imagery in Fresne heightens the dramatic irony of the lay: just as outward appearance does not reveal one's true colours, the girls' names deliberately mislead the characters and the audience into thinking they must be unrelated. After the revelation, the audience is forced to look beyond superficial markers and become aware that both girls are, in fact, of noble lineage. Evidently, noble character is not inherited through the matrilineal line, since Fresne's and Codre's mother is portrayed as their adversary. While both girls receive a different yet honourable upbringing, their father's bloodline remains the deciding factor in their social position. The lay of Le Fresne seems to communicate that a genetic link (nature) is of greater importance than upbringing (nurture) in the construction of noble identity.

While he does not directly refer to grafting in his works, John Lydgate uses elements from the family tree domain to convey concerns about hybrid identity in his *Fall of Princes*, a Middle English adaptation of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*.<sup>301</sup> *The Fall of Princes* (*FoP*) was dedicated to Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester, and the fact that this text frequently features in the manuscripts owned by bourgeois and gentry individuals suggests that the language of family trees and the hybridity of their offspring must have been familiar to part of fifteenth-century literate society.<sup>302</sup> In *FoP*, Lydgate conveys a deep concern with deceptive outward appearance, a form of hybridity that is constituted by concealing one's true identity. The poet frequently uses "stok" (tree-trunk) figuratively, in the sense of peerage, lineage, ancestry, race, kindred, family, or tribe,<sup>303</sup> and denotes the offspring of these "stokkes" as "graffes": "ther stock was first contagious of nature, / The griffes froward, thowh thei wer gret in noumbre" (ll. 3.5091-2).<sup>304</sup> This imagery recurs throughout the text, for instance when Lydgate denounces individuals getting ideas above their

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<sup>301</sup> Lydgate did not translate this work directly but relied on a French version, see A.S.G. Edwards, "Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*: Translation, Re-Translation and History" in *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print, and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640*, ed. S. K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 21-34, pp. 25-27.

<sup>302</sup> Raluca Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's Morte Darthur* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 48-9.

<sup>303</sup> The fixed expression 'stok and rote' was used in the sense of 'generation after generation', see *MED* "stok, n.(1)".

<sup>304</sup> John Lydgate, *Here begynnethe the boke callede Iohn bochas descriuinge the falle of princis [and] other nobles tra[n]slated i[n]to englissh by Iohn ludgate mo[n]ke of the monastery of seint edmu[n]des Bury* (London: Richard Pynson, 1494).



stations:

What thyng to god is more abhominable  
2.240 Than pride vpreysed out of pouerte  
And no thinge gladly is founde more vengeable  
Than are wretches set in high degre  
For from his stok kynde may nat fle  
Ech thyng resorteth howe ferre euer it go  
2.245 To the nature which that it cam fro.<sup>305</sup>

The poet repeats the same sentiment in ll. 4.1149-1153:

Of gentil stokkes rekne out the issues  
4.1150 That be descendid doun from a roial lyne  
Yif þei be vicious & void of al vertues  
And ha[ue] no tarage of vertuous disciplyne  
With temporal tresour thouth thei florshe & shyne.

The word ‘tarage’ (l. 4.1152) is of presumed French origin, and seems to have been introduced into the English language by Lydgate to signify flavour or essence and, figuratively, human character.<sup>306</sup> Moreover, the sentiment expressed in the abovesited passages concerning inborn character is also present in ll. 2.246-52:

Frute and apples take their talarage [*sic*]  
Where they first grewe of the same tre  
And semblably eche kynrede and lynage  
Onys ayere it wyll none other be  
2.250 By tokyn and sygne at the iye as men may se  
Draweth comonly in euery creature  
Sume teche to folowe after his nature

Just as the colour of fruit does not reveal whether it is spoilt, persons might seem noble on the outside because of various “signs and tokens” (l. 2.250), while they are, in fact, descended from a

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<sup>305</sup> ll. 2.239-245.

<sup>306</sup> See “† tarage, n.1,” *OED Online*. In Modern French, the word is used for ‘calibration’, which does not seem to fit Lydgate’s usage. Alternatively, ‘tarage’ may also be a misspelling of ‘carage’ or ‘carriage’, which was used historically in the sense of ‘ability or capacity for carrying’, see “carriage, n. (†6)” *OED Online*.

tainted stock. Just as a piece of fruit, their true colours lie hidden in their ‘tarage’.

Lydgate further addresses the consequences of giving in to one’s fated nature in the following passage, which was evidently inspired by an ancient maxim:

A progenye borne of a cursed lyne  
May through his frowarde fals infection  
Outwarde by coloure of trouth though they shyne  
Vnder apparence and simulacion  
3.5080 Infect and corrupt all a regyon  
For it is sayde of full olde langage  
Frute of soure trees take a soure tarage.<sup>307</sup>

Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* sustains the notion that hereditary factors may be overcome in the rise through peirage: the fact that only some people (“sume”, l. 2.252) follow after their nature, implies that nurture can overrule nature. Yet, as Lydgate shows in ll. 5.3076-3082, an imbalance between inner character and outward appearance (i.e. pretending to be above one’s station) will result in apples that are rotten on the inside, which have the capacity to “infect and corrupt a region” (l. 3.5079). Simultaneously, the text communicates that achieving gentility requires effort, not just a noble bloodline:

Plukke up vices, braunche, cropp & roote  
Frut off goodnesse groweth up so soote  
Whan it is plauntid off youthe in a corage  
It neuer appalleth in helthe off his tarage (ll. 3.1240-1246).

For both sapling and child, Lydgate emphasises, good character ought to be fostered in a nursery: good ‘tarage’ will bring forth fruit that is ‘soote’ (flavoursome), but only when the tree is pruned in its infancy:

But oft tyme vertue nor gentylnesse  
Come nat to heires by succession  
[...]

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<sup>307</sup> Lydgate, *FoP*, ll. 3.5076-5082.

For which let men deme as they must nedys  
Nat after birth but after the dedys (ll. 6.596-7; 6.601-2).

In effect, Lydgate's juxtaposition of 'coloure' and 'tarage' results in a nature versus nurture debate *avant la lettre*, in which "teaching to follow one's nature" (l. 2.252) is seen as a critical factor in human character development. Lydgate's ideas thus reinforce existing notions about gentility, such as those present in literature (Marie de France's lay *Le Fresne*, for instance) and visual culture (such as Trees of Virtues and Vices, which often appear as diagrams in medieval manuscripts).

Outside of his moral works, Lydgate employs fruit tree imagery for different purposes. For instance, in the laudatory poem *Henry VI's Triumphal Entry into London*, the poet presents the streets of London as though they were a paradisiacal orchard: "Ther were eke treen, with leves fressh of hewe / Alle tyme of yeer, fulle of fruytes lade" (ll. 349-362). Needless to say, no European tree produces fruits all year round and so it follows that Lydgate, here, refers to the Mediterranean fruits (oranges, almonds, pomegranates, lemons, dates, pippins, quinces, 'blaunderells' and 'pomecedars') that were available in the London market throughout the year. Next to these exotic wares, Lydgate praises the more common fruits that were the pride and joy of his King's country:

355 Eke the fruytes which more comune be —  
    Quenynges, peches, costardes and wardouns,  
    And other meny ful fayre and fresh to se;  
    The pomewater and the gentyll ricardouns;  
    And ageyns hertes for mutygaciouns  
360 Damysyns, which with here taste delyte,  
    Full grete plenté both of blak and white (ll. 355-361).<sup>308</sup>

In its celebration of homegrown fruit, this section of Lydgate's poem is akin to the enumeration of fruit trees that appears in in the Middle English poem *The Pistil of Swete Susan*, a late-fourteenth century reworking of the apocryphal tale of Susannah and the Elders. At the beginning of the tale,

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<sup>308</sup> Lydgate seems to make a slight nod to dietary literature when he notes that Damson plums relieve the heart from sorrows (ll. 359-60).

the newlywed Susannah and Joachim are introduced as the owners of an idyllic estate:

1 Ther was in Babiloine a bern in that borw riche  
That was a Jeww jentil, and Joachim he hiht.  
He was so lele in his lawe ther lived non him liche.  
Of alle riches that renke arayed he was riht.  
5 His innes and his orchardes were with a dep dich,  
Halles and herbergages heigh uppon heiht:  
To seche thoru that cité ther nas non sich  
Of erbes and of erberi so avenauntliche i-diht  
[...]  
He hedde an orchard newe that neighed wel nere  
That Jewes with Joachim priveleche gon playe;  
For he [was] real and riche of rentes ever rere,  
30 Honest and avenaunt and honorablest aye.

Joachim and Susannah's orchard is populated with an array of exotic flora and fauna: parrots, goldfinches, and sixty turtle-doves (ll. 81, 84, 90) are perched on the branches of olive, almond, pear and pine trees (ll. 80-82), vines and cinnamon trees (l. 83-4), dates and Damsons (l. 89). The catalogue of trees continues in the next stanza, with figs and hazelnuts (l. 92), cherry and chestnut (l. 93), apple and almond (l. 94), grape and pomegranate (l. 95), custard apple (l. 96), Breton apple, 'blauderelle', (l. 97), wardon and walnut (l. 99), quince and codling apple trees (l. 102). Their kitchen garden, moreover, boasts an abundance of herbs, flowers and vegetables:

105 The chyve and the chollet, the chibolle, the cheve,  
The chouwet, the cheverol that schaggen on niht,  
The persel, the passenep, poretes to preve,  
The pyon, the peere, wel proudliche ipiht;  
The lilye, the lovache, launsyng with leve,  
110 The sauge, the sorsecle so semeliche to siht,  
Columbyne and charuwé clottes thei creve,  
With ruwe and rubarbe ragget ariht -  
No lees.

Daysye and ditoyne,  
115 Ysope and averoyne,  
Peletre and plauntoyne  
Proudest in pres.

*The Pistil of Swete Susan* knew a varied readership: the poem is extant in five manuscripts, two of which are anthologies of (vernacular) religious and didactic prose and verse, which may have belonged to a Cistercian abbey, and one of which, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ii (103), has been linked to a gentry ownership. As Denise White argues, many of the poems in this manuscript “illustrate the conflict between social classes and show the tension that came from people’s desire to move upward while at the same time avoiding censure”, a concern typically associated with lower and middle class audiences.<sup>309</sup> This multi-text manuscript contains various works of Lydgate as well as several (gentry) romances, such as *Libeaus Desconus*, *Legend of Ipotis*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Sir Lanfal*, and didactic works such as the *Dietary*, *Vrbanitatis*, and *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, all of which touch upon the subject of obedience.<sup>310</sup> Notably, the version of the *Pistil* in Cotton Caligula A.ii omits 104 lines from the introduction, and starts *in medias res* with the alliterative enumeration of garden herbs.<sup>311</sup>

Because it is embedded in a framework of modesty and obedience, the idyllic orchard in *The Pistil of Swete Susan* does not function as a sign of decadence, which would have appealed to audiences who were eager to maintain a moderate lifestyle, dictated by such texts as the *Dietary* and the *ABC of Aristotle*. As opposed to the pleasure-gardens that frequently feature in other medieval texts, Susannah’s garden is “a place of safety and purity[,] prayer and contemplation”; her respectful attitude to this God-given garden makes her a heroine “that a young middle-class medieval reader could emulate”.<sup>312</sup> As Russel Peck notes, the paradisiacal garden in *The Pistil of Swete Susan* is not a

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<sup>309</sup> See Denise C. White, “BL Cotton Caligula Aii, Manuscript Context, The Theme of Obedience, and a Diplomatic Transcription Edition,” (PhD Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2012), p. 44.

<sup>310</sup> White, “BL Cotton Caligula Aii”, p. 2.

<sup>311</sup> White, “BL Cotton Caligula Aii”, p. 191.

<sup>312</sup> White, “BL Cotton Caligula Aii”, p. 52.

biblical Eden; instead,

Joachim's estate is that of a superbly manicured fourteenth-century household, with moat, lovely dwelling places, and especially a well-tended garden, inhabited as joyously by the birds as by the people who relax there. The garden reflects well upon its owners - sophisticated people, who understand the order of God's world, enhance it through civilized gestures, and live by it in their personal lives.<sup>313</sup>

What is more, the fact that the trees and plants that grow in their garden are similar to those that are described by Lydgate, as well as popular horticultural texts, suggests that images of gardens such as present in *The Pistil of Swete Susan* might have motivated gentry readers to develop such an orchard themselves. After all, as Dyer notes, medieval orchards served cultural rather than economic purposes:

we must avoid the mistake of concentrating on the utility and commercial value of gardens and their products. Gardens were a great source of enjoyment and contributed to the quality of life. In towns gardens might be called 'paradise', and guilds and fraternities would arrange for gardens to be laid out next to their halls, where the brethren could enjoy themselves. Fruit was accorded a high status not fully reflected in its market price, and when the elite wished to acknowledge and honour their associates or superiors, they would send gifts of apples, pears, or cherries.<sup>314</sup>

Furthermore, the enumeration of herbs in *The Pistil*, ll. 105-117 (above) resembles the way in which the gardener John presents a cornucopia of useful plants in ll. 159-180 of *The Feate of Gardening*:

Pelyter dytawnder rewe & sage  
160 Clarey tyme ysope and orage  
Myntys sauerey tuncarse & spynage  
Letows calamynte auans & borage  
Fynel sowthrynwode warmot & rybwort  
Herbe Ion herbe Eobert herbe Water & walwort  
165 Hertystonge polypody parrow & comfery

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<sup>313</sup> Russell A. Peck, *Heroic Women from the Old Testament in Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), p. 74.

<sup>314</sup> Dyer, "Gardens", p. 39.

- Gromel woderofe hyndesaft & betony  
 Gladyn valeryan scabyas & sperewort  
 Verueyn wodesour' waterlyly & lyuerworte  
 Mouseer' egri moyne honysoke & bugull  
 170 Centory horsel adderstong' & bygull  
 Henbane camemyl wyldtesyl & stychewort  
 Weybrede growdyswyly elysauwder & brysewort  
 Merege lauyndull radysche sanycle & seueny  
 Peruynke violet cowslyppe and lylly  
 175 Carsyndyllys strowberys and moderwort  
 Langebese totesayne tansay & feldewort  
 Orpy nepte horehownd & flos campi  
 Affodytt redeuay primrole (*sic.*) & oculus Christi  
 Rose ryde rose why3te foxgloue & pypyrnold  
 180 Holyhocke coryawnder pyony & y wold

It is striking that two poems with a supposedly different readership both incorporate long, alliterative lists of herbs, conveying to their readers a similar sense of abundance. Yet, while *The Pistil* is considered an unpractical text in the sense that its contents are not directly applicable for a gardener, *The Feate of Gardening* is usually categorised as a work of information.

The status of *The Feate of Gardening* as a practical poem was solidified by its first and only editor, Alicia Amherst, a botanist who combined historical and philological research in *A History of Gardening in England*.<sup>315</sup> The poem allegedly preserves the knowledge of 'Mayster Ion Gardener', and it is divided into eight chapters concerning planting trees, grafting trees, setting vines, sowing seeds, planting (root) vegetables, kinds of parsley, other herbs, and saffron. Besides describing a hundred species of vegetables and herbs, John also includes a number of trees: hazel, ash, and hawthorn. His arboricultural instructions are limited to cross-breeding apple varieties and grafting a pear upon a hawthorn tree.<sup>316</sup> Despite Amherst's disclaimer that "it is impossible to identify the

<sup>315</sup> Alicia M. Tyssen Amherst, *A History of Gardening in England* (London: Quaritch, 1896).

<sup>316</sup> Hawthorns were cultivated for culinary purposes, but it is likely that John grafted them for their decorative and

author of this poem”,<sup>317</sup> the twentieth century saw a number of scholars trying to identify the elusive John, yet most attributions are speculative and opportunistic. While some scholars maintain that John worked at one of the King’s royal courts, others offer the more compelling hypothesis that the poem records the words of an Irish gardener.<sup>318</sup> John H. Harvey, for example, lists several Jo(h)ns who worked as gardeners in the fourteenth century, most notably those working at Windsor Castle, the abbey and manors at Glastonbury, and houses and gardens surrounding the Royal palace of Westminster. Furthermore, the inclusion of John’s poem in the Hiberno-English manuscript London, Wellcome History, MS 406 (183, formerly known the Loscombe manuscript), as well as a later addition of a list of Irish herbs, has spurred on Harvey’s theory that it was adapted for a household living in the Pale (parts of Ireland colonised by the English).<sup>319</sup> Harvey also states that the poem must have been composed in middle of the fourteenth century, because the kitchen herb rosemary, which became a staple after its introduction in 1340, is not included in John’s catalogue of edible plants.<sup>320</sup> Amherst, moreover, maintains that John is not a skilled poet, as he resorts to assonances rather than end-rhyme. However, the poet is evidently not the gardener himself, since the poem ends with the line “And thus seyde mayster Ion Gardener to me” (l. 196). Besides, the poet evidently did put effort into his versified enumeration of Irish herbs, by using internal rhyme, alliteration, and assonance: “Hertystonge polypody parrow & comfrey / Gromel woderofe hyndesaft & betony / Gladyn valeryan scabyas & sperewort / Verueyn wodesour’ waterlyly & lyuerworte” (ll. 165-168).<sup>321</sup> Amherst deems the poem to be “singularly free from the superstitious beliefs in astrology, and the extravagant fancies and experiments in grafting and rearing plants,

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symbolic qualities upon request of his courtly clients. Known as “May tree” in Middle English, this flowering shrub plays an important role in romance literature as it signifies the arrival of spring and symbolises carnal desire, see Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004), 14 and Susan S. Eberly, “A Thorn Among the Lilies: The Hawthorn in Medieval Love Allegory”, *Folklore* 100.1 (1989), 41-52.

<sup>317</sup> Alicia M. Tyssen Amherst, “A Fifteenth Century Treatise on Gardening”, *Archaeologica* 54.1 (1894), 157-172, p. 159.

<sup>318</sup> See Arne Zettersten, *The Virtues of Herbs in the Loscombe Manuscript* (Lund: Gleerup, 1967).

<sup>319</sup> John H. Harvey, “The First English Garden Book: Mayster Jon Gardener’s Treatise and Its Background”, *Garden History* 13.2 (1985), 83-101, p. 83. Rosemary was supposedly introduced in Britain after a request by Queen Philippa, see Keiser, “Rosemary, Not Just for Remembrance” in *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, Peter Dendle, Alain Touwaide, eds., (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), p. 84.

<sup>320</sup> Harvey, “Garden Book”, pp. 180-204.

<sup>321</sup> Amherst, “A Fifteenth-Century Treatise”, p. 166.



especially fruit trees, so prevalent in the writings of this period”.<sup>322</sup> It would appear that the poem is indeed based on experiential grafting: even the combination of pear with hawthorn, two species that do not share any familial compatibility, has been proven successful by modern-day grafters.<sup>323</sup> Overall, while the matter-of-factness of the poem’s subject matter combined with the use of rhyme and alliteration may serve a mnemonic rather than aesthetic purpose, it is not unlikely that the possibility that *The Feate of Gardening*, like the introduction of *The Pistil of Swete Susan*, was simply enjoyed because it instilled a sense of plenty.

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<sup>322</sup> Amherst, “A Fifteenth-Century Treatise”, p. 158.

<sup>323</sup> A gardener who operates under the pseudonym David The Good tracks the process of grafting a pear on a hawthorn tree on his website *The Survival Gardener*, see his entries about this topic from 6 April 2015, <http://www.thesurvivalgardener.com/grafting-pear-onto-hawthorn/>, and 13 July 2015, <http://www.thesurvivalgardener.com/pears-grafted-onto-hawthorn-update/>.

### 3.4 Conclusion

At the start of this chapter, I returned to the idea of ‘generic flexibility’ (§3.2), as introduced in Chapter 2 in the context of Lydgate’s *Dietary*, and analysed husbandry books in this light. A closer look at the contents at the manuscript context of Old English (§3.2.i) and Anglo-French (§3.2.ii) managerial texts affirmed that the husbandry genre is inherently flexible, as these texts operated across literary boundaries and in different settings, such as scholarly and antiquarian study. The latter text, Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry*, circulated alongside grafting treatises during the late-medieval period, an association which signals that, in its translation from Anglo-French to Middle English, Henley’s text was lifted from its legal context. Furthermore, the *Husbandry*’s association with Robert Grosseteste and Palladius also lent the agricultural text a ‘scientific’ aura, signifying how the text was repurposed according to the taste of late-medieval readers. In section §3.3, I narrowed down my focus to texts on tree-grafting, a subject that features widely in agronomical texts. As discussed in §3.3.i, classical agronomical texts are increasingly being considered as literary products, and as I discuss in §3.3.ii, we should also view late-medieval grafting treatises in the context of contemporary literary culture. In addition, this paragraph outlined how grafted trees and orchards featured in aspirational texts about landowners, such as romances, poetry, and didactic works. I continue to expand on the notion of generic flexibility in relation to husbandry books and arboricultural literature in the following two chapters, respectively, in order to show how these kinds of literature were integrated into manuscripts with a clear gentry signature.



## Chapter 4: Husbandry books and the gentry

### 4.1 Introduction

“Books [...] are a valuable guide to the intellectual baggage of the gentry. They were powerful agents fashioning the gentry, shaping their attitudes, giving them a philosophy of life, and directing their actions”.<sup>324</sup>

While scholars such as Keiser have proposed a number of causes underlying the success of husbandry books among gentry readers, the role of gentry readers in the dissemination of husbandry literature has not yet been fully examined. Yet, it is important to highlight the varying backgrounds of members belonging to the landowning class in order to fully appreciate the manuscripts that circulated within this milieu. Therefore, I first provide a look into the late-medieval gentry and their cultural interests before turning to a discussion of the gentrification that took place as a result of the gentry’s involvement in literary productions of both a fictional and non-fictional nature. Next, I focus on a distinctive feature of many gentry manuscripts: the inclusion of didactic texts for the education of children, and consider the possibility that husbandry texts were included for their educational qualities. I then proceed to test to what extent the gentry self-educated using agricultural and managerial literature in four case studies: the first considers the manuscript of the physician John Crophill, the second is dedicated to a gentry family from Essex, the third study revisits the Rate manuscript (MS Ashmole 61), and the fourth case study juxtaposes two metropolitan compilations. At the end of the chapter, I move forward to the Early Modern period in order to show the continuity in the gentrification of husbandry literature.

### 4.2 The gentry in late-medieval England

Several factors contributed to the success of gentry landowners in the later Middle Ages, such as increasing urbanisation and Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries, which opened up

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<sup>324</sup> Joan Thirsk, “The Fashioning of the Tudor-Stuart Gentry”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 72.1 (1990), 69-86.

opportunities for individuals who were not previously eligible for landownership.<sup>325</sup> Rural landowners were traditionally ingrained in their family businesses and operated from a country manor and they mainly acquired land from adjacent territories within their home county.<sup>326</sup> After the second plague pandemic (which had swept across England from 1348 to 1350), new land became available for redistribution, which opened up opportunities for smallholders to acquire bigger plots of land. As a result, young men would have had more opportunities to secure a property close to their birth ground instead of having to wait to inherit their father's estates and manor houses. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, manor houses were owned by different families over a shorter amount of time than ever before. In late medieval Worcester, for instance, many cottagers and smallholders emigrated from the countryside to more prosperous towns to seek financial success, while freeholders and gentry families stayed in the villages.<sup>327</sup> As vacant land was frequently redistributed, the social stratification of rural Britain was in constant flux.<sup>328</sup>

The borders surrounding the medieval gentry class were fluid. As the contributors to Radulescu and Alison Truelove's 2005 essay collection *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* stress, their cultural domain was liable to the influence of external currents: from above, there was a "coalescence of gentle and noble culture evident in such practices as manuscript exchange",<sup>329</sup> and from below it knew an influx of yeomen and urban professionals.<sup>330</sup> Because of this estuary situation, several scholars cluster the gentry together with other layers of society: Youngs summarises how "the landed gentry, civil servants, lawyers, merchants and aldermen, [have] been collectively called, in different contexts, the professions (Clough), a fourth estate (Strohm), a civil

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<sup>325</sup> See S. J. Payling, "Social Mobility, Demographic Change, and Landed Society in Late Medieval England", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 45. 1 (1992), 51-73, p. 55.

<sup>326</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History III*, p. 533.

<sup>327</sup> Christopher Dyer, *The Self-contained Village?: The Social History of Rural Communities, 1250-1900* (Hatfield: U of Hertfordshire P, 2007), p. 20.

<sup>328</sup> This kind of migration could benefit the social cohesion of rural villages; according to Dyer, it may even have been "healthy for a community to replenish its population, and bring into its upper ranks those who had useful outside experience", see Dyer, *The Self-contained Village?*, p. 22.

<sup>329</sup> Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove in their introduction to *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester: UP, 2005), p. 8.

<sup>330</sup> Radulescu and Truelove, *Gentry Culture*, p. 9.

service sub-culture (Riddy) and ‘public servants’ (Barnes)”.<sup>331</sup> Thus, despite the growth of gentry studies in recent years, there is no unanimous agreement on how to determine whether an individual was a member of the gentry in medieval Britain.<sup>332</sup>

Indeed, the very existence of the gentry as a distinct layer of society has been a controversial topic: Peter Coss, for instance, dismisses the notion of a medieval gentry as nothing more than a “construct employed by historians”.<sup>333</sup> In past scholarship, clear-cut definitions have been offered, such as Thirsk’s classification of the rural gentry based on an income threshold.<sup>334</sup> Thirsk deems an income of twenty pounds to be a safe dividing line between gentry and commoners, even though she admits that the gentry also included individuals whose income matched that of a yeoman but whose social status and way of living would classify them as lower nobility.<sup>335</sup> Noble and gentry families with multiple households, for example, often relied upon a squire to attend to their estates. While such squires received a middle-range income for their services, their social status would increase and allow them to marry within the gentry class.<sup>336</sup> Clearly, determining whether a person belonged to the gentry by analysing his or her income alone is problematic; it is not hard to see why Coss takes issue with ahistorical name-calling. Still, to offer at least a framework of reference to determine a ‘gentry identity’, Coss outlines six ‘social processes’ as preconditions of what he calls ‘gentry-formation’, the means by which freshly initiated landowners would establish themselves as

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<sup>331</sup> Deborah Youngs, “Cultural Networks”, in Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove, *Gentry Culture in Late-Medieval England* (Manchester: UP, 2005), 119-133, p. 129.

<sup>332</sup> Recent contributions include those by C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (1999); Peter Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (2003), Raluca L. Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory’s Morte D’Arthur* (2003) and *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (2005); Michael Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry in Late Medieval England* (2014), and recent case studies of individuals belonging to merchant and gentry classes in the fifteenth century, such as *Humphrey Newton (1466–1536): An Early Tudor Gentleman* by Deborah Youngs (2008) and Christopher Dyer’s *A Country Merchant, 1495-1520: Trading and Farming at the End of the Middle Ages* (2014). Furthermore, the letter correspondences of the Stonor, the Paston, and the Cely families have received scholarly editions, offering a vast amount of evidence on the way medieval gentry landowners lived.

<sup>333</sup> Peter Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge: UP, 2003), p. 7.

<sup>334</sup> According to Thirsk, “it can be justified by stressing an important difference between the gentry and those below them in rural society. [...] A landowner with a net income of £20 a year drew a substantial part of it from rents and farms of tenants, whereas a yeoman, while he might be a freeholder and also engage in subletting to other peasants, was generally a tenant of a manorial lord”, see Joan Thirsk, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales Vol. III: 1348 – 1500* (Cambridge: UP, 1991), p. 538.

<sup>335</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History*, p. 538.

<sup>336</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History*, p. 537.

a new landowning elite. The preconditions for this process are (1) identifying as a type of lesser nobility; (2) landownership (also by urban individuals); (3) territoriality; (4) public authority in a system which requires the services of a local elite but which is unable to support a paid bureaucracy; (5) collective social control of a territorial populace, and (6) collective identity and interests.<sup>337</sup>

One of the ways in which the gentry detached themselves from other social groups was through political influence: Coss claims that the gentry held “public authority in a system which requires the services of a local elite”; in other words, the gentry operated as a mediating factor in-between the squirearchy and local governments. According to Eric Acheson, the King and shire communities repeatedly selected officials and MPs from a pool of gentry individuals belonging to the same “oligarchy of family members who not only governed but expected to govern, in the county”.<sup>338</sup> Another of Coss’ processes, the “collective social control of a territorial populace”, is directly related to the gentry’s public authority. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was quite common that manors had no resident landlord, a situation which led to increased opportunities for the lower gentry to step up as leaders of their locality.<sup>339</sup> According to Carpenter, rural England knew “an ascending scale of localism matching a descending social scale, from the greatest noble to the least parish gentry”, which meant that the lesser gentry would enjoy a higher status than other parishioners because they held lordship over their tenants.<sup>340</sup> Thus, belonging to the higher orders of a village community strengthened a sense of responsibility for minor landowners over other parishioners, and lent them social superiority and status. The growing influence of the gentry is especially visible in their cultural interests. As I will show in §4.4, manuscripts attest how the gentry self-educated by means of texts on landownership, courtesy, and leisure activities. First, however, I will explain how the gentry’s growing influence in late-medieval England gave rise to a process that can be considered ‘gentrification’.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Coss, *Origins*, p. 11.

<sup>338</sup> Eric Acheson, *A Gentry Community: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c.1422-c.1488* (Cambridge: UP, 1992), p. 134.

<sup>339</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History*, p. 537.

<sup>340</sup> Christine Carpenter, “Religion” in Radulescu and Truelove, *Gentry Culture*, p. 143.

<sup>341</sup> There is contemporary evidence of gentrification in medieval Malmö (which was part of the Danish kingdom until

## 4.3 Gentrification of the late-medieval cultural landscape

### 4.3.i Grounds for gentrification

As the gentry became more involved in shaping the cultural landscape of the late-medieval and Early Modern periods, I suggest that ‘gentrification’ follows up the process of ‘gentry-formation’. Some scholars use ‘gentrification’ to refer to the process of gentry-formation itself, yet there is a vital difference between the two concepts. While ‘gentry-formation’ refers to individuals or communities adopting a gentry identity, ‘gentrification’ denotes the effect that follows as a result of the gentry’s presence in a certain area or cultural domain. This use of gentrification is thus broader in meaning than its first coinage by Ruth Glass in 1964, when she described the process of gentrification as the renovation of deteriorated property “so that it conforms to middle-class taste” and “render[s] an area middle-class”.<sup>342</sup> Perhaps superfluously, I wish to underline that it is not my intention to project modern concerns on gentrification, which has become a highly controversial subject, on the medieval situation.<sup>343</sup> I adopt this term to refer to any kind of conscious appropriation by the gentry: both physical, material property such as manors and tenements and intangible, intellectual, or cultural property, such as literature.

For example, as a means to express themselves as a new territorial elite, some newly-endowed gentry families chose to adopt existing coats of arms that belonged to the manor they inhabited instead of their family’s heraldry (provided that their family owned a coat of arms).<sup>344</sup> As

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1658), suggesting that this phenomenon also occurred in continental Europe, see J. Thomasson, “A Feudal Way to Gentrify? The Current Understanding of Gentrification and Changes of Social-topography in a Medieval and Early Modern Town”, *Current Swedish Archaeology* 12 (2004), 187-210.

<sup>342</sup> See Ruth Glass, *London: Aspects of Change* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964), and *OED Online*, s.v. “gentrify, v” accessible at <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77697?redirectedFrom=gentrify> (date accessed 15 June 2015).

<sup>343</sup> Property that is to be gentrified is generally obtained from lower social classes who are then forced to relocate, after which a snowballing effect sets and other, not necessarily derelict, buildings also fall out of the hands of prior residents. Since its coinage the term has obtained political, racial, and economic connotations, see Lincoln Anthony Blades, “Gentrification is Nothing More than Modern-Day Colonialism”, *ThisIsYourConscience.com* (blog), 27 February 2014, accessible at <http://www.thisisyourconscience.com/2014/02/gentrification-is-nothing-more-than-modern-day-colonialism/>. See also Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 30-47.

<sup>344</sup> Jon Denton, “Genealogy and Gentility: Social Status in Provincial England” in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Medieval Britain and France*, ed. R.L. Radulescu and E.D. Kennedy (Leiden: Brepols, 2008), pp. 156-7.



J. Thomasson argues, the underlying reason for gentrification in the Middle Ages—identifying “with the use of space and the architecture of a particular area, with its connotations to persons, groups and history”—is similar to the gentrification that can be observed today.<sup>345</sup> Over time, this heraldry-hopping led to copycat behaviour, which in turn gave rise to fraud and legal dispute. The right to bear a coat of arms was not well regulated in the fifteenth century and so *vileins*, those belonging to the third estate, would feign gentility by furnishing themselves with a coat of arms.<sup>346</sup> Consequently, official documents were issued by the governing body, the King of Arms, which prohibited that heraldic arms would be assigned to “men issued of vile blood”.<sup>347</sup> Such interventions, however, did not impede individuals from climbing the social ladder.

Rural communities were not only controlled by the established gentry, but villagers could also be responsible for the tenure of land, pastures, and fisheries.<sup>348</sup> Thirsk describes how these village societies or “village guilds” engendered “new forms of communal activity” by organising religious and practical ventures.<sup>349</sup> Some members of these village communities were newly

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<sup>345</sup> See J. Thomasson, “A Feudal Way to Gentrify?”, 190. Moreover, in the nineteenth-century Dutch province of Groeningen, similar cultural developments arose as a result of the agrarian revolution and new legislature concerning land tenure. Former yeomen were able to develop themselves into gentleman farmers: not aristocratic descent, but ownership of land was a prerequisite to these farmers’ acceleration into the higher echelons of society. So, just as the fifteenth-century gentry in England, these so-called herenboeren became a territorial rather than patrilineal elite. They built exuberant farmhouses or borgen, complete with moats, dovecotes and landscape gardens which they had filled with mazes, orchards, and fountains. Moreover, these gentlemen farmers were quick to adopt modern lifestyle items and innovations as well as the latest fashions of merchants and noble families in the thriving provinces of Holland. Not only were the herenboeren outwardly transforming themselves into a new farming elite, they also embraced a new enlightened mind-set. They developed an interest in “science and philosophy, were influenced by agricultural ideas from the university, had hoards of books and paintings, and were anxious to turn economic success into political influence” (190). Clearly, outward appearance and a luxurious lifestyle were only part of being a gentlemen farmer. Being knowledgeable, well-read and erudite, not just in the field of agriculture but also in other domains, was equally important.

<sup>346</sup> The folk etymology of “noble” as “non vile” is first recorded in Dante Alighieri’s *Convivio* Book IV, chapter xvi, paragraph 6.

<sup>347</sup> Maurice Keen, *Origins of the English Gentleman* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002), p. 83.

<sup>348</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History III*, p. 623.

<sup>349</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History III*, p. 623. There are, in addition, methods in which lands were shared not only through horizontal arrangements between landlords and tenants, but among peasants, who would enter sharefarming agreements to stabilise their cashflow. Despite the long-held belief that there is no documented evidence to support such practises in the medieval English system, Elizabeth Griffiths and Mark Overton have made a strong case for a long-standing tradition of sharefarming in rural England, precisely because the practice was meant to stay under the radar. They propose a taxonomy of sharefarming arrangements, distinguishing between the sharing of output (known as “farming to halves”) sharing profits (also known as “half crease”), farming partnerships, leasing cows and other livestock to other farmers, corn rents (receiving grain instead of money), and corn agreements (landowners buying subsidised corn at a fixed price). All of these subtypes could be realised in a variety of ways, with the common aim to spread risk and sustain rural communities through difficult periods. While there are individual cases of sharefarming in the earlier Middle Ages, the practise became more abundant between landowners and farmers in the fourteenth and

endowed with property, leading to an increase of their wealth during the fifteenth century, attested by recurrent recording of their names in rentals.<sup>350</sup> Likewise, in an urban context, especially in merchant circles, upward mobility was very much attainable in the late-fifteenth century: as Jon Denton has shown, the brass effigies in a church in Charwelton bear witness to the “cultural transition from merchants to gentlemen” that manifests itself in a change of wardrobe—this family quite literally self-fashioned themselves as gentry individuals. While the brass of the first buried member of a certain family is clad like a merchant, his descendants are all depicted as noblemen dressed in full armour.<sup>351</sup> This ostentatious display of identity in a local parish church is not unique to the gentry family that was buried in Charwelton: in fact, many gentry families established chapels in parish churches and adorned them with heraldic devices, their names, and likenesses in the form of stone effigies and brasses.<sup>352</sup>

In the introduction to their essay collection on the Welsh and English gentry, Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes arrive at the paradoxical conclusion that “the gentry were that body of men and women whose gentility were acknowledged by others”.<sup>353</sup> Yet although members of the medieval gentry did not self-identify as ‘gentry’, they did cultivate a social code that differed from noble culture in several respects, so much so that it would allow others to identify the gentry as a distinct layer of society. As Coss argues, “there can be no doubt that a capacity for collective self-expression is a vital ingredient of the gentry [...] to be a member of the gentry was to be constantly undertaking a performance”, ideally, a performance with as wide an audience as possible.<sup>354</sup> Acknowledgment of genteel status could be gained in several ways, for instance at social gatherings, such as the

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fifteenth centuries, as more of lands were being leased than in the centuries before. Griffiths and Overton stress that a side-effect of “flexible short-term arrangements” was communal benefit: they “eased the village community through the vicissitudes of life and enabled peasants to exploit their opportunities”, see Elizabeth Griffiths and Mark Overton, *Farming to Halves: The Hidden History of Sharefarming in England from Medieval to Modern Times* (London: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 4-42.

<sup>350</sup> Thirsk, *Agrarian History III*, p. 623.

<sup>351</sup> Denton, “Genealogy and Gentility”, p. 153.

<sup>352</sup> See, for instance, Deborah Youngs, *Humphrey Newton (1466 – 1536): An Early Tudor Gentleman* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 38, 136, 209, for Humphrey Newton’s involvement in the interior and exterior of his local parish church.

<sup>353</sup> Felicity Heal & Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 19.

<sup>354</sup> Coss, *Origins*, p. 10.

archery contests that functioned as a meeting point between members of the rural and urban gentry. While hunting was traditionally exclusive to higher aristocracy, who possessed the grounds and means to organise such contests, longbow shooting matches could be realised inside a town by individuals of humbler means. And, like the hunt, these social events were not just concerned with martial superiority. John Block Friedman contends that “[a]rchery could be the occasion for ostentatious display both of material culture and political power” as well as a “a nexus for social mobility and display”, as continental confraternities of crossbowmen organised parades and award ceremonies to flaunt their most exuberant apparel.<sup>355</sup> For instance, members of longbow associations wore lead and tin badges depicting arrows on their belts as a marker of status. It is thus evident that visual and literary depictions of archery show the gentrification of archery during the later Middle Ages.

While members of the rural gentry were bound to a certain locality and established themselves as an elite on a local level, their cultural horizons were not necessarily narrower than those of their urban peers. The infrastructure of thoughts and ideas was unrestricted by physical boundaries, as Radulescu and Truelove argue: “[t]he urban and rural worlds did not function as separate spheres of activity” and thus “we should be careful to recognize the significant influence urban life may have had in the formulation of gentry culture in general”.<sup>356</sup> Through networks of apprenticeship, for example, rural families exchanged their children to work in the city, and vice versa.<sup>357</sup> Spaces of convergence could be physical, such as the song school at the Inns of Court which was attended by both gentry and urban elites. In addition, they could connect on a spiritual level: the liturgical services held in Westminster Abbey are known to have been imitated in parish churches, which means that both rural and urban gentry were affected by the same religious ideas.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> John Block Friedman, “Robin Hood and the Social Context of Late Medieval Archery” in *Robin Hood in Greenwood Stood: Alterity and Context in the English Outlaw Tradition*, ed. Stephen Knight (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 67–86, pp. 76–7.

<sup>356</sup> Truelove and Radulescu, *Gentry Culture*, p. 12.

<sup>357</sup> See A. Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: UP, 1982), p. 9.

<sup>358</sup> Truelove and Radulescu, *Gentry Culture*, p. 12.

Evidently, gentry landowners were not only professionally involved in exchanges with urban professionals, but also culturally there were “similarities between the culture of the country gentry and that of urban elites, especially regarding the texts they chose to read and circulate, and the manuscripts they commissioned”.<sup>359</sup> Manuscripts owned by gentry landowners also evince a flexibility in drawing from a variety of textual sources that did not distinguish between a rural or urban readership. Radulescu maintains that reading books of nurture and penitential literature moulded a group consciousness which transcended localities and sought contact with the local nobility as well as urban elites.<sup>360</sup> Youngs adds that, “given the mobility of the gentry, it is not unusual to find that the contents of gentry manuscripts were not exclusively regional”, but rather, these manuscripts “embody a ‘national consciousness’: an English rather than regional identity”, shaped, in turn, by contact with Continental Europe.<sup>361</sup>

Although “gentrification” denotes the adaptation of material or immaterial property to suit gentry tastes, often with the by-purpose of increasing their social presence, members of the gentry were not always directly involved as agents in this process. Gentrification was also executed by those responding to the presence of the gentry in a certain area, similar to the way in which modern-day estate-agents shepherd the housing market in the interest of the middle classes. In medieval Wales, for instance, landowners would hire professional poets to versify their ancestral history in order to solidify their entitlement to land or other privileges.<sup>362</sup> At the same time, these bards would remind their clients of the values associated to manorial lordship and local duties.<sup>363</sup> Gentrification can also be observed in medieval visual art. Joseph Rosenblum and William K. Finley contend that the illuminators involved in the production of the Ellesmere Manuscript (San Marino, Huntington Library MS 26 C 9) gentrified the depictions of the pilgrims in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* by

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<sup>359</sup> Radulescu, “Literature”, in Radulescu and Truelove, *Gentry Culture*, p. 100.

<sup>360</sup> Truelove and Radulescu, *Gentry Culture*, p. 8.

<sup>361</sup> Youngs, “Cultural Networks” in Truelove and Radulescu, *Gentry Culture*, p. 126.

<sup>362</sup> J. Gwynfor Jones, *The Welsh Gentry* (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1998), p. 7.

<sup>363</sup> Gwynfor Jones, *The Welsh Gentry*, p. 13.

changing their status markers, such as clothes, attributes, and colours.<sup>364</sup> For example, both the Squire and Knight are given the most prestigious outfits as they rank highest among the company of pilgrims, even though “the Ellesmere Knight is far more presentable as an illustration than would be a picture of the Knight as Chaucer describes him”.<sup>365</sup> In addition, while Chaucer’s description of the Man of Law in the *General Prologue* is not wholly sympathetic, the Ellesmere miniatures do “nothing to imply the greed and possibly shady dealings suggested by the text”—they adorn him with a badge of office instead.<sup>366</sup> Three other secular pilgrims who are also subject to gentrification are the Manciple, the Merchant, and the Reeve, all of whom, in Chaucer’s tales, are guilty of some sort of fraud. In the Ellesmere illuminations, however, these pilgrims are depicted as favourable rather than malignant characters. Yet not all secular pilgrims are represented sympathetically: the Miller, Cook, Wife of Bath, and Shipman remain unattractive characters, true to Chaucer’s description. This, Rosenblum and Finley argue, makes the elevation of the other secular pilgrims all the more apparent. They deem it likely “that the patron and his peers to whom he would proudly display his gorgeous manuscript would gladly laugh at the lower classes or a disreputable religious figure”.<sup>367</sup> The Reeve, Manciple, Man of Law, and Franklin “appear as pillars of society”; the former two are the kind of people “whom a noble commissioner of a manuscript would trust to manage his estate or to run an institution given to the training of future such overseers”.<sup>368</sup> Thus, Chaucer’s satire is undermined by the marginalia that represent the patron’s gentrified views of society. At the same time, these changes reflect the social elevation of rural officials, such as the Reeve and the Franklin.

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<sup>364</sup> Joseph Rosenblum and William K. Finley, “Chaucer Gentrified: The Nexus of Art and Politics in the Ellesmere Miniatures”, *The Chaucer Review* 38.2 (2003), 140-157.

<sup>365</sup> Rosenblum and Finley, “Chaucer Gentrified”, p. 141.

<sup>366</sup> Rosenblum and Finley, “Chaucer Gentrified”, p. 141.

<sup>367</sup> Rosenblum and Finley, “Chaucer Gentrified”, p. 153.

<sup>368</sup> Rosenblum and Finley, “Chaucer Gentrified”, p. 144.

#### 4.3.ii *The gentrification of literary texts*

An oft-cited example from the corpus of Middle English literature that is simultaneously illustrative of the gentrification of popular culture are the tales of Robin Hood, which not only feature a gentrified protagonist, but may have instigated “the changed social meaning and the gentrification of archery”.<sup>369</sup> While in most medieval texts, Robin is presented as a yeoman, Anthony Munday’s 1598 theatrical production solidified the exile’s legacy as a “nobleman in disguise”.<sup>370</sup> Nonetheless, Robin’s rise through the peerage is already foreshadowed in Middle English tales: the peacock-feathered arrows which Robin receives from Sir Richard, for instance, are one of the many symbolic gestures that illustrates the gentrification of the character.<sup>371</sup>

In addition, romance literature gentrified in the more traditional sense of the word: originally, romances were popularised folk tales which were ‘upcycled’ in the decades following the turn of the fifteenth century. Nancy Mason Bradbury, one of the first scholars to connect gentrification to medieval literature, supposes that, when a premodern poet *coterises* (i.e. rewrites a text to make it more exclusive to a *coterie*, or in-crowd), he or she “gentrifies popular language and folk genres”, transforming them

into poetry that, by virtue of its international learning, still belongs primarily to the culture of the few, but also draws significantly upon lived experience, popular verbal forms, and the enormous vitality of a spoken language.<sup>372</sup>

Furthermore, Mason Bradbury adds that “the transmission of cultural patterns [is] not so much as a movement from group to group, from churls to *gentils* or *gentils* to churls, but rather as a movement from the shared property of a large group to the particular purposes of a small and highly educated one.”<sup>373</sup> To illustrate how this kind of literary gentrification operated, she presents examples from

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<sup>369</sup> It is difficult to tell whether the upscaling of archery in the Robin Hood mythology is a case of life imitating art, or whether the literary gentrification of the main hero also impacted the social status of archery during the time these tales were most popular, see Block Friedman, “Robin Hood”, p. 85.

<sup>370</sup> Meredith Skura, “Anthony Munday’s “Gentrification” of Robin Hood” *English Literary Renaissance* 33.2 (2003): 155-180, p. 155.

<sup>371</sup> Block Friedman, “Robin Hood”, p. 383.

<sup>372</sup> Nancy Mason Bradbury, “Gentrification and the “Troilus””, *The Chaucer Review* 28.4 (1994): 305-329, p. 307.

<sup>373</sup> Bradbury, “Gentrification”, p. 307.

*Troilus and Criseyde* which show how Chaucer transformed a folk motif into a more exclusive text, and how the writer incorporated proverbial speech from everyday language in elevated poetry.<sup>374</sup>

In addition, the most striking examples of gentrification can be sourced in the literary texts that were personally adapted for the late-medieval gentry in England and Wales and other Western European countries. In the case of England and Wales, Michael Johnston describes how clerks and scribes modified existing tales into “gentry romances” that reflect upon the ideals and socioeconomic concerns of provincial lesser landowners, “offering their readers comforting resolutions to some of the intractable dilemmas governing the daily lives of English landowner”.<sup>375</sup> Next to addressing familiar problems of medieval landowners, romances also offer alternative realities that must have appealed to those who entered the gentry class from a yeoman background. For instance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*, and *Ipomedon* feature noblemen hiding behind a feigned boorish persona. In addition, the Middle English corpus of romance literature contains several popular narratives in which the hero or heroine is unaware of his or her own true identity, such as *Fresne*, *Lybeaus Desconu*, and *The Squire of Low Degree*. These romances feature sympathetic protagonists whose hybrid identity causes tensions within the narrative, which are eventually resolved upon the revelation of their true nature and status. Readers who aspired to enter into gentry circles may have found narratives featuring noble(women)-in-disguise or character-of-unknown-nobility tropes motivational.<sup>376</sup>

Moreover, Johnston addresses the phenomenon of literary gentrification as a result of “textual grafting”, and describes how scribes imposed new meanings upon existing romances by making use of semantic drift.<sup>377</sup> To illustrate, in order to prepare the romances *Sir Amadace*, *Sir Degrevant*, and *Sir Isumbras* for a new readership, these scribes would

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<sup>374</sup> Bradbury, “Gentrification”, p. 316.

<sup>375</sup> Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 96.

<sup>376</sup> Nonetheless, Helen Phillips notes, “medieval rags-to-riches stories are almost stories of riches to rags to riches”, which means that they also serve as a warning against social climbing, see Phillips, “Bewmaynes: the Threat from the Kitchen”, in David Clark and Kate McClune, ed., *Blood, Sex, Malory: Essays on the Morte Darthur* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011): 39-56, p. 55.

<sup>377</sup> This form of textual mobility can be seen as a form of “mouvance”, a term coined by Paul Zumthor in his *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972).

graft the new social denotation of the term “knight” onto the existing martial ones. Such grafting allows the gentry to participate in the social space of a romance – a desideratum, to be sure [...] – while at the same time maintaining their distinct social identity.<sup>378</sup>

Another example of a “gentry romance” that was created through this technique is *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*, a narrative which appears uniquely in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2). Because *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle* is both indebted to the courtly tradition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and popular late-medieval Arthuriana, Sean Pollack considers it a “hybrid romance” that “explores hybrid national, social, and literary forms”.<sup>379</sup> Moreover, this text has a particular bearing on the subject of hybrid identity as it concerns itself with characters that border between estates, and takes place on an estate that is situated on the borderlands between Wales and England. The plot of the romance is upheld by the tension between the boorish-looking Carl, who actually possesses many courteous qualities, and Sir Gawain, the not-so-chivalrous knight. The moral ideals of this romance would, according to Pollack, resonate among audiences “in ambiguous border regions between sovereign states of all kinds”.<sup>380</sup> Pollack deems it striking that “a hybrid, a monstrous churl-aristocrat becomes the body of evidence for examining the unspoken consequences of class affiliation and aspiration” as it forces the audience to question their own identity.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, according to Pollack, “the Carl’s daughter embodies the gentry’s social ambiguity as her noble appearance masks her questionable ancestry”.<sup>382</sup> Even though she is of low birth, the Carl uses her as “matrimonial currency” to enter into aristocracy, which reinforces the idea that noble status can be achieved through intermarriage.<sup>383</sup> Because of the gentry’s hybrid identity, “gentry romances” can also be seen as “hybrid romances”, stories that are rooted in noble culture have been grafted to include a gentle

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<sup>378</sup> Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 58.

<sup>379</sup> Sean Pollack, “Border States: Parody, Sovereignty, and Hybrid Identity in *The Carl of Carlisle*”, *Arthuriana* 19.2 (2009): 10-26, p. 10.

<sup>380</sup> Pollack, “Border States”, p. 22.

<sup>381</sup> Pollack, “Border States”, p. 22.

<sup>382</sup> Pollack, “Border States”, p. 18.

<sup>383</sup> Pollack, “Border States”, p. 19.



readership.

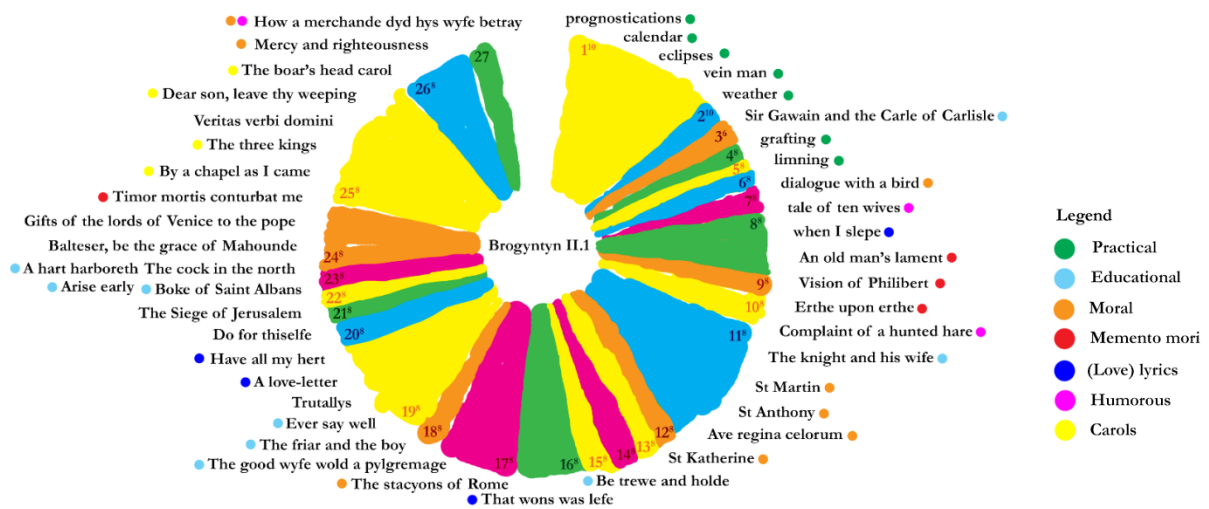


Figure 14: Schematic overview of the contents of Brogyntyn II.1.<sup>384</sup>

What is more, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* has further implications on the topic of hybridity beyond the confines of its own text: it is the only 'gentry romance' to appear in a manuscript alongside a practical treatise on grafting. As visualised above in Figure 14, the manuscript containing the romance, Brogyntyn II.1, proffers a variety of texts that range from educational texts to drinking songs. The grafting and limning treatises are contained in an individual gathering that was copied by a scribe who signs his work as H. Hattun, but there is no reason to suppose the quire knew an independent circulation. The placement of the romance *Sir Gawain and the Carle of Carlisle* in between almanac-material and the grafting and limning tracts may or may not be deliberate: there is a suggestion that the compilation is roughly organised by theme, so it is possible that texts that were associated with landownership are located at the start of the manuscript. The fact that the hybrid romance is located next to the grafting treatise, moreover, seems to convey a positive attitude towards hybridity.

<sup>384</sup> Permalink to this image: <https://perma.cc/ZD9Y-83G2>

#### 4.3.iii *The gentrification of practical literature*

Not only medieval works of fiction were subject to gentrification; texts that are considered to be of a factual or utilitarian nature were also adapted to cater for a gentry readership. As Lynette Hunter notes, “some household practices and artisan secrets became aristocratic science or professional knowledge” after the arrival of the printing press, yet manuscript evidence attests that this process already took place in the late-medieval period.<sup>385</sup> Professional knowledge can also be gleaned from texts that were produced for a non-professional audience. For example, in medieval Germany, a medical text that was adapted for a lay reader was later used by a professional physician.<sup>386</sup> The broadening of audiences of specialised literature is also notable in editions of Thomas Tusser’s *Hundred Points*, which displays a shift in the way the author addresses his audience. Meredith Anne Skura points out that the 1570 edition of this book contains the lines “Though gentiles have a pleasure, with hawk upon hand / Good husbands get treasure, to purchase their land”, which suggests that the audience of the tract is not the nobility who are entitled to land and spend their time hawking, but the thrifty husbandmen who earned their land through hard work. In the 1573 revision, however, the first line is replaced by “Though some have a pleasure...”, indicating that hawking is no longer a marker of class, that ‘gentiles’ and ‘good husbands’ are no longer antonyms and, most strikingly, that the audience of the work may also include those ‘gentiles’ that were mocked in the earlier edition.<sup>387</sup>

The elevation of the social status of agricultural knowledge, as described in Tusser’s *Hundred Points* already began during the later Middle Ages, which is evident from a variety of sources. One example is a short fifteenth-century treatise on the seven liberal arts that appears in the manuscript

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<sup>385</sup> Lynette Hunter, “Books for Daily Life: Household, Husbandry, Behaviour” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 4, 1557–1695*, ed. John Barnard, D. F. McKenzie, Maureen Bell (Cambridge: UP, 2002), pp. 514-532.

<sup>386</sup> The manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MGQ 1404, belonged to the Westphalian medic Peter of Münster, and contains medical texts and Münster’s own medical notations, such as a register and recipes. Moreover, the codex is notable for its copy of an astrological text that was composed some hundred years earlier, for the noblewoman Aleid van Zandenburg, see Lenny Veltman, “Een breed spectrum tussen hemel en aarde”, in *Artes in Context*, ed. Orlanda S.H. Lie and Joris Reynaert (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004): 59-78, p. 74.

<sup>387</sup> Skura, *Tudor Autobiography*, p. 144.

Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.14.52.<sup>388</sup> Based on the preference for English rather than Latin texts in the manuscript, Mooney suggests that the text may have circulated among London's mercantile class. Moreover, the scribe of the manuscript is known to have had access to the manuscripts of the scribe John Shirley, who worked primarily on commission for the urban bourgeoisie. Therefore, it seems that his clientele would have consisted of "wealthy, but not necessarily noble" individuals.<sup>389</sup> As this scribe copied both the literary and scientific texts in TC R.14.52, Mooney reasons that "the readers of Middle English literary texts also had an interest in vernacular compendia of medical and scientific knowledge".<sup>390</sup>

Traditionally, the *artes mechanicae* or seven mechanical arts (tailoring, agriculture, architecture, martial arts, trade, cooking, and metallurgy) were considered of secondary importance compared to the study of the *artes liberales* or the seven liberal arts.<sup>391</sup> The Middle English treatise TC R.14.52, however, connects the seven "vsual or comune craftis and hand werkis" to the skills of urban craftsmen, and elevates them to "instrumentis and mynistres to philosophie and to the vij liberal and special sciences" (ll. 501-519).<sup>392</sup> To illustrate, the section on music relates how Pythagoras found his inspiration for his theory of musical tuning in a smithy, where he discovered how the sound caused by hammers changed according to their weight.<sup>393</sup> According to the treatise, another liberal art, geometry, is especially dependent on empirical findings ("certitude and evidence in demonstracioun") which can only be obtained when applied, experiential knowledge ("veray kunnyng") is "brought in to mannes [soule]" (ll. 520-522). Throughout the text, the status of practical crafts is lifted to such an extent that they are presented as prerequisite to theoretical study, rather than an inferior curriculum. As the writer of the treatise argues, the common crafts that are daily used by workmen—tillage,<sup>394</sup> venery, medicine, theatre, weaving, armoury, and navigation—

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<sup>388</sup> Linne R. Mooney, "A Middle English Text on the Seven Liberal Arts", *Speculum* 68.4 (1993), 1027-1052.

<sup>389</sup> Mooney, "Seven Liberal Arts", p. 1037.

<sup>390</sup> Mooney, "Seven Liberal Arts", p. 1037.

<sup>391</sup> See Elspeth Whitney, "Artes Mechanicae" in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, eds. F.A.C. Mantello, A.C. Rigg (Washington: CUA, 1996), 431-435, p. 432.

<sup>392</sup> Mooney, "Seven Liberal Arts", p. 1052.

<sup>393</sup> Traditionally, music is considered to be a liberal rather than mechanical art.

<sup>394</sup> Agriculture is broken down into four elements: tilling of fields, pastures, woods, and gardens.

would pave the way to the liberal arts. Although these seven crafts are “not cald sciences or veray konnynges propyrly” (l. 517), the knowledge shared by mercers, grocers, and other craftsmen are nonetheless considered “special sciences” (l. 526) that are necessary and principally ordained by God (ll. 526-6). Mooney, in her discussion of this section of the treatise, asserts that the emphasis on guild crafts is

just what we would expect in the social climate of late-fifteenth-century England, where the merchant class was claiming a greater and greater share of the nation’s wealth and political power. The text expresses a pride in artisanship, [which] is apparently being voiced by a writer/cleric rather than a member of the mercantile class itself.<sup>395</sup>

Thus, the gentrification of the treatise is twofold: on the one hand, it lectures those without an academic education on the liberal and mechanical arts, and, on the other, it teaches them that craft knowledges are worth studying. The composition of the treatise indicates how subjects that formerly belonged to the sphere of universities were gentrified and vernacularised according to the growing literary involvement of the urban gentry.

#### 4.4 Husbandry books and gentry education

“Experience, though noon auctoritee / Were in this world, is right ynogh to me”, declares Alison, better known as the Wife of Bath from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, in the prologue to her tale: no amount of bookish authority can compete with her first-hand experience of marital tribulations.<sup>396</sup> Nonetheless, when Alison continues to recount her own ‘experience’, she supplements it with several references to scripture and ancient authors. Paradoxically, she transforms into a written, albeit fictional, authority herself.<sup>397</sup> In effect, the Wife of Bath’s transformation is exemplary of the cycle from personal experience to written knowledge. Once recorded on parchment or paper,

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<sup>395</sup> Mooney, “Seven Liberal Arts”, p. 1036.

<sup>396</sup> Chaucer, *Wife of Bath’s Tale*, ll. 1-2.

<sup>397</sup> Fifteenth-century scribes even annotated the Wife of Bath’s many vernacular translations from scripture with Latin glosses, thus rendering Alison an “unlikely woman preacher”, see Theresa Lynn Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), p. 101.

experiences have the capacity of becoming educational to the inexperienced.

While the educational value of practical texts seems to be a given, the reality of learning from a text is far more complicated. As Socrates questions in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, can a reader truly learn how to perform an agricultural procedure just by reading about it? Medieval sources, as I will point out later in this chapter, are divided on the answer. Another complicating factor in the analysis of pragmatical literature is literacy: while internal evidence from agricultural and managerial texts suggests that they are primarily aimed at literate audiences, these readers likely did not perform the agricultural procedures they read about. Thus, if these works were written with practical instruction in mind, they are encoded in a medium that was not accessible to those who would benefit from them the most. Unfortunately, there is no written evidence that allows us to retrace the education of illiterate groups, but it can safely be assumed that oral instruction played a large role in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge.<sup>398</sup> Fortunately, more evidence is available concerning the reading interests of literate non-academic and lay groups in the late-medieval period, whose upbringing seemingly included agricultural and managerial education.

Multi-text manuscripts reflecting the interests and day-to-day life of medieval families are particularly useful in reconstructing the agricultural education these audiences may have enjoyed. As Figure 15 below attests, there are several gentry-owned manuscripts containing both agricultural texts and educational literature.

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<sup>398</sup> Different media for instruction would also have been possible, as for example those practiced in present-day agricultural societies. For example, Malian musician and government-appointed agricultural advisor Afel Bocoum and the musical group Alkibar (“messenger of the great river”) use songwriting to teach the rural population around the Niger river, where illiteracy rates are high, about irrigation, see the entries for Afel Bocoum on *Mali Music* and *Musiques d’Afrique.com* (<https://www.mali-music.com/Cat/CatA/AfelBocoum.htm> and [http://www.musiques-afrique.com/frames/art\\_afelbocoum.html](http://www.musiques-afrique.com/frames/art_afelbocoum.html)).

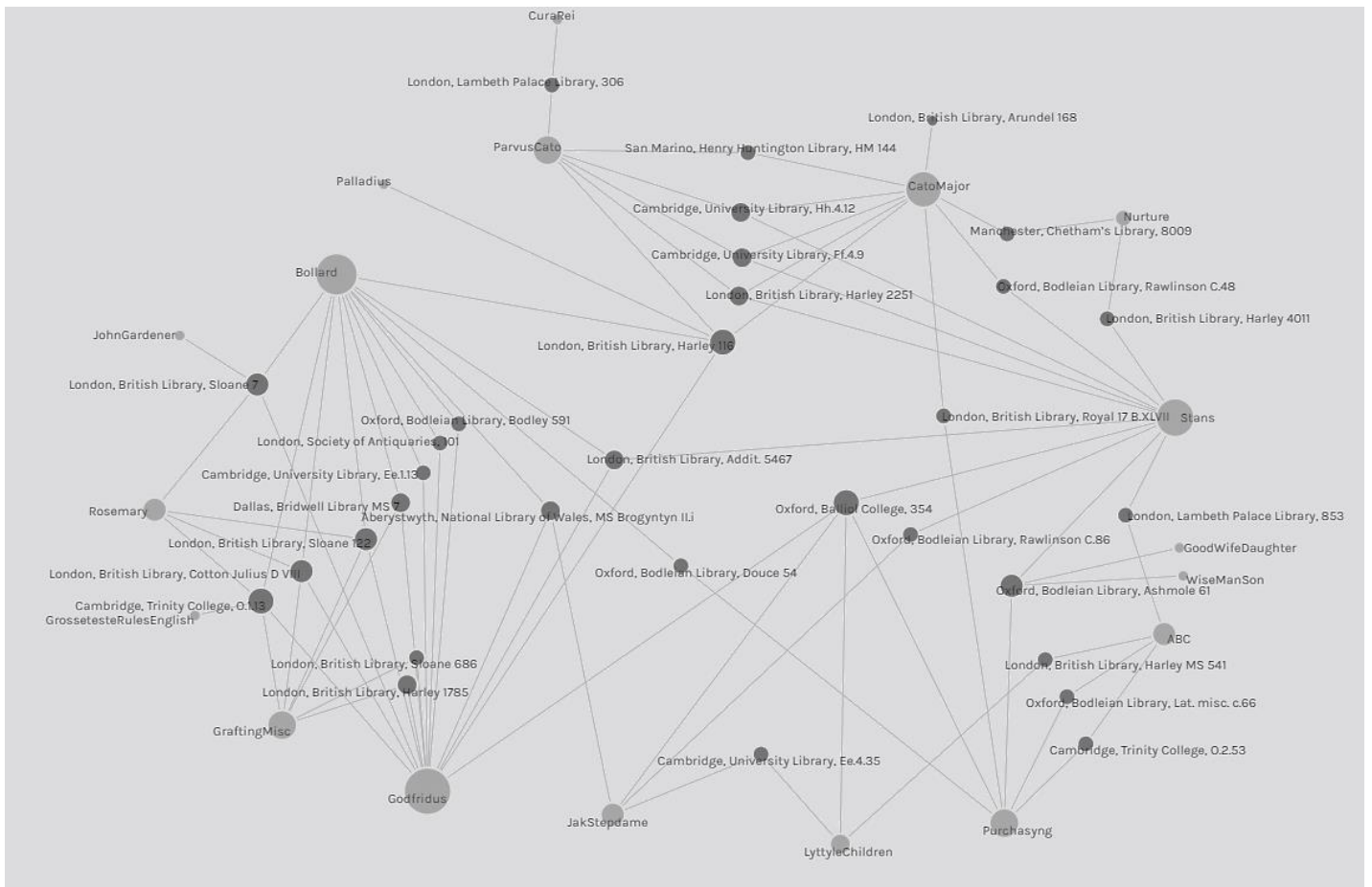


Figure 15: Thematic relations between manuscripts containing agricultural texts and educational literature. For the sake of clarity, this network only portrays thematic connections between manuscripts and, therefore, manuscripts containing only one title have been filtered out (e.g. one manuscript containing *De Cura rei famularis*, London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 306 is shown because it also contains the educational text *Parvus Cato*, whilst Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.1.5, which features in the latter part of this chapter, is not included).<sup>399</sup>

Before turning to these late-medieval manuscripts, I will first briefly address the earliest agricultural texts that were produced in the early Middle Ages, in order to highlight that the relation between agricultural and educational literature has a historical precedent. Then, in my discussion of two vernacular translations of the managerial text *De Cura rei famularis* I proceed to illustrate the interrelation between practical and literary texts within the context of late-medieval multi-text manuscripts. Furthermore, a case study of a poem concerning the purchasing of a plot of land, known as *Rules for Purchasing Land*, will attest the educational qualities of a seemingly prosaic piece of text. The latter part of this section addresses the growing availability of educational works on

<sup>399</sup> Permalink to this image: <https://perma.cc/S9V9-FGGZ>

agriculture during the Early Modern period. Fitzherbert's *Boke of Husbandry* and Olivier de Serres' *Theatre d'Agriculture* exemplify how large-scale instruction was made possible by the development of printing.

#### 4.4.i Early educational treatises on agriculture

The first vernacular instructions on estate-management from medieval Britain are organisational in focus and not strictly concerned with agriculture. Aimed at adult rather than younger readers, the Anglo-Saxon texts *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* and *Gerefa* are supposedly composed to aid the reeve of a (monastic) estate.<sup>400</sup> Likewise, the late thirteenth-century Anglo-French text *Seneschaucie* advises the overseer (*seneschal* in Anglo-French) of a demesne about the management of his staff. Several Anglo-French and Latin tracts from the twelfth century also share a legal focus, and thus the manuscripts in which they appear are frequently compendia of statutes for legal students, or of secular law, belonging to the libraries of monastic institutions.<sup>401</sup> The fact that Latin tracts and their vernacular translations appear together in manuscripts from the twelfth century, attest that these texts reached audiences with diverse levels of literacy.<sup>402</sup>

Other, more educationally oriented managerial texts from this time are aimed at adult but inexperienced landowners. For instance, Bishop Robert Grosseteste compiled a series of Latin *Rules*, originating from his monastic estate, for the recently widowed Countess of Lincoln, Margaret the Quincy. Grosseteste translated his *Rules* into Anglo-French around 1240-42,<sup>403</sup> instructing her not only to work closely with a steward or reeve but also to involve herself in accounting. Each of Grosseteste's rules is formatted according to the same principle, starting with "la [n] reule vus aprent [...]" [the [n]th rule teaches you] and is written in imperative mood. The addressee of this treatise, moreover, is interpretable as both male and female.<sup>404</sup> As a result, later copies of this work

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<sup>400</sup> P. D. A. Harvey, "Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa," *The English Historical Review* 108.426 (1993), 1-22.

<sup>401</sup> See Oschinsky, *Walter*, passim.

<sup>402</sup> See Oschinsky, *Walter*, passim.

<sup>403</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, p. 3683.

<sup>404</sup> See Louise J. Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), p. 59.

are more inclusive than the male-oriented tracts, such as the Anglo-French *Husbandry*, attributed to Walter of Henley, and the pseudo-Bernardian householding tract *De Cura rei familiaris*. These two texts both invoke the classical topos of moral “father-to-son” counsel and, arguably, continue the classical tradition of *paraenetic* writing.<sup>405</sup>

An agricultural work that is evidently directed at children is *Tretiz de Langage* (ca. 1250) by Walter of Bibbesworth (also Bibblesworth) which, like Grosseteste’s *Rules*, originates as an instructional text that was requested by an Anglophone patron, Dionysia de Munchensi, “to make her children competent users of French”.<sup>406</sup> In particular, Bibbesworth’s treatise teaches them “specialised vocabulary which they would have to master for the running of their estates once they had come of age”.<sup>407</sup> It is unknown whether subsequent copies of the text (at least fifteen witnesses survive) were exclusively used for the education of children, but it is clear that Bibbesworth’s treatise is less advanced than Grosseteste’s, whose main purpose is transmitting managerial expertise. The text starts with a basic lexicon, listing the names of human body parts, after which the vocabulary becomes increasingly specialised. As Karen Jambeck notes, “significantly, the latter descriptions include terms that would appear in a landowner’s records and legal documents, as well as in his conversations, terms appropriate to one who advances in age and enters into estate-management and husbandry”.<sup>408</sup> Thus, Bibbesworth’s language-learning tract complements other twelfth-century treatises outlining the duties of an estate-accountant by priming young readers with the necessary vocabulary. For instance, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden Supra 74 (258), Bibbesworth’s treatise precedes Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry*, indicating the texts may have been

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<sup>405</sup> *Paraenesis* is a convoluted umbrella term covering a range of genres and literary modes from Graeco/Roman, Christian, and Jewish traditions. I refer to the working definition of *paraenesis* offered by Wiard Popkes in his chapter “Paraenesis in the New Testament”, in which he notes that its “basic function is to promote attitudes and actions which secure the future of the recipient [who] has come into a state of reshaping his or her future and now needs competent advice”, see Popkes in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen and James Starr (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), p. 17.

<sup>406</sup> W. Rothwell, “A Mis-Judged Author and a Mis-Used Text: Walter de Bibbesworth and His ‘Tretiz,’” *The Modern Language Review*, 77.2 (1982), 282–293, p. 282.

<sup>407</sup> Rothwell, “A Mis-Judged Author”, p. 282.

<sup>408</sup> Karen K. Jambeck, “The *Tretiz* of Walter of Bibbesworth: Cultivating the Vernacular” in Albrecht Classen, ed. *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in the History of Mentality* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 159-184, p. 182-3.



read in conjunction.<sup>409</sup> The fourteenth-century farm accounts that are added to f.13 of this manuscript, moreover, suggest that this manuscript continued to circulate within the landowning class.<sup>410</sup>

Knowing the French words for farmhouse equipment was useful to a certain extent, but knowledge of Latin was a precondition for becoming a professional estate-manager in premodern Britain. As stated in the Anglo-French treatise known as the (*Anonymous*) *Husbandry* (ca. 1300), practical literacy was of vital importance:

[t]he steward or chief bailiff ought to inspect at the end of the year all the small necessary items, utensils, horseshoes, and everything that remains on the manor, small and large. And he ought to put these things down in writing so that one can in the following year learn from it what it will be necessary to buy and allow for these things but avoid overcharge.<sup>411</sup>

To prepare the student for composing estate accounts, Adam of Balsham (also known as Adam du Petit Pont, who lived between ca. 1100 and ca. 1150-60) compiled *De Utensilibus* halfway through the twelfth century.<sup>412</sup> Balsham offers a virtual tour of an English estate which allows the learner, who assumes the guise of the recently landed gentleman Anselm, to acquire Latin names for utensils found on a large demesne. Essentially, the treatise is a “class glossary” that relies on the linguistic principle of a word-field or semantic domain populated with interrelated nouns.<sup>413</sup> As medieval children recited versified lists of plant names at school, it is plausible that they did the same with lists of agricultural utensils.<sup>414</sup>

Illustrative of the growing need for such education, Balsham’s project probably inspired Alexander Neckam to extend his own *De Utensilibus* (ca. 1190) with interlinear French glosses to

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<sup>409</sup> Oschinsky, *Walter*, p. 44.

<sup>410</sup> Richard William Hunt, *A summary catalogue of Western manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford which have not hitherto been catalogued in the quarto series: with references to the Oriental and other manuscripts* Volume 2 no. 3462 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1922), pp. 642-644.

<sup>411</sup> Translated by Oschinsky in *Walter of Henley*, p. 437.

<sup>412</sup> R. Klibansky, “Balsham, Adam of [Adam de Parvo Ponte] (1100x02?–1157x69?), logician” *ODNB*, 2004.

<sup>413</sup> Werner Hülsen, *English Dictionaries, 800-1700: The Topical Tradition* (Oxford: UP, 1999), p. 82.

<sup>414</sup> For instance, Bernard Silvestris’ *Cosmographia*, see Douglas Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting, and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 93.

facilitate learning according to the so-called contrastive method. Anglo-French, thus, functioned as a proxy language. For this method to be effective, children would necessarily have had knowledge of an estate and its inventory before they could start extending their individual vocabulary from (Anglo-)French to Latin. It is difficult to obtain direct evidence of the interplay between actual experience of estate-management and learning its vocabulary, but anecdotal records attest that boys became involved in fieldwork and animal husbandry from an early age, and would thus have been exposed to the necessary vocabulary.<sup>415</sup> Overall, as most early medieval texts pertaining to agriculture and estate-management are closely related to traditions of legal language tracts and glossaries, their practical purpose is overshadowed by didacticism.

#### *4.4.ii Views on practical knowledge in late-medieval educational literature*

Although agricultural writings that were read in the later Middle Ages may have been experiential in origin, they often record the experiences of ancient agronomical writers, who are geographically and temporally distant from their medieval audience. Agronomical literature has a long-standing history of being both edifying and aesthetically enjoyable, and was not aimed specifically at the education of children. This dual purpose underlies the main agricultural treatises of Virgil, Columella, and Palladius, and so it necessarily left its mark on the medieval texts that derive from their works. In addition, the interplay between practical knowledge and theoretical wisdom has been the subject of philosophical thought since the origins of science. To illustrate, Aristotle considered *episteme*, theoretical science, and *phronesis*, practical wisdom, to be distinct states of mind by means of which the soul can obtain truth.<sup>416</sup> As medieval wisdom writings frequently adopt Aristotelian and Ciceronian thought, the importance of ‘experience’ and ‘auctoritee’ (authoritative doctrine) is also stressed in medieval treatises.<sup>417</sup> Moreover, the ideas contained in wisdom literature provides clues for finding the rationale behind the collecting of practical texts that are found in

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<sup>415</sup> See Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (Yale: University Press, 2001), pp. 307-8.

<sup>416</sup> Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: UP, 1991), 14-5.

<sup>417</sup> The *MED* defines ‘auctoritee’ as “authoritative doctrine (as opposed to reason or experience)”.

medieval manuscripts.

Late-medieval wisdom literature was mainly aimed at and consumed by the middle class and aristocracy.<sup>418</sup> One example of this genre is a compilation of biographies and aphorisms attributed to ancient philosophers, known in English as *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (printed by Caxton in 1477), which repeatedly addresses the difference between experience and wisdom. The work, which ultimately derives from the eleventh-century Arab collection *Mukhtâr al-bikam*, was translated into Latin via Spanish in the thirteenth century, then into French at the turn of the fifteenth century, and eventually into English in the late-fifteenth century. Four different translations survive, made by influential writers and public figures of the period: Anthony Woodville, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Rivers, Stephen Scrope, William Worcester, and George Ashby.<sup>419</sup> John William Sutton argues that the *Dicts* are a “monument to wisdom and as a spur toward the obedience of intellectual authority” while the practical utility of the information on offer seems “to have been beyond the concerns of its original author and the legions of later redactors”.<sup>420</sup> In addition, T. L. Burton considers the quick-fire questions and aphoristic answer format, characteristic of the genre, to be a form of “infotainment”, a disposable form of literature which did not impact the written tradition to the extent that works of literary authorities did.<sup>421</sup> In light of late-medieval manuscript culture, however, this statement is untenable: multi-text manuscripts containing aphorisms are far from disposable, as families held on to them for generations.

The manuscript context of wisdom literature suggests that the *Dicts* functioned in an educational setting: London, British Library, Add. 60577 (96), also known as the Winchester Anthology, contains several texts that are related to the education of children: John Lydgate and Benedict Burgh’s *Secrees off Old Philosoffres*, the *ABC of Aristotle*, fragments of the *Disticha Catonis* and

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<sup>418</sup> John William Sutton, ed., *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006).

<sup>419</sup> Curt F. Bühler, ed., *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, EETS os. 211 (Oxford: UP, 1941), p. xiii.

<sup>420</sup> Sutton, *Dicts*, p. xiii.

<sup>421</sup> Sutton, *Dicts*, p. xiii.

Latin *vulgaria*,<sup>422</sup> and a verse starting with the line “On days when I am callit to þe scole”.<sup>423</sup> On f. 39v of this MS we find a simile likening those with idle knowledge to barren trees: “He [th]at hath wytt and dyscrecyon and knowythe it not in dede / Resemblethe the tree that berythe no fruyte”.<sup>424</sup>

Gentry families evidently took a genuine interest in wisdom compilations: the Paston family’s inventory of books, for example, attests that they owned printed manuals such as *The Boke of Noblesse* and Cicero’s *On Old Age* (*Tullius De senectute*).<sup>425</sup> In addition, another manuscript containing the *Dicts and Sayings*, Cambridge, University Library, Gg.1.34.2, contains an additional section that partly overlaps with Cicero’s *On Old Age*. The similarity between these two sections is remarkable, as they concern the moral underpinnings for involving oneself in agriculture.<sup>426</sup> To illustrate, readers of the *Dicts and Sayings* are advised to be “under konnyng and wisdom” and praise those who work to till the riches from the earth, for they govern and sustain the people, increase chivalry, fill houses and barns with riches, and sustain and govern realms. Therefore,

it longith oponly to worship soche men every after his discretion, degre, his condicion and his connyng to that entent that the peple may know the good and be courage to doo well to all tho that sekith konnyng to the entent that thei may haue the grettir will to lerne. And that all ther vnderstanding may be to stody that the province and the shire or town may be the bettir be them and deliuer the to ponisshe euill doers also sone as to the shall appere their delite.<sup>427</sup>

To paraphrase: those who seek knowledge should seek it, and those who possess it should spread it for the common profit of their environment. Similar to some of the sections in *On Old Age*, the speaker here stresses how chivalry can be increased by obtaining and sharing agricultural

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<sup>422</sup> Harriet Soper, “Three Newly Recovered Leaves From The ‘Winchester Anthology’”, *The Library* 18.2 (2017): 218-224. The scribe of the Winchester Anthology, moreover, also copied MS Harley 172, which contains two educational texts for children: Burgh’s *Cato* and Peter Idley’s *Instructions to his Son*, so at least he had an educational back catalogue.

<sup>423</sup> *DIMEV*, 4263. The poem is related to “The Schoolboy’s Lament” (*DIMEV*, 2332), which appears in the educational miscellany of London mercer Richard Hill, Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198).

<sup>424</sup> Soper, “Three Newly Recovered Leaves”, p. 218.

<sup>425</sup> Bühler, *Dicts and Sayings*, p. xlii.

<sup>426</sup> Bühler, *Dicts and Sayings*, p. xlv.

<sup>427</sup> Bühler, *Dicts and Sayings*, p. xlv.

knowledge.<sup>428</sup>

The chapters of the *Dicts and Sayings* are constructed as biographies of one or more historical thinkers while, at the same time, they also deal with the balance between experiential knowledge, reason, and bookish wisdom. This theme is central to the chapter *Hypocras* which, contrary to its title, is not a biography of Hippocrates but a survey of the convoluted history of experiential and bookish knowledge of *physic*, medical science. The chapter relates how Esculapius, the founder of *physic*, believed that the discipline should be based on experience only. The physician Ancias disputed his views nine years later, stating that experience-based medicine without reason would be injurious. According to the *Dicts*, both Esculapius and Ancias' opinions were sustained for seven hundred years until a certain Bramaydes expressed that the sole foundation for the practice of *physic* should be reason. Subsequently Bramaydes raised three disciples, each of whom maintained a different opinion: “the toon used his craft by experience oonly, and the tothir used by reason oonly, and the thridde by subtilté and enchaument” (ll. 17-18). Another seven hundred years passed before Plato reset the discipline by burning all books based on either experience, reason, and magic (*enchaument*), keeping only those that combined experience and reason. Thus, the *Dicts* present Hippocrates as the first physician to plead for “experience and reasoun togedir” in his medical discourse (ll. 36-7), one of the factors that solidified his reputation as the leading authority on medicine during the Middle Ages.

The notions of experience and wisdom are further explored in the chapter dedicated to Plato. When Plato's following asks him to share his own experience on how good counsel should be given, “he aunsuerd and seide: ‘By right grete experience or by natural witte’” (ll. 469-471). Moreover, as Plato continues, the relation between wisdom and old age is a misconception: “aske counsell of olde men, and nat of alle, but oonly of hem that have experience and have sene many

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<sup>428</sup> Idealisation of landownership also happened elsewhere in Early Modern Europe, for instance, in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century: performances by companies of dramatists known as *Rederijckers* promoted the image of agriculture as the most praiseworthy of all crafts, see Anne-Laure van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: Rederijckerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden 1400-1650* (Amsterdam: UP, 2008), p. 102.

things” (ll. 328-9). Wisdom, according to the philosopher, is a result of experience, while “natural wit” is an inborn capacity. In spite of the innateness of “natural wit”, the *Dicts and Sayings* stress the importance of imparting wisdom at an early age: in the final section on miscellaneous philosophers, a certain Artasan is asked about the essential sciences that children should learn. His answer: those sciences that shall make them eschew ignorance the most in their age (ll. 25-28).

#### 4.4.iii *Agricultural education in gentry manuscripts*

There is very little evidence of agricultural education in the later Middle Ages. Nevertheless, several multi-text manuscripts dating from the later Middle Ages convey a sense that written agricultural knowledge was embedded into the education of children from rural gentry and urban bourgeois families. Possible manuscript evidence for such agricultural vocabulary practice can be found in British Library, MS Harley 1735, a personal notebook fused with a professionally copied compendium on empirical science. The manuscript was owned by John Crophill, a medical practitioner and bailiff of Wix Priory in Essex.<sup>429</sup> Crophill likely operated as a self-educated medical practitioner and, because of his social status and literacy, would have counted a large number of nearby villagers among his clientele.<sup>430</sup> Furthermore, Crophill must have received a substantial income from his patients, as he was able to rent a house with an enclosed garden, hire workmen and an agent.<sup>431</sup> His manuscript contains three booklets, the first of which comprises an astrological text titled “Thyrty Days of the Mone” (ff. 1r-13v), prognostications, *Prophecies of Esdras* (ff. 13v-16v), and culinary recipes (ff. 16v-28v). The second part of the manuscript contains a series of vernacular texts (ff. 29r-36v) copied on paper by a Norfolk scribe, which relate to astrology, astronomy and cosmology (ff. 29r-33r), the four elements and the human complexion (ff. 33r-34v),

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<sup>429</sup> Taavitsainen, “Genres and the Appropriation of Science” in Janne Skaffari, Matti Peikola, Ruth Carroll, Risto Hiltunen, Brita Wårvik, eds., *Opening Windows on Texts and Discourses of the Past* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005): 179-198, p. 188. Crophill’s additional duties involved being ale-taster for the Wix manor, see James K. Mustain, “A Rural Medical Practitioner in Fifteenth-Century England”, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 46.5 (1972), 469-76.

<sup>430</sup> See Mustain, “A Rural Medical Practitioner”, *passim*, and Rossell Hope Robbins, “John Crophill’s Ale-Pots”, *The Review of English Studies* 78 (1969), 182–189.

<sup>431</sup> Robbins, “John Crophill’s Ale-Pots”, p. 183.

uroscopy (ff. 34v-35v), two alchemical recipes (in Latin, f. 35v), and oenomancy (divinations based on the examination of wine, ff. 35v-36v). The third part of the volume is made up by Crophill's personal notebook (ff. 36v-52v), which contains notes on his patients, more texts on uroscopy and prognostications, an ale-house poem written by Crophill, who was himself an amateur brewer,<sup>432</sup> as well as a verse copy of "On the Virtue of Rosemary".<sup>433</sup>

The first part of Crophill's manuscript (ff. 2r-28v), containing prognostications and culinary recipes, is particularly enlightening on the subject of interaction with texts as at least one, and quite possibly two, readers made drawings in the margins, which visually complement the text.<sup>434</sup> The culinary recipes are accompanied by marginal drawings of their respective ingredients, such as almonds, figs, plums, and animals.<sup>435</sup> In addition, some of the biblical characters that are mentioned in the text are visualised according to iconographic conventions: Adam is depicted with a spade, Eve with a distaff, and Moses with horns. Also, several drawings were added to the margins of the text on prognostications, and it would seem that the person who added them drew inspiration from his or her rural surroundings. For example, drawings of a tree, plough, and arable fields have been added in the upper margin where the text recommends to begin with tillage, and the grafting of trees (on the day of Absalom's birth, f. 13r). Apparently, the plough was of importance to the readers of this manuscript: two more drawings of the implement can be found on ff. 12v and 13r (see Figures 16 and 22).

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<sup>432</sup> See Robbins, "John Crophill's Ale-Pots", *passim*.

<sup>433</sup> See Keiser, "Rosemary: Not Just for Remembrance" in Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide, eds., *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2008): 180-204, p. 199.

<sup>434</sup> Other marginalia include drawings of genitalia (m/f), arrows, and hands, which seem to be connected to prognostications ("sone deed", "sone he shall rysyn", "long lyff") that feature in the upper margin of every page. Possibly, these were used for divination based on the page the book was opened.

<sup>435</sup> See also Sarah Peters Kernan, "Illustrated Recipes in Crophill's Cookery", *The Recipes Project* (12 January 2017), available at <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/8817>, date accessed 1-9-2017.



Figure 16: Plough, f. 10v.

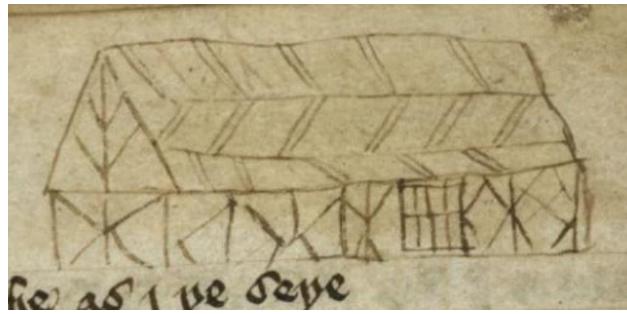


Figure 17: House, f. 7v



Figures 18, 19: Sheaves of wheat, ff. 4r, 16r.



Figures 20, 21: Presses, f7. 6v, f. 7r.



Figure 22: (Grafted) tree and plough, f. 13r



Figure 23: Onion, f. 20r





Figure 24: Chicken and pheasant, f. 17v.



Figures 25, 26: Rabbits, f. 17v, f. 18r



Figures 27, 28: Hogs, f. 19r

Even though MS Harley 1735 offers little textual evidence to suggest that it was used in children's education (it contains no other texts that are specifically aimed at a younger audience) the marginalia do appear to indicate an educational purpose, in particular language and drawing practice. Some words appear to have been lifted from the text, such as 'house' on f. 7v, which is clearly styled as a rural building (see Figure 17). Since 'house' is part of a very basic vocabulary, it is possible that the image served as a kind of visual clue to improve understanding of the text. Moreover, the recurrence of images such as the ploughs and sheaves of wheat (ff. 10-11) may imply that these images too served as visual aids for language-learning. In any case, whether or not these marginalia played a role in the education of children, the text engages the reader by appealing to them visually as well as literally, and locates the texts firmly in a rural environment. While most images are quite skilfully drawn, some other drawings are of inferior quality, in particular the drawings of what appear to be cherries and an onion or leek on f.20r and the duplicate animals on ff.17-19 (see Figures 24-28). It seems that in these cases, one animal was drawn after the example of the other. Possibly, a child was responsible for the less advanced marginalia and some of the other rudimentary drawings that appear elsewhere in this manuscript.

#### 4.4.iv Printed husbandry books and gentry education

From the sixteenth century onwards, evidence for the relation between book production and agricultural education of the gentry becomes more readily available. Anthony (or John) Fitzherbert envisages reading his *Boke of Husbandry* as a collective activity.<sup>436</sup> He presents, in Keiser's words, a picture of "idealised domestic harmony": a young landowner, book in hand, rehearsing the monthly duties with his manorial staff.<sup>437</sup> By including a distich he learnt during his own schooldays, Fitzherbert overtly signals his indebtedness to educational traditions:

For I lerned two verses at grammer scole & those be these. *Gutta cauat lapidem non vi, sed sepe cadendo: Sic homo sit sapiens non vi, sed sepe legendo.* A droppe of water perseth a stone, not al onely by his owne strength, but by his often fallynge. Ryght so a man shal be made wise, not al onely by hym selfe, but by his oft redyng.<sup>438</sup>

Although Fitzherbert imagines his readership as both gentlemen and husbandmen, this reference to grammar school will sound more familiar to a schooled landowner than to unschooled fieldworkers. Furthermore, Fitzherbert's *Boke of Husbandry* provides a detailed inventory of farming equipment for a less informed readership, similar to Latin and Anglo-French glossaries. The following excerpt from a description of a plough, which extends over two pages of the *Boke of Husbandry*, aims to remedy a lacuna in their agricultural knowledge:

Men that be no husbandes may fortune to rede this booke, that knowe not whiche is the plough beame, the sharbeame, the plough shethe, the plough tale, the stilt, the rest, the sheldbrede, the se[n]brede, the rough staves / the plough fote, the plough eare or coke, the share, the culture & plough mal. Perave[n]ture I gyve them these names here, as is used in my countre, & yet in other countrees they have other names / wherfore ye shall knowe / that the plough beame is the longe tree above, the whiche is a litel bente / the sharbeame is the tre underneth where upon the share is set, the plough sheth is a thyn pece of drye woode made of oke, th[at] is set fast in a morteyes in the plough beame [...]<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> The authorship of the *Boke of Husbandry* is debated, see Reginald H. C. Fitzherbert, "The Authorship of the 'Book of Husbandry' and the 'Book of Surveying'", *The English Historical Review* 12.46 (1897): 225-36.

<sup>437</sup> Keiser, "Practical Books", p. 494.

<sup>438</sup> STC, 109955, 70. Italics are my own.

<sup>439</sup> Fitzherbert, 2r., (EEBO scanned image 8).

The description is so elaborate that one might be able to name the constituent parts of a plough if one sees one before them. It seems likely that some landowners would try to mend their own agricultural inexperience with a book like Fitzherbert's and not that of their servants, who would already be familiar with the components of a plough. Of course, there is a limit to what a landowner could achieve with only bookish knowledge.<sup>440</sup> When it comes to "a connynge poynt of husbandrye", Fitzherbert argues, "it is so narrow a point to know, that it is hard to make a man to understand it by wryting without he were at the operacion thereof to teche men the practyue (*sic.*)".<sup>441</sup> In other words, possession of knowledge does not equate familiarity with agricultural practices, and thus we should be careful to assume that books like these were used practically.

While there are limits to what one can experience through reading a husbandry book, there is evidence that books were printed to promote the use of new agricultural techniques and crops at the turn of the seventeenth century. In Early Modern France, the husbandry writer Olivier de Serres catered primarily for the lower aristocracy. Serres was also employed as an agricultural advisor to King Henri IV (1553–1610), and persuaded the King to set up a silkworm rearing programme on French estates in hopes that France would become self-reliant on the expensive fabric. As silkworms feed on mulberry trees, Serres advised the King to plant 20,000 mulberry trees in the Tuileries in Paris, and ordered that another 60,000 white mulberry trees be distributed among the nobility and gentry across the country.<sup>442</sup> To provide the aristocracy with a user's manual for maintaining the trees, sections on silk and mulberries were lifted from Serres' *Théâtre d'agriculture* (1600), and independently reprinted. Some 16,000 copies of the booklet were distributed across every parish in France.<sup>443</sup> Although the introduction of sericulture in France seems to have been mildly successful, the production of raw silk was low and the silk industry did not take off until the

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<sup>440</sup> See Hüllen, *English Dictionaries*, p. 234.

<sup>441</sup> Fitzherbert, *Booke of Husbandry* (STC, 109955), p. 10.

<sup>442</sup> Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), p. 213.

<sup>443</sup> McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France*, p. 213.

eighteenth century.<sup>444</sup> Overall, it seems the venture was mostly advantageous to Serres, as the audience of his work increased significantly. His efforts, moreover, did not go unnoticed: just a few years after Serres' endeavour, King James I of England took after the French King's example and had a mulberry orchard north installed north of London.<sup>445</sup> Moreover, he had pamphlets issued, ordering the gentry to plant 10,000 mulberry trees on their estates, provided instructions for cultivation, and promulgated the profitability of homegrown silk.<sup>446</sup> Even though King James' venture was even less successful than that of his French peer, the strategy of combining written instruction with the introduction of new crops proved effective. Partly thanks to his active pamphleteering and shipment of books, King James successfully introduced large-scale silk production in Virginia.<sup>447</sup>

While the printing press proved to have been highly effective in promoting agricultural self-education among the lower aristocracy, it is less evident how the spread of agricultural texts in late medieval manuscripts took place. As Malcolm B. Parkes argues, the late-medieval period witnessed an active acquisition of texts with utilitarian, moral, scientific, and cultural information by middle-class readers, which attests to their growing pragmatic literacy.<sup>448</sup> At the same time, the availability of cheaper materials such as paper made manuscripts and printed books accessible to a wider audience. Yet the mechanics underlying the compilation of multi-text manuscripts are far from clear. While the analysis of the codices owned by landowners has led me to assume that agricultural texts were sometimes acquired to aid in the education of future landowners, it is not the only context in which these texts were read.

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<sup>444</sup> Rajat K. Datta, Mahesh Nanavaty, *Global Silk Industry: A Complete Source Book* (Irvine, CA: Universal Publishers, 2015), p. 20.

<sup>445</sup> Alicia Amherst, *London Parks and Gardens*, (Cambridge, UP, 2014), 59.

<sup>446</sup> Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: UP, 2005), 99.

<sup>447</sup> José F. Blanco, Patricia Kay Hunt-Hurst, Heather Vaughan Lee, Mary Doering, *Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe [4 volumes]: American Fashion from Head to Toe* (ABC-CLIO, 2015), p. 250.

<sup>448</sup> M.B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts, and Readers*, (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), p. 284.

#### 4.4.v Managerial education: the manuscript context of *De Cura rei familiaris*

Since evidence of medieval school curricula is scarce, it is unclear what texts may have been studied by medieval children; the only texts that were certainly taught at medieval schools were two pseudo-Catonian collections of *disticha*.<sup>449</sup> *Parvus Cato* and *Cato Major* (also *Magnus Cato*) were compiled and adapted to Middle English by Benedict Burgh (d. ca. 1483), and structured to aid the understanding and memorisation of Latin aphorisms: each time, two distichs are followed by a versified English paraphrase. Young schoolchildren would recite the distichs in unison, first *Parvus* then *Magnus*, before moving on to more advanced Latin phrasebooks.<sup>450</sup> In one of the distichs, Pseudo-Cato leaves the medieval learner at a crossroads for further education, as he directs them to consult Classical authorities for other areas of knowledge: Lucan on martial arts, Ovid on love, and Virgil and Aemilius Macer (d. 16 BCE) on agriculture and cultivation.<sup>451</sup> Burgh translates this section as follows:

Yf thou lust, my child, set thy hertly delyt  
Of erth to knowe the tilthe and the culture,  
And yf thou wilt be of knowleche parfit  
Why summe is erable and summe eke pasture,  
Why summe is freshe lyke floures of picture  
I conseile the to studye sadlye [*diligently*] for a whyle  
In the laureate poete grete Virgile.<sup>452</sup>

Despite his recommendation to read the agricultural oeuvre of Virgil, this poet's agricultural works, the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*, were seldom studied directly in medieval England.<sup>453</sup> Nonetheless, the manuscripts containing distichs or other educational texts frequently also include items of an

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<sup>449</sup> Orme, *Medieval Schools*, p. 98.

<sup>450</sup> Betsy Bowden, "Ubiquitous Format? What Ubiquitous Format? Chaucer's Tale of Melibee as a Proverb Collection", *Oral Tradition* 17.2 (2002): 169-207, pp. 176, 179.

<sup>451</sup> *Telluris si forte velis cognoscere cultus, / Virgilium legito; quod si mage nosce laboras Herbarum vires, / Macer tibi carmina dicet*. See Benet (Benedict) Burgh, *Parvus Cato, Magnus Cato* (Westminster, ca. 1477), *Magnus* Book II: ll. 1-3.

<sup>452</sup> Burgh, *Magnus Cato* Book II: ll. 4-10.

<sup>453</sup> Jan Ziolkowski notes that Virgil was "ubiquitous, in writings by Augustine, Jerome, Isidore, and others who shaped culture powerfully even when the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* were not directly approachable", see "Virgil" in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature: Volume 1: 800–1558* ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford: UP, 2016), 165-186, p. 166.

agricultural nature, which may suggest that the compilers of these manuscripts did seek to provide a fuller palette of ancient sciences to their children. For instance, a manuscript containing Burgh's distichs, Göttingen, UL 8 Codex MS Philol. 163 n., contains a (Latin) inventory of all the sheep-farmers in Eastbury (Berkshire). It possibly belonged to (a relation of) the Fettiplaces, a landed gentry family of Berkshire whose genealogy was recorded on f. 32r.<sup>454</sup>

A manuscript featuring Cato's *Distichs* that may have also belonged to a gentry family, Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.1.5 (43), contains a pseudo-Bernardian Latin tract of unclear origin, which is traditionally titled (*Epistola*) *de Cura rei familiaris*. The manuscript context of this work further exemplifies the interaction between didactic, managerial writings and romance literature in late medieval England. *De Cura* is styled as a letter from St Bernard to a newly landed knight called Raymond, in which Bernard offers Raymond advice on managing his household. Like Grosseteste's French *Rules*, the text embodies the interrelation between managerial literature and religious didactic literature as it, too, projects the ideals of monastic conduct onto a secular household. Pseudo-Bernard's letter is found in manuscripts across continental Europe, both in Latin and vernacular translations. Printed tracts also survive: a French translation was printed in 1480 under the title *Le Regisme de Mesnaige Selon Saint Bernyrd*,<sup>455</sup> the first printed Latin version in England was published by Richard Pynson around 1505,<sup>456</sup> and an English translation of the tract was printed by Robert Wyer in 1530.<sup>457</sup>

Only two vernacular versions survive in manuscripts from the British Isles: one Middle English and one Middle Scots version.<sup>458</sup> The Middle English version adheres closely to the Latin

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<sup>454</sup> Fraser James Dallachy, *A study of the manuscript contexts of Benedict Burgh's Middle English 'Distichs of Cato'*, PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, (2013), 178. For the contents of Göttingen, UL 8 Codex MS Philol. 163 n., see *Die Handschriften der Niedersächsischen Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen: Neuzugänge 1894-1966*, Irmgard Fischer. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), pp. 8-19.

<sup>455</sup> *ISTC*, ib00382300.

<sup>456</sup> *STC*, 1967.3.

<sup>457</sup> *STC*, 1967.5.

<sup>458</sup> A French translation was printed in 1480 under the title *Le Regisme de Mesnaige Selon Saint Bernyrd* (*ISTC*, ib00382300). The first to print a Latin version in England was Richard Pynson in ca. 1505 (*STC*, 1967.3). The text was translated into English for Robert Wyer's 1530 printed edition, which is attributed to Bernard Silvestris and unrelated to the translations found in medieval manuscripts (*STC*, 1967.5).

tract and is similarly organised in distichs, while the Scots version of the text is a more comprehensive learning tract, as the latter retains the original Latin maxims in red ink and provides longer, versified paraphrases in black, akin to Benedict Burgh’s adaptations of Cato. By contrast, the Middle German version of *De Cura rei famularis* exists in twenty-three surviving manuscript witnesses.<sup>459</sup> While the German translations are mainly found in multi-text manuscripts with a devotional focus, its educational purpose can be observed in two codices. The first, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Cgm. 75 contains didactic materials, such as a *speculum* text titled *Tobias’ Lehre an seinen Sohn* (Tobias’ teachings to his son) and the medical didactic poem *Regimen scolae Salernitanae*.<sup>460</sup> The second manuscript, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mgo. 101, includes several items of *Fachprosa* as well as a German version of the *Disticha Catonis*.<sup>461</sup> Furthermore, a German text that incorporates part of *De Cura*, known as *Hausssorge* (literally ‘house care’), survives in three manuscripts, one of which is particularly suited to the interests of a gentry household. This manuscript, MS. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Mgg. 796, is dated 1464 and features a German herbal based on *Macer floridus*, treatises on fishing, viticulture, and horses, as well as a text with the title “Wie man Kinder sal regiren” (how to govern children).<sup>462</sup> The fact that this compilation closely resembles collections that were owned by the landowning gentry in medieval Britain illustrates that the interests of the lower nobility were part of broader European trends.

Returning to the two British redactions of *De Cura*, it is clear that they also fit into the gentry-slash-merchant profile. The Middle Scots version of *De Cura* is the first item in an educational cluster of manuscript Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.1.5. (43), which probably belonged to a Scottish merchant family.<sup>463</sup> Not much is known about the compilation of this manuscript, but its contents resemble those of other identifiable gentry and merchant manuscripts,

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<sup>459</sup> C.D.M. Cossar, *The German Translations of the Pseudo-Bernhardine Epistole de cura rei familiaris* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1975), p. 1.

<sup>460</sup> Cossar, *German Translations*, p. 22.

<sup>461</sup> Cossar, *German Translations*, p. 44.

<sup>462</sup> Cossar, *German Translations*, p. 61. Notably, a Pseudo-Aristotelian text known also as *Hausssorge* co-occurs in a German manuscript of *GSP*, Augsburg, Universitätsbibl., Cod. III.1.2° 41, attesting that treatises on home economics and grafting knew a shared readership in medieval Germany.

<sup>463</sup> Joanna Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424–1540* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 126.

combining texts aimed at aspiring landowners as well as romance literature. The manuscript survives as nine separate quires filled with items that were added as late as the sixteenth century.<sup>464</sup> The first part includes Christine de Pizan's *Book of the Body Politic* and Philip Sidney's *New Arcadia* (written in the 1580s), Scottish legal texts and statutes. Among the legal compendium is a tract describing the Court Baron, the manorial court hosted by landowners. It further comprises political prophecies, devotional texts, and moral guides. There is a loose order to be discerned among the items, as the cluster of moral and religious advice is sandwiched between local politics and law. This middle section, which ends with the virtues of mass, features a unique but incomplete Arthurian romance: *Lancelot of the Laik*. The romance is copied by the same hand as a group of items which might have served for the education of children: two pieces of father-to-son advice known as *Ratis Raving* and *The Council the Wise Man Gave His Son*.

The introduction to *Ratis Raving* establishes it as an authentic piece of fatherly counsel: “my dere sone, wnderstande this buk, / þow study, & reid It oft, and luk, / Her sal þow fynd thi faþeris entent, / To the [you] left in amendement (ll. 1-4). The last instructional text in this cluster is *The Thewis off Good Women*, a paraenetic text aimed at daughters. The catalogue description of MS CUL Kk.1.5. hints that its Latin explicit, which translates as “here ends the book of morals according to the fathers of old”, refers back to earlier items in the manuscript, and that the clustering of texts is therefore intentional. At the start of the educational cluster, the speaker explains to his “son” that experience can be gleaned from the writings of wise poets:<sup>465</sup>

Awtenyk [*authentic*] bukys and storis alde and new  
 Be wys poetys are tretit, the quhilk trew,  
 Sum maide for law of god in document  
 And othir for varldly regiment,  
 Experyence throw tham that men may haffe

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<sup>464</sup> Charles Hardwick, Henry Luard, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved by the Library of The University of Cambridge* Vol. III (Cambridge: UP, 1863), 558-63.

<sup>465</sup> J. Rawson Lumby, ed. *Bernardus De Cura rei familiaris With Some Early Scottish Prophecies, &c* (London: EETS, 1870), pp. 1-17.



Off sapience, and sa, amange the laiffe,  
A lytil epistile I fande for to comende (ll. 1-7)<sup>466</sup>

The fact that the “lytil epistile” occurs “amange the laiffe” (among the rest) indeed suggests that the compiler envisaged this tract as part of a larger collection of texts on law and worldly matters. The addition of “off sapience” (l. 7), moreover, implies that the learner will not gain any applicable skills from reading this cluster of texts, but an experience or understanding of wisdom. So, contrary to the notion that undergoing a practical trial is necessary to acquire knowledge or skills, here, “experience” can be defined as “the actual observation of facts or events, considered as a source of knowledge”.<sup>467</sup>

The speaker in *De Cura rei famularis* uses strong imagery to underline the responsibilities of the head of an estate, emphasising that “the negligens of a Ruler is compared to a great fire brenning up a house”.<sup>468</sup> Not only must the landowner account for a healthy household, but the wellbeing of his cattle is paramount, illustrated by the fact that the line “consider the mete and the drynke of thy beastys for though they hungryr they aske not” appears before “feede thy house with gross and not with delicate meete”.<sup>469</sup> Bernard stresses that cattle, having no ability to speak up for themselves, take precedence over peckish household staff. After several general warnings against gluttony, Bernard discusses the dangers of avarice by addressing the temptations of the market: “Sel thy corne at a low price, and not when it may not be bought of powre men”.<sup>470</sup> Furthermore, Bernard urges the landowner to take care of those below his own standing: “Selle no parte of thyne heritage unto thy better, but for lesse price selle it to thy subject”.<sup>471</sup> This highly moralising tract ends with some assorted words of advice, such as maintaining a strict division between professional

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<sup>466</sup> The word “laiffe” (remainder) also recurs in the *Thewis of Good Women*, elsewhere in the same manuscript. In addition, “comende” (recommend) in line 7 is repeated in the courtesy poem *Ratis Raving*: “Thai thretty 3er are to comende”. These words are most likely part of the scribe-translator’s idiolect and not necessarily part of the exemplar.

<sup>467</sup> *OED Online*, s.v. *experience* (n.), available at <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/66520> (accessed January 26, 2017).

<sup>468</sup> Henry George Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard* (Chiswick: Caradoc Press, 1904), p. 1.

<sup>469</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 2.

<sup>470</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 4.

<sup>471</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 9.

and family life: “make not thy son steward of thy goodes”.<sup>472</sup> Moreover, the head of the estate is advised to invest in the safety of his household and not his own leisure activities, exemplified by his choice of dogs: “waker houndes ben profitable” while “houndes of venery cost more than they avayle”,<sup>473</sup> a piece of advice that seems strikingly at odds with the inclusion of the treatise on beasts of venery elsewhere in the same manuscript.

The ending of *De Cura rei familiaris* seems particularly relevant to gentry readers, as it contains a plea for primogeniture to secure the status of one’s lineage. The speaker implores the reader to ask his children after their future plans, which might involve a “departysion of thir heritage”.<sup>474</sup> If his children follow their father’s footsteps in becoming gentlemen, he advises that “it is better they be divided in the worlde than her heritage shulde be divided”.<sup>475</sup> Secondly, if his children become labourers, they must simply do as they please, and, thirdly, if they become merchants, it is best to divide the heritage so as to prevent the infortune of one from hurting the other.<sup>476</sup> Clearly, the Middle English text found in manuscript London, Lambeth Palace Library 306 (177), promotes an awareness that the social fluidity of younger sons can be a blessing or a curse to their eldest siblings, depending on how the inheritance is divided. The Middle Scots text proffers the same advice on the distribution of an inheritance, viewed from the perspective of children, rather than their fathers: “This nobyl clerke now wyl he speke a space / Of yonge childyr quhilk are left fadyrles” (l. 380), and continues to refer to “þer progenitouris”, “þer faderys”, and “þar moderis”.<sup>477</sup> While the Middle English seems to be aimed at older landowners teaching their children, the speaker in the Middle Scots version is adapted to the younger audience of the educational cluster. It is thus evident that the translations of pseudo-Bernard’s twelfth-century doctrine offers moral guidance tailored to both the needs of late-medieval gentry and merchant

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<sup>472</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 11.

<sup>473</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 11.

<sup>474</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 13.

<sup>475</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 13.

<sup>476</sup> Webb, *The Proverbys of Saynt Bernard*, p. 14.

<sup>477</sup> Lumby, *Bernardus*, p. 16.

landowners, who were typically concerned with peerage and division of wealth.

Of further interest in manuscript Kk.1.5. is the relation between *De Cura rei familiaris* and the metrical romance *Lancelot of the Laik*, for it features a long piece of political advice from the sage Amytans to Arthur that bears resemblance to the didactic *speculum* genre. According to Lupack, however, it is “clear that *Lancelot of the Laik* is not a courtesy book but a romance in which the advice plays an important but subsidiary role”.<sup>478</sup> He highlights a “verbal echo” in the recurrence of the word “flour” (flower) in an elaborate section which features the word in almost every line, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who is called “the flour of every flouris floure” (Book II: l. 2090).<sup>479</sup> About sixty lines later, Alan Lupack notes, Arthur refers to Lancelot as his “flour”.<sup>480</sup> Lupack suggests that this “implied comparison between Lancelot on a worldly level and Mary on a spiritual level” is the translator’s own addition, as the references to “flour” are not found in the French redaction of this romance.<sup>481</sup> The lexical connection does not end with Lancelot and Mary, as Gawain too is considered a “flower of chivalry”: “But Gawane haith he clepit, was hyme by, / In qwhome rignith the flour of chevelry” (Book I: ll. 780-1).<sup>482</sup> What is more, the addressee of *De Cura rei familiaris*, Raymond of Ambrose Castle, is also called “of chewalry the ros” (l. 9), which is another of the translator’s original additions, as the Latin text only describes him as “gratioso et felici militi”.<sup>483</sup> By comparison, the Middle English version does not introduce Raymond at all beyond his name. Clearly, the cluster of moral texts for future householders and the romance are interdependent, rendering the manuscript itself a *florilegium* or garden of knightly paragons. Both the romance and the courtesy tract in MS Kk.1.5. exemplify chivalrous householders, such as Arthur, Gawain, and Raymond, and their advisers, Amytans and Bernard, casting them as role-

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<sup>478</sup> Alan Lupack, *Lancelot of the Laik and Sir Tristrem* (Kalamazoo: TEAMS Middle English Texts, 1994), p. 4.

<sup>479</sup> Lupack, *Lancelot*, p. 7.

<sup>480</sup> “The king says that it was once assumed that he had in his household “the flour of knichthed and of chevalry” but that now he sees that the contrary is true since “the flour of knyghthed is away” (ll. 2183-85)”.

<sup>481</sup> Lupack, *Lancelot*, p. 7.

<sup>482</sup> Lupack, *Lancelot*, p. 7.

<sup>483</sup> Rawson Lumby, *Bernardus*, vi. Intriguingly, a Middle German translation of the text identifies the letter-writer as Lienhart and the recipient as Raymond, “amtman” or bailiff to St Ambrose, bishop of Milan, see C.D.M. Cossar, *The German Translations of the Pseudo-Bernhardine Epistole de cura rei familiaris* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1975), p. 163.

models for the readers of this manuscript. The other manuscript containing *De Cura rei famularis*, MS Lambeth 306, may also have prepared its younger readers for a future in landownership, as attested by the presence of a poem on the perils of buying land, discussed in the next section.

#### 4.5 “The Rules for Purchasing Land”

The manuscript context of a poem known as “The Rules for Purchasing Land” (hereafter: “Purchasing”) also sheds some light on the education of medieval landowners. This poem, which discusses many important legal considerations involved in buying a plot of land, was particularly favoured among sixteenth-century landowners and, presumably, prospective ones. Several manuscripts containing “Purchasing” belonged to rural gentry and urban bourgeois families and a sixteenth-century printed husbandry book also proffers the poem.<sup>484</sup> According to J. D. Alsop, the “crude poetic form” of “Purchasing” suggests “that the piece was originally composed for easier oral transmission among a partly illiterate audience”, and later found its way into the written tradition.<sup>485</sup> While it is tenuous to link the ‘crudeness’ of the poem to a lesser-educated audience, the simplified rules for purchasing seem apt for a younger audience. The version below has been transcribed from Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21), hereafter referred to as the Ramston manuscript:

Who so woll be wise in parchesyng  
Considre the poyntes that be folowyng  
Se þat the sellere be of age  
And þat it be in no mergage  
5 Se wheder the land be bond or fre

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<sup>484</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61 (210), f. 21v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 54 (225), f. 64; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. misc. c.66 (240), f. 101bv; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.252 (247), f. 1; Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198), f. 206; Cambridge, University Library, Hh.2.6 (1), f. 58v; Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21), f. 24r; London, British Library, Add. 6702 (98), f. 109; London, British Library, Add. 25001, f. 2v; London, British Library, Lansdowne 470 (147), f. 298v; London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149), f. 2v; London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xlvii (153), f. 59; Canterbury, Cathedral Library, Lit. B.2 (49), f. 9; London, Lambeth Palace Library, 306 (177), f. 203; London, Lincoln’s Inn Misc. 2 (181), ff. iii-iv; Untraced, present whereabouts unknown, olim Davies-Cooke 30 (271), flyleaf; 17; Barnabe Googe, trans. Conrad Heresbach, *Four Bookes of Husbandry*, published between 1577 and 1657 (*STC*, 13195-13202; Wing, P1489).

<sup>485</sup> Alsop, “A Late Medieval Guide to Land Purchase”, *Agricultural History* 57.2 (1983): 161–164, p. 161.

And se the relese of every feoffe  
 Loke what quyt rent þerof out must goo  
 And what service that longeth þerto  
 Loke wheder it meve of a wedded manne  
 10 Ware wel of Court de Baronne thanne  
 Loke wheder þerof a taile may be founde  
 And wheder it stant in statute bounde  
 And if thow wilt be ware and also wise  
 Se þat thi Charter be made of warantise  
 15 And if it be lordship lond or housyng  
 To them .iij. longeth dyuerse paying  
 And thus shuld a wise parchessour do  
 Be hold well all thing þat longeth þerto  
 And if þu wise parchessar be  
 20 In x yere day þu shalt agayne þi money se

While the poem has a legal rather than agricultural focus, it nonetheless deserves attention as it lays out the foundational steps of estate management. The copyists of two manuscripts (240 and 247) misattribute the poem to political theorist John Fortescue (c. 1394 – 1480), which underlines that these rhyming principles possessed a degree of authority in the later Middle Ages.<sup>486</sup>

The formulaic opening lines of “Purchasing” (“who so woll be ...”) and the conventional phrase “if thow wilt be ware and also wise” are typical of medieval educational poetry. The Ramston manuscript contains another text that is linked to the education of children, the *ABC of Aristotle*, which contains a similar introduction: “Who so wil to be wyce / and worship desireth” (ll. 1-2). The *ABC* is an educational *abecedarium* on the Aristotelian doctrine of the golden mean, which appears in a number of gentry household manuscripts that will be discussed accordingly. Another similar opening line to “Purchasing” is found in the *Booke of Courtasye* (also known as *The Babees Booke*) in London, British Library, MS Sloane 1986 (163), which opens with the lines “Whoso will

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<sup>486</sup> Shuffelton, “Items 9-11, Latin Epigrams and The Rules for Purchasing Land: Introduction”, in *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse*.

of courtesy here”.<sup>487</sup> Likewise, *Vrbanitatis*, another moral tract aimed at children, starts with the lines “Who so wyll of nurtur here / Herken to me & 3e shall here” (ll. 1-2).<sup>488</sup> This text appears in two manuscripts associated with gentry and bourgeois families: London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ii (103) and Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1 (59, also known as the Heege manuscript). Furthermore, the poem known as *The Feate of Gardening*, which I discussed in more detail in the third chapter, also starts with a similar opening: “ho so wyl a gardener be / here he may both hyre & se” (ll. 1-2).<sup>489</sup> The verb “willen” can mean “desire” but, at the same time, it functions as a modal auxiliary for “been”, it is clear that these introductory lines present landownership a desirable as well as a potential future.<sup>490</sup> The aspirational quality of a poem such as “Purchasing”, therefore, suggests that it is aimed at an audience that is not yet bound to landownership, nor has accumulated a great deal of experience on the subject. Even though scholarship has not considered that this poem may be aimed at children, it is not unlikely that the poem could have been a useful tool in the memorisation of plants.

In spite of its basic form, there is evidence that manuscripts containing “Purchasing” belonged to a noble, presumably experienced, estate-owner. At one point, London, British Library, Add. 6702 (98) was owned by Roger Columbelle, Esquire, of Darley Hall (Derbyshire), who made several entries into the manuscript in the 1580s.<sup>491</sup> This landowner clearly lived well-above Thirsk’s income threshold of £20: in 1588 he received a request from Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Seal asking for a sum of £25 to be paid as a forced loan to support the defence against the Spanish Armada, which he obeyed.<sup>492</sup> The manuscript consists mostly of indentures and other transactions of purchases, such as the bill of expensive garments lace, silk, rose buttons, and Turkish lace that

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<sup>487</sup> *DIMEV* 6648; for editions of this text see Frederick James Furnivall, *The Babees Book*, EETS o.s. 32 (London: Trübner, 1876): 177-205 and James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips, *The Boke of Curtasye: An English Poem of the Fourteenth Century*, Percy Society 4 (London: Richards, 1841).

<sup>488</sup> Furnivall, *The Babees Book*, p. 13.

<sup>489</sup> Amherst, “A Fifteenth-Century Treatise”, p. 160.

<sup>490</sup> *MED*, s.v. “willen, v1”, , meanings 9 and 12.

<sup>491</sup> James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips and Thomas Wright, *Reliquiae Antiquae: Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, Illustrating Chiefly Early English Literature and the English Language, Volume 1* (William Pickering, 1841), 254.

<sup>492</sup> See Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and Her Times: A Series of Original Letters, Volume 2* (London: Colburn, 1838), p. 361-2.

appears on f. 85v.<sup>493</sup> Despite the later date of the manuscript, Columbello's collection reflects the interests of early sixteenth-century landowners. It contains, for instance, a fragment of the prophecy of Thomas of Erceldoune, which also appears in the two other manuscripts that circled among the London middle class: Lansdowne 762 (149) and Harley 2252 (125), as will be discussed in §4.5.ii below.

#### 4.5.i Case study I: The Ramstons of Essex and their manuscript

The co-occurrence of "Purchasing" and other educational literature is attested by Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. O.2.53 (21), henceforth called the Ramston manuscript.<sup>494</sup> The multi-text manuscript comprises several booklets, of which the oldest items were copied before the turn of the fifteenth century by an unknown compiler.<sup>495</sup> The "Purchasing" poem also seems to have been copied during this initial production phase, as it is written in a fifteenth-century hand. A double title appears above the poem, written in the same hand as the poem itself, but with ink of a different colour, suggesting that the scribe reserved the page for the inclusion of the poem, which was then copied at a later stage. At some point during a later usage phase, the contents of the poem seem to have been commented upon by one of its readers. Underneath the poem appears a word in an unidentifiable, early modern hand, which could either read "farshod" or "falshod". The former could be a form of "fershod", meaning fierceness, or a past participle of "forsheden", which means to shed or drive away.<sup>496</sup> If the word reads "falshod", it may indicate that the poem was to be disregarded. Yet it should be noted that, since there is a considerable white area below the poem, there is also a possibility that the marginal note is simply a pen trial.

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<sup>493</sup> Another point of interest may be the note on f. 116r: "To mr John Fitzherbert Captain of the horse", which is dated 1634. This most likely refers to the Derbyshire Colonel, leader of a Regiment of Horse, and descendant of Anthony Fitzherbert, author of the *Boke of Husbandry*.

<sup>494</sup> This manuscript is mentioned by Julia Boffey in *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), 24.

<sup>495</sup> Also, in "A Late Medieval Guide to Land Purchase", notes that "all of the entries for the period of Edward IV's reign which can be placed geographically relate to individuals and property in the vicinity of Bromley, Orpington, and St. Mary Cray in northwest Kent" (162).

<sup>496</sup> *MED*, s.v. fērshēde, -hod (n), and forshēden (v).

Concerning the compilation of MS O.2.53 (21), Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson maintain that the “previously independent circulation of these units hardly contributed in any meaningful way to the eventual organisation of the miscellany”.<sup>497</sup> From the digital facsimile the following collation formula can be deduced: I<sup>11</sup> (1-24); II<sup>8</sup> (23-42); III<sup>2</sup> (43-46); IV<sup>4</sup> (47-54); V<sup>2</sup> (55-58); VI<sup>16</sup> (59-74). Quires II, III, IV, V and VI do not contain any text that can be considered central, as no text covers more than one page. Notably, the second folio of the first quire contains the names of John and James Trystram, which recur on f.48r, the second page of quire IV. Furthermore, the last page of the fourth quire is marked by a Thomas Cavendyssh, whose name does not occur elsewhere. At some point, quires I and IV appear to have been separate booklets that were owned by the Trystrams. “Purchasing” occurs on f.24r and is thus part of the first quire, suggesting it also circulated as part of the booklet prior to being bound into a codex. The first quire could reasonably have been a booklet circulating on its own, as it mainly consists of the *ABC of Aristotle*.<sup>498</sup> As mentioned briefly in §4.4.iv, this alphabetical list of Latin aphorisms frequently occurs in gentry manuscripts, for instance Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. Misc. 16 (240).<sup>499</sup> It is apparent that, in both manuscripts, the *ABC* is the first substantial text within the first quire.

Many of the owner marks that were added to MS O.2.53 date from the Tudor period, and were made by the Ramstons of Chingford, a family of landowners from south-west Essex.<sup>500</sup> On f. 36v and f. 37r of MS 7, we find the birthdates of John (6 October 1527), Thomas (3 February 1530) and Addre Ramston (29 April 1531). In addition, f. 46r details that Robard (Robert) was born on 11 December 1525; John, Thomas and Audere (*sic*) again on the same dates mentioned before but with added roman numerals; Ellsebeth in 1531, Horsela in 1537, Dorothe in 1535, and Antone in

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<sup>497</sup> Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, “Anthologies and Miscellanies”, in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, eds. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: UP, 1989): 279-315, p. 292.

<sup>498</sup> *DIMEV*, 6054.

<sup>499</sup> The overlap between this manuscript and MS O.2.53 will be further discussed below.

<sup>500</sup> As early as the thirteenth century, the Chingford manor supplied grain to St. Pauls, see Joan Thirsk, 359. One of these records is a publication by the Public Record Office, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: 1553; Appendices. 1547-1553* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1926), 344. The manor and grounds that belonged to the Ramstons, Strood-Hall Farm, still exist, see <http://images.eigroup.co.uk/propertyauctions/342/12265/a92c5df4-95fc-4fb0-9c44-9b0332b2cf4e.pdf> (date accessed 22 March 2017).



1539. While it is possible that Audrey and Elisabeth are twins, as they were both born in 1531, the sequence of the other birth dates suggests that these children are probably part of multiple nuclear families, probably those of Robert or Rowland Ramston, sons of John Ramston (whose will dates from 1507).<sup>501</sup> Most probably, Robert and his brother Rowland exchanged the manuscript at some point, because they both wrote their name in the manuscript while John's eldest son, Thomas, did not. The handbook remained in the Ramston family for at least two generations, as Anthony Ramston, who was the keeper of Walcumstowe Walk in the Royal forest of Walthamstowe in 1583,<sup>502</sup> wrote his name on f. 70v. From the number of different owner's marks in the manuscript, it is clear that the Ramston manuscript was not reserved for use by a single person, but that the manuscript seems to have functioned as a notebook for its owners through various stages in life.

The Ramston manuscript also contains courtly love lyrics, one of which is a moralised version of the secular (drinking) song "Come over the burne Besse" (f. 55r).<sup>503</sup> Sarah McNamer states that this text is an example of a "sacred parody"; like romances, Passion lyrics answered to the needs of a rising textual or emotional community of "lay men of the middling and upper ranks".<sup>504</sup> This, she argues, fits the overall contents of the manuscript, which seems to reflect a very individual taste of the male head of the family.<sup>505</sup> As other supposedly male-oriented contents of the Ramston manuscript, McNamer lists Latin drinking songs, recipes for sick livestock, "Purchasing", and a cure against baldness.<sup>506</sup> Most of these entries are written in a sixteenth-century hand, which also copied the accounts relating to estate management, remedies for ill horses, oxen, and greyhounds, purchases of sheep and land, and the hiring of apprentices. The person who wrote these entries is probably not Rowland or Robert Ramston, but one of the sixteenth-century owners

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<sup>501</sup> PROB 11/15/467.

<sup>502</sup> Ramston's occupation is documented in *Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons and Command, Volume 6* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1814), p. 107.

<sup>503</sup> Contemporary Tudor poet John Skelton alludes to the song in his poem *Speke Parott* (ll. 235-40), which attests that it must have been a well-known song.

<sup>504</sup> Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2011), pp. 177, 262.

<sup>505</sup> Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, p. 262.

<sup>506</sup> Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, note 3 on pp. 262-3.

of the manuscript, possibly Anthony.

While the manuscript includes estate accounts that deal with transactions of the buying and selling of sheep, there are no systematic attempts at account-keeping, which were probably kept in different account-books (possibly by a reeve). Considering the fact that many business transactions are lined through, it seems the owner used the notebook as an extension of his memory, rather than a syst  
ntbook.

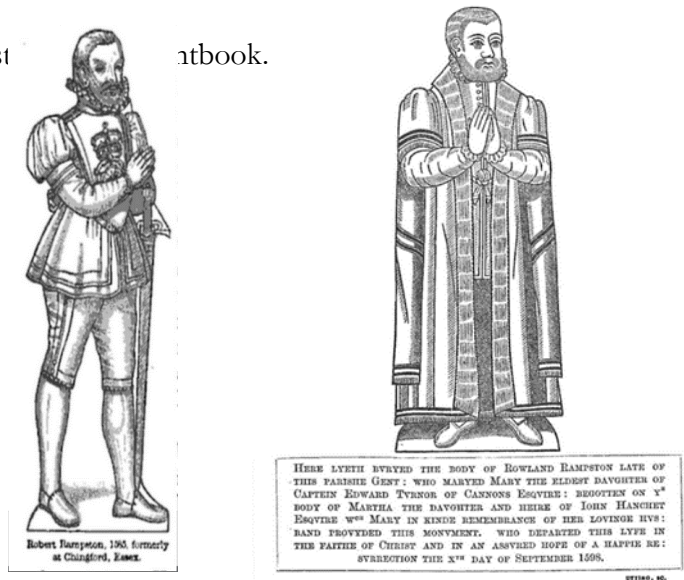


Figure 29 (left) is an engraving of the brass on Roland Ramston’s tomb, which depicts him wearing a breastplate with a rose and crown embroidery, a design associated with the Yeomen of the Guard.<sup>507</sup> The effigy of Robert’s nephew Rowland, shown in Figure 30 on the right, which used to reside in the church of Great Parndon, depicts him clad like a gentleman. Both brasses are now lost.<sup>508</sup>

There is a significant amount of Latin in the Ramston manuscript, and it is likely that some of the texts were used for language education, such as the macaronic verse line with Middle English glosses on f. 72r. The lines are part of a larger poem on the abuses of the ages, transcribed and translated below.<sup>509</sup> The poem was possibly used for recital in a private chapel or chantry, as

<sup>507</sup> Herbert Haines, *A Manual of Monumental Brasses* (Oxford: Parker, 1861), p. cxxvii.

<sup>508</sup> Haines, *Monumental Brasses*, 205. Rowland Ramston’s effigy was deposited in the museum of the Essex Archaeological Society in Colchester in the nineteenth century.

<sup>509</sup> Both MS O.2.53 and Cambridge, University Library, Hh.2.6 contain “Purchasing” as well as a satirical poem deriding the apparel of the clergy, starting “this prowde Galantes thriftles” (*DIMEV*, 6831). It is unlikely that there is a connection between the two manuscripts, however, as the main share of the codex is made up of statutes from the time of Henry III and Edward I. These Anglo-French texts are written in a sixteenth-century hand that also copied satirical verses on the “Evils of the Time”, suggesting that this later owner had antiquarian interests. I thank Sjoukje Kamphorst, Caroline van Toor, and Kees Dekker for their help with the translation.

accolades designate which part of the poem are meant to be recited by the flock (*vulgus*), which parts are observed (*videte*) and sung (*canete*). While the main share of the verse is in Latin, the glossed words (except the Latin “malagma”) are in Greek, of which “pragma”, “drachma”, and “charagma” frequently occur in a biblical context.<sup>510</sup> Thus, the Greek words in the verse are possibly derived from the Greek Bible or commentaries, which became more widespread in the early sixteenth century.

### Transcription

### Translation

*Vulgus*

*Flock*

Etas ridetur // mulier pulsatur amore

The old generation is laughed at, the woman is beaten with love

Dives laudatur // pauper adheret humo

The rich man is praised; the poor man clings to the soil

Oldmen been scornyd // women arn wowed

Old men are scorned; women are wooed

Richemen arn glosed and pouremen bowed

Rich men are flattered and poor men are pushed down

*Vulgus*

*Flock*

Prudentes cecus // cognatum degenerere sunt

The old men are blind; kinsmen are dissolute

Mortuus ignotus nullus amicus adest

The deceased is unknown and no friend is there

Wysemen arn blynde // kynesmen beth unkynde

Wise men are blind; kinsmen are unkind

The dede is out of mynd & Frenedes may non fynde

The deceased is forgotten, and friends may no one find

*Videte*

*Look*

Hiis diebus iam peracis nulla fides est in pactis

In these days yet completed, there is no trust in pacts

Mel in ore verba lactis // Fel in corde fraus in factis

Sweetness [is] in the mouth [through] words of milk, deceit is made in the heart

*Canete*

*Sing*

Dum dolor est pragma mea dragma sit inde malagma

While pain is my business, the money comes from the emoilient

<sup>510</sup> See the online concordance on *BibleHub*, s.v. *πράγμα* (pragma) available at [http://biblehub.com/greek/strongs\\_4229.htm](http://biblehub.com/greek/strongs_4229.htm); s.v. *δραχμή* available at <http://biblehub.com/greek/1406.htm>; and s.v. *χάραγμα* available at <http://biblehub.com/greek/5480.htm>.

Sit tibi sintagma multum valet inde caragma.

If you have order, its imprint is strong

Glossing verses such as these might have prepared the younger Ramstons for further education, which they must have received, as f. 45v contains a draft letter, written by a student urging his father to send him study books lest he should not be able to finish his studies. These kinds of letters are found in other medieval schoolbooks and, therefore, this seems like a generic template letter copied by one of the younger Ramstons. Underneath the letter is a fragment of “My love she mourneth for me” written in the same hand, a song attributed to the Tudor composer William Cornysh, which notably also occurs in MS Kk.1.5 (43). In addition, the Ramston codex shares some texts with other gentry compilations: as mentioned before, some of the textual choices resemble Oxford, MS Lat. Misc. 16 (240), a manuscript owned by Humphrey Newton, a member of the Cheshire gentry. In addition, both the Ramston and Newton compilations contain the *ABC of Aristotle*, “Purchasing”, and instructions for tuning a harp.<sup>511</sup> Both the Ramston manuscript and Richard Hill’s Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354 (198) contain an epitaph that featured as an inscription on many late-fifteenth century tombstones and effigies,<sup>512</sup> and a similar epitaph appears in British Library, MS Lansdowne 762 (149).<sup>513</sup>

The Ramstons were also keen on acquiring new lands: in 1544, Roland Ramston leased the Chingford estates, known as Pimp Hall, from Henry VIII.<sup>514</sup> Moreover, the family did not only hold responsibility over their own estates and parish but they were also tasked with maintaining the royal hunting grounds in Epping Forest. A note on f. 20v of the manuscript relates how the Ramstons were involved in the clearing of the forest for the creation of Fairmead Park in 1542. After the grounds were cleared, a hunting lodge was built at the behest of Henry VIII. Originally called Great Standynge, the three-storey house was a gift to his daughter and it is currently known

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<sup>511</sup> Deborah Youngs, *Humphrey Newton (1466-1536): An Early Tudor Gentleman* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 169, 182, 194.

<sup>512</sup> *DIMEV*, 1271.

<sup>513</sup> *DIMEV*, 1265. Both MS 198 and MS 149 will be further discussed in §3.5.ii.

<sup>514</sup> Kenneth James Neale, *Chingford in History: The Story of a Forest Village* (Chingford: Historical Society, 1967), p. 9.

as Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge.<sup>515</sup> Rowland Ramston's loyalty to the king is evinced by the prayer on f.24v, which invokes Saint George to be the King's foreman and Mary to be his guide. This Catholic prayer must have been written around the 1540s,<sup>516</sup> which seems to suggest that the Ramstons did not follow Henry in his religious reforms. Further insight into the Ramston's religious life is illustrated by a dispensation from Pope Leo X to Wolsey concerning eating fish on Lent that occurs on f. 41v, which is lined through. The crossing out probably has nothing to do with censorship of the Pope or Cardinal Wolsey, but rather indicates that the dispensation was only valid in a certain year. Moreover, a note which states that Wolsey was an archbishop and cardinal before he was named Chancellor in 1515 remains untouched on f. 60r, so there is no question of consistent post-reformation censorship. The Ramstons' ties to the royal household remained strong throughout the century, as Robert Ramston was appointed Yeoman of the Chamber during the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth.<sup>517</sup> It was probably during this time that a dovecote was erected on the Chingford estates, which has been recently restored to its early modern appearance.<sup>518</sup> As a whole, the Ramston manuscript matches the image of a gentry family who climbed the social ladder. The presence of the *ABC of Aristotle*, "Purchasing", and Latin (school) texts illustrates how younger members of the Ramston family were readied for landownership through the written word.

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<sup>515</sup> "Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge", *City of London* (website), accessible at <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/visitor-information/Pages/queen-elizabeths-hunting-lodge.asp>. As there is no evidence of Elizabeth having made actual use of the lodge, it was likely a royal gift to nobilities and foreign dignitaries, see "Epping Forest—Historic Buildings", City of London (website), accessible at <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/heritage/Pages/historic-buildings-in-Epping-Forest.aspx>. (date accessed 16 March 2017).

<sup>516</sup> See J.D. Alsop, "A Catholic Prayer for Henry VIII", *Notes and Queries* 228 (1983), p. 411.

<sup>517</sup> See *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* Vol 6 (Colchester: Essex and West Suffolk Gazette Office, 1898), p. 166.

<sup>518</sup> As I will explain further in §5.5.v, dovecots were status-markers in medieval England.



Figures 31 and 32: On the left, the (deteriorated) sixteenth-century Pimp Hall dovecote in Chingford, close to the estate held by the owners of Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.2.53 (photo my own). On the right: the Pimp Hall dovecote after being restored to approximate its original look (photograph by Purcell UK).

#### 4.5.ii Case study II: The urban manuscripts of Rate, Hill, Rowce and Colyns

The educational qualities of “Purchasing” can be further inferred by looking at a number of multi-text manuscripts from late-medieval England. A well-known manuscript with a sustained educational focus is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61 (**210**), which was copied by a scribe who identifies him or herself as Rate. The manuscript contains several pieces of conduct literature, such as *How the Wise Man Taught His Son* and *How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter*, which suggests that the manuscript was at least partly intended for the education of children. Also notable is a sequence of Arthurian romances: *Sir Cleges*, *Sir Isumbras*, *The Erle of Toulous*, and *Lybeaus Desconus*, which are, to varying degrees, associated with the theme of “loss and recovery of property”. Rory Critten notes that many of the texts in the volume bear witness to the compiler’s preoccupation with worldly possession: *How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter* and Lydgate’s *Dietary* both communicate concerns with wealth, and “Purchasing”, the *Short Charter of Christ* and the description of Adam’s fall in *The King and His Four Daughters* (ll. 26.155-222) are composed using the “language of tenancy and legal ownership”.<sup>519</sup>

Nevertheless, the legal language in “Purchasing” has been simplified by the scribe of

<sup>519</sup> Critten, “Bourgeois Ethics Again”, p. 118.

Ashmole 61: it can be observed that the scribe's emendations of the poem reduce the amount of French legal terminology and replace it with English, which may point at a less educated or young audience.<sup>520</sup> As Shuffelton argues, Rate's adaptation of the legal term "statut (marchaud)" to "state" does appear to be a scribal vagary but a deliberate attempt to simplify the text. Similarly, in line 16, which advises the reader to be mindful of the "covert-baron" when buying land from a married woman, the scribe of Ashmole 61 turns it into a less specific piece of advice: "Luke ryght wele if that thou cane" ("look really well if it is possible"). According to Shuffelton, this was done in avoidance of unknown legal terminology concerning the "covert-baron", a legal clause of French origin which stated that a woman's property could not be sold without her husband's permission, as her land was under his governance until his death.<sup>521</sup> Shuffelton argues that "Purchasing" functions as a "hard-nosed reality" which counterbalances the rosy image of landownership portrayed in the romances, and supplements the poem *Vanity* for moral reflection on the ownership of worldly goods. There is even a rural influence to be observed in the compilation. As Shuffelton observes, the narrator of *The Stations of Jerusalem* "claims that the oxen and asses in the manger 'dyde curtasy' (l. 667) to the infant Jesus, an example that further associates courtesy with humility and deference rather than refinement (the latter virtue being rarely embodied by barnyard animals)".<sup>522</sup> Yet, while Shuffelton maintains that the romances in Ashmole 61 offer complimentary treatments of worldly possessions and other prime concerns of bourgeois members, Critten demonstrates how many of the romances are in fact subverting the moral messages of the didactic texts in the codex. The compiler's careful juxtaposition of thematically linked texts indicates that he might have had reasons to be preoccupied by worldly possessions, but at the same time he subjected the poem to several rigorous changes, leaving out technical jargon and decreasing the practical utility of the work. Although these simplifications render the poem useless for legal reference, it is still suitable enough for a young audience to learn about the possible dangers of landownership.

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<sup>520</sup> Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*, textual note 12.

<sup>521</sup> Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*, textual notes to lines 12 and 16.

<sup>522</sup> Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*, p. 14.

Similar to Rate's collection is another urban-oriented manuscript containing "Purchasing", Oxford, Balliol College 354 (198), which has the dimensions of a "holster book", a format that is usually associated with the ledgers in which merchants and guilds kept their accounts, but also functioned in an educational context.<sup>523</sup> Balliol 354 was completed around 1536 by London grocer Richard Hill and is now one of the best-known multi-text manuscripts owned by a member of the mercantile sector.<sup>524</sup> Together with the printed chronicle of haberdasher Richard Arnold,<sup>525</sup> Hill's manuscript proffers one of the earliest systematic annals of the city of London. Moreover, the manuscript is a highly personal book and records birthdates of Hill's children, one of whom, John, inherited the manuscript. Beside London affairs, Hill includes a variety of materials, some of which are concerned with rural occupations: apart from "Purchasing", there are treatises on horse keeping and grafting, the latter text forming the basis for Wynkyn de Worde's *Art of Graffynge and Plantynge of Trees*.<sup>526</sup> The manuscript context offers little information on Hill's rationale for including the poem on landownership, but its inclusion is not surprising as Hill probably owned a manor in Hertfordshire,<sup>527</sup> and 130 acres of land in Ratcliffe in Greater London, a hamlet near the Thames.<sup>528</sup> As "Purchasing" is written in the same ink and style as the texts surrounding the poem, it forms

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<sup>523</sup> These long and narrow type of codices (with a height-width ratio of 1.0:0.3) occur three times in my corpus: the aforementioned MSS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61 (210) and Balliol 354 (198), and Cambridge, Trinity College, O.9.38 (22), which contains a copy of the poem *John the Gardener*. Apart from functioning as account-books, holster books were also used as songbooks in the early Middle Ages. As Erik Kwakkel explains, "the narrow format guided the pressure of the book's weight away from fingers and thumb toward the palm of the hand, which made it easier to hold the object in one hand for an extended period of time". Erik Kwakkel, "Decoding the material book: cultural residue in medieval manuscripts" in *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, Michael Johnston and Michael Van Dussen, eds., (Cambridge: UP, 2015): 60-76; 71. For this reason, the format was favoured by teachers in monastic schools: "a random sample of eighty holsterbooks from the eleventh and twelfth centuries shows that teaching texts are their most common contents: over 50 percent of holsterbooks are filled with such works, in particular prose and verse texts of classical authors", p. 72-3. It is unclear whether in the later Middle Ages, holster books were still used by teachers, but evidence from the Continent seems to suggest this was the case: Kwakkel presents the manuscript Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 15642-51 as a holster book with urban/educational focus, see Pratt *et al.*, *Dynamics*, 58.

<sup>524</sup> See Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century: A Revolution in English Writing* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), p. 36.

<sup>525</sup> Arnold's chronicle is discussed in more detail in §4.5.

<sup>526</sup> In addition, Hill's manuscript contains several remedies and farming accounts, but these additions were made by a later, seventeenth-century owner. Perhaps the agricultural content of the manuscript might have been of particular relevance to this later owner, more so than historical accounts of sixteenth-century London.

<sup>527</sup> Douglas Richardson, *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families Volume I*, ed. Kimball G. Everingham (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2005), p. 349.

<sup>528</sup> T.B. Howell, *A Complete Collection of State Trials Vol. X* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1816), pp. 577-8.



part of the same usage phase. Moreover, it is likely that these texts ultimately derive from the same exemplar. Hill's versions of "Purchasing" is sandwiched between a treatise on wine and a bawdy anti-clerical, anti-feminist tale titled "Jak and his stepdame & of his ffrere", the central message of which is clear from the lines "I have a steppemoder at home / and she is a shrowe to me" (ll. 113-114).<sup>529</sup> Notably, the tale of Jack and his stepmother is also present in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2), which contains gentry romances as well as *Godfridus super Palladium*, the treatise that forms the basis of Hill's grafting text. It thus appears that the compilers of MS Brogyntyn II.1 and Richard Hill had shared interests or, presumably, had access to exemplars containing these two texts.

The version of "Purchasing" in Hill's manuscript is unique because of the addition of two lines concerning the seller of land: "Se that he not in preson be / & that he be in good mynd or memory" (ll. 5-6). This addition communicates a concern with the moral and mental stability of the vendor, who must also not be in prison. Most likely, a debtors' prison is meant, as most medieval prisoners were incarcerated because of financial reasons. Inmates of debtors' prisons would sometimes be given tasks, such as financial or legal paperwork, and they were occasionally allowed outside to beg for money.<sup>530</sup> It is not inconceivable that prisoners would use these outings to try and shed their debts by selling lands, if they had any, or attempt other forms of fraud. For an inexperienced and naive buyer, the risk of falling victim to such schemes would be particularly high in the streets of London, where several debtor's prisons were located. The Marshalsea, the Fleet, the Clink, and the King's Bench did, at times, allow gaolers outside their gates. Since the owner of the Balliol manuscript was a London merchant, it is plausible that he added the two lines of warning for future readers, or copied them from an exemplar to which these dangers were already added.

"Purchasing" continued to circulate in an urban setting during the Tudor period. It appears,

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<sup>529</sup> See Melissa M. Furrow, *Ten Bourdes* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013), p. 30.

<sup>530</sup> See Guy Geltner, "Medieval Prisons: Between Myth and Reality, Hell and Purgatory", *History Compass* 4 (2006), 1-14, p. 4.

for instance, on a pastedown of London, Lambeth Palace Library, 306 (177). The manuscript features London-focused texts, such as lists of mayors and the names of the keepers and bailiffs of the city; nonetheless, several texts indicate that the patron of the manuscript must also have been interested in life on a rural estate. There are treatises on hawking, beasts of venery, and on determining the gender of larks. The manuscript is marked with the initials J.S., and it has been suggested that the scribe John Shirley (ca. 1366-1456) was involved in its production.<sup>531</sup> Both Shirley and his “circle” produced bespoke manuscripts for members of the gentry and bourgeoisie and had a range of literature available that catered to their specific interests. The Lambeth manuscript comprises eleven individual booklets written in eight different hands, and *De Cura rei famularis*, previously discussed in §4.4.v, appears on ff. 64r-65r as part of a separate booklet that was copied in a sixteenth-century Secretary hand. The further manuscript comprises a Brut chronicle, a herbal, and Lydgate’s animal fable turned political debate *The Horse, the Sheep, and the Goose*. This latter text refers to mercantile conflicts as a result of the Siege of Calais in 1436, during which English merchandise, especially cloth and wool, was banned in continental ports.<sup>532</sup> Despite the poem’s overt “plea for the mercantile interest”, it may also have appealed as a moral lesson for gentry children: while the three animals are each assigned one of the three estates, the division is not impermeable: apart from the stereotypical aristocratic horse, who is exhorted to protect a flock of feeble sheep, Lydgate also introduces horses of “lower degrees” who are indispensable to farmers, merchants, brewers, and “do grete profite to eny communalte” (ll. 106-7).<sup>533</sup>

Another clear metropolitan focus can be observed in the manuscript London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149),<sup>534</sup> the contents of which bear a striking resemblance to the manuscript London, British Library, Harley MS 2252 (125) which belonged to the mercer John

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<sup>531</sup> For the view that Lambeth 306 is a “manuscript of the larger Shirley circle some of whose contents parallel those in Shirley manuscripts”, see Linne R. Mooney, “John Shirley’s Heirs”, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 182-98. The classic study of Shirley’s activities is Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production in the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

<sup>532</sup> See further Walter F. Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, trans. Ann E. Keep (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 230.

<sup>533</sup> Cited by line from *John Lydgate, Horse, Goose and Sheep*, ed. Max Degenhart (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1900).

<sup>534</sup> Richardson, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, p. 165.

Colyns. Both codices feature John Skelton's *Collyn Cloute*, a prophecy related to Thomas of Erceldoune, and other works of a satirical, political nature. In addition, the manuscript features many lists that seem to have served a mnemonic purpose, such as a catalogue of Roman gods and their attributed function on f. 105v: "jupiter – god of wysdome, juno – goddess of riches, pan – god of sheppardes, marcurius – god of langage, saturnus – god of color, ffortune – the variant goddess". Apart from "Purchasing", Balliol 354 (198) and MS Lansdowne 762 (149) share a short lyrical meditation starting with the line "In four points my will is ere I hence depart",<sup>535</sup> as well as a poem honouring London, which has been attributed to the Scots *makar* (poet laureate) William Dunbar.<sup>536</sup> In addition, both these two manuscripts and MS Brogyntyn II.1 contain a series of rhyming precepts that were later printed in William Caxton's edition of Benedict Burgh's *Cato*, suggesting that they may have been used in an educational setting.<sup>537</sup> Also, Lansdowne 762 and the manuscripts of Hill, Colyns, and Rate, all contain works of an managerial nature. Beside "Purchasing", which was copied on f. 2v, Lansdowne 762 contains instructions for land-measurement, as well as a mnemonic verse on buying a horse which later featured in Master Fitzherbert's *Boke of Husbandry*.<sup>538</sup> Lastly, the manuscript is the only surviving witness of a piece of Plowman-apocrypha known as "God Spede the Plow",<sup>539</sup> which further suggests that the owner was not only interested in politics that affected himself directly, but on the economic interdependence of urban and rural domains.<sup>540</sup>

According to Malcolm Richardson, the organisation of Lansdowne 762 is "amateurish",<sup>541</sup> and David Parker describes how the regularity of the handwriting degrades as the pages turn.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> *DIMEV*, 2503.

<sup>536</sup> *DIMEV*, 3164.

<sup>537</sup> *DIMEV*, 560.

<sup>538</sup> Keiser, *Manual*, listing 440.

<sup>539</sup> *DIMEV*, 618.

<sup>540</sup> According James M. Dean in *Medieval English Political Writings* (Kalamazoo: TEAMS Middle English Series, 1996), "the poem includes estates satire with the farmers as plaintiffs; they produce food for the common good whereas those who prey on them are managers and bureaucrats", p. 245.

<sup>541</sup> Malcolm Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 165.

<sup>542</sup> David Parker, *The Commonplace Book in Tudor London: An Examination of BL MSS Egerton 1995, Harley 2252, Lansdowne 762, and Oxford Balliol* (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 1998), p. 130.

Nonetheless, Richardson asserts that the compiler is better educated than most of his peers, as “he includes not only more Latin but an obscure text apparently translated from German containing twenty-four articles, many urging reform of church and state, although not openly Protestant”.<sup>543</sup> Neither Parker nor Richardson attach a name to the compiler or owner of the manuscript, yet the first flyleaf bears the inscription “Est mihi liber Henrici Rowce”.<sup>544</sup> This owner can positively be identified as the scrivener Henry Rowce or Rowse, who is mentioned in a 1525 entry in the accounts of the London Mercers Company.<sup>545</sup> Paleographical comparison of the scribal signature and handwriting in Lansdowne 762 and the *Common Paper of the Company of Scriveners*, currently at the Guildhall Library, confirms that Rowce was indeed the owner of this manuscript, and the scribe of several texts within it.<sup>546</sup> Moreover, subsidy rolls attest that a notary called Henry Rowce resided in Chepe Ward, St. Pancras Parish.<sup>547</sup> Intriguingly, a notary called Rowce, located in Cheapside, appears as a character in one of John Rastell’s popular jest books, which suggests that the printer and the notary were acquainted, and that Rowce had acquired some degree of celebrity or notoriety.<sup>548</sup> While Rowce was not responsible for copying the first part of the manuscript, the

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<sup>543</sup> Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing*, p. 165.

<sup>544</sup> Ingeborg Nixon, ed. *Thomas of Erceeldoune, Part One*, in *Publications of the Department of English, University of Copenhagen, Vol. IX* (Copenhagen: UP, 1980), p. 15.

<sup>545</sup> Laetitia Lyell and Frank D. Watney, *Acts of Court of the Mercers’ Company 1453-1527* (Cambridge: UP, 1936), p. 685.

<sup>546</sup> London, Guildhall Library, MS 5370, p. 97.

<sup>547</sup> Arthur W. Reed, “The Widow Edyth”, *The Library* 3.9 (1918): 186-199, p. 196.

<sup>548</sup> *STC*, 22870. Printed under the title *XII mery Jests, of the nyddow Edyth*, the tale of the widow Edith is staged “in the time of King Henry the eight” and relates the wrongdoings of a *femme fatale* who deceives several men in London. See Walter Smith, *XII. mery iests, of the nyddow Edyth this hyng widow, false and craftie...* (London: Richard Johnes, 1573). The index describes the fifth jest as follows: “how she deceived a Scriuener in London, whose name was M. Rowse”. In this instalment, Edyth knocks at the scrivener’s door, and when he sees her clad in rags, he lends her his wife’s clothes. Edith asks the scrivener to write her a will and testament, upon which she discloses her ownership of a plot in Kingston upon Thames. While the scrivener sets to his task, the widow expresses her wish to make a donation at St. Saviour’s in Southwark. The widow persuades Rowse’s clerk to come with her and empty his pockets for the benefit of St. Saviour’s while, in the meantime, Rowse enquires after Edith’s property. Predictably, he discovers she is not “worth a q” and, once the widow has returned, brutally reclaims his wife’s clothes. Rowce’s initial hospitality towards the widow Edith turns into hostility after he has found out that he has been trapped into a false investment. Scriveners, of course, would know that widows had ownership over their own property, cf. “Purchasing”, which warns expressly against buying land from a wedded woman, and Rowce is thus presented as somebody who only acts kindly to people that are of financial interest to him. Dressed down to her petticoat, the widow continues to roam the streets of London and localises her next victim, a draper. She tricks the draper into outfitting her extravagantly, and sending his servant to Rowse’s address with an invoice. Naturally, Rowse refuses the request to pay for the dress in his best silverware, and so ends up in a conflict with the draper. In the end, both victims conspire to prevent the widow from doing further harm, but Edith is already on her way to lure another man into a fatal marriage. Even though the succession of events in the tale and the wickedness of the protagonist are exaggerated for the sake of storytelling, Rowse’s description as a notary who is stationed in Cheapside, is accurate. In fact, Reed, in his article “The Widow Edyth” (196) discovered that nearly all names that are mentioned in this apparently fictional tale as real people who were alive in the 1520s in

combination of urban and rural texts does seem to fit the interests of a man of Rowce's description, as sources attest a notary called Rowce buying and renting out land: in 1530, he held lands in Mundesley (Norfolk) and a messuage at Wolkested Farm (Kent).<sup>549</sup> Another record from 1540 attests the notary owned lands in Bletchingley (Kent).<sup>550</sup> It is unknown whether Rowce had an actual *pied à terre* in the countryside; in any case, it is most likely he was living in London and held lands as an investment. Rowce's profession would make him an unlikely target market for the basic legal advice proffered in "Purchasing"; it is possible that he kept it for his clients. Alternatively, considering Rowce's apparent interest in list-making and prophetic texts, "Purchasing" may have also appealed as a prognostication for the return of investment. Overall, the contents of Lansdowne 762 reflect the tastes of urban individuals with rural interests and Rowce's own additions signal a predilection for prophetic literature. As a whole, this case study has attested how an exploration of the manuscript context of a short poem such as "Purchasing" reveals the shared tastes of late-medieval manuscript owners hailing from both urban and rural backgrounds.

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order to enhance the verisimilitude of the jests. After all, the narrator professes to tell "No fayned Stories, but matters in deed" (Reed, 196). As the location and occupation of Rowse are corroborated by several archival records, Lansdowne 762 was possibly owned by the very same scrivener who supposedly fell victim to the wicked widow. It seems ironic that the real Rowce (if he was indeed a one-time owner of Lansdowne 762), an urban professional who owned texts advocating an ethos of modesty in life, became a caricature of avarice in popular fiction. The tale illustrates how, during the sixteenth- and seventeenth century, medieval merchants increasingly became the stock figures of avarice and fraudulence, as can be read in the chapter "An Evolving Market Morality?" by James Davis in *Medieval Market Morality* (Cambridge: UP, 2011).

<sup>549</sup> Christobel Mary Hoare Hood, *The History of an East Anglian Soke* (Bedford: Beds Times Pub. Co, 1918), p. 252, and Uvedale Lambert, *Blechingley: A Parish History Together with Some Account of the Family of De Clare Chiefly in the South of England* Volume 2, (London: Mitchell, Hughes & Clarke, 1921), p. 493.

<sup>550</sup> Lambert, *Blechingley*, 609.

## 4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the role of husbandry books in the education of gentry, provided examples of the cultural gentrification that took place in late-medieval Britain, and discussed the ways in which gentry culture put a mark on literary productions. Collections of wisdom literature, such as *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, *On Old Age* and *De Cura rei famularis*, illustrate the persisting influence of classical ideals of agriculture and landownership in late-medieval gentry households. Considering wisdom literature in relation to the agricultural texts that were available in the later Middle Ages has led me to assume a different perspective on the role of husbandry literature: it is possible that agricultural texts were, in part, educational. If we take into account the long-standing link between language-learning and agricultural subject matter, as evidenced by the Anglo-French and Latin vocabularies that are discussed in §4.4.ii, it is possible that children also learnt about agriculture in books. In §4.4.iii I suggest that the manuscript owned by the rural physician John Crophill may have aided in agricultural education. The illustrations in his manuscript single out objects that occur in an agricultural environment, and the fact that a second (apparently untrained) person duplicated these images suggests that the book was used in an educational setting.

When viewing the relations between educational and agricultural texts in a network diagram (see Figure 15 on page 124), some manuscripts and texts stand out as being particularly indicative of a gentry interest in agricultural education. The case studies that feature in the latter part of this chapter provided a closer look at some of the manuscripts used within a household setting. In the first case study, a manuscript owned by the Ramston family of Essex, I discussed how younger family members may have been primed for landownership through the use of “Purchasing”, a poem that lays out the dangers of buying land. The same poem appears in urban manuscripts that form the focal point of the third case study, which attests that members of the urban gentry (and their households) were also self-educated on the legal side of landownership. The question of whether poems and treatises actually helped these (aspiring) landowners to put their ambitions to

to practice will be further analysed in the following chapter, which considers the role of grafting and horticultural in the context of gentry-owned manuscripts.

## Chapter 5: Grafting treatises and the gentry

### 5.1 Introduction

In §3.3 I discussed how late-medieval grafting treatises are not straightforward practical texts, but could be aspirational reading material to middle class audiences. Following my approach in the previous chapter, I will now discuss the grafting treatises in Middle English gentry manuscripts. In §5.2 I explore the contents of the most widespread grafting treatises in medieval Europe, and highlight what aspects of these works would have appealed to a gentry readership. Then, in §5.3 I turn to the manuscripts in which these treatises are found, as well as handwritten arboricultural notations which were left by the users of these manuscripts. During the age of print, arboricultural treatises continued to be marketed at gentry readers, as I discuss in §5.4. Yet, while husbandry books became increasingly didacticised, as discussed in §4.4.iv, grafting texts featured in books with varying degrees of utilitarian value. A particularly telling development is the inclusion of medieval grafting treatises in early printed ‘books of secrets’, which I discuss in §5.5. In this final paragraph, I juxtapose arboricultural literature with other ‘practical’ texts on subjects such as alchemy and limning, in order to show how printers across Europe utilised the generic flexibility of these works to entice gentry audiences.

### 5.2 Middle English grafting treatises

Since most medieval works on arboriculture are ultimately indebted to Palladius, Virgil, and Columella, whose grafting combinations are nigh-on fictitious, they would be of little use for premodern gardeners. Nevertheless, the Latin version of Palladius’ *Opus Agriculturae* was widely distributed in medieval England, its popularity only to be exceeded by the treatise *Godfridus super Palladium*, which was compiled by a certain Gottfried von Franken (Geoffrey of Franconia) around the middle of the fourteenth century. The Latin version of Gottfried’s treatise is extant in at least 86 manuscripts,<sup>551</sup> and was translated into several European vernaculars, of which at least eleven

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<sup>551</sup> Braekman, “Bollard”, p. 21.



Middle English versions survive. The Middle English version of his work was prepared by Gottfried's friend Nicholas Bollard,<sup>552</sup> a Westminster monk whose apparent aim was to make the text available for a public beyond the monastic sphere where both he and Gottfried were based. By profiting on the success of the *Opus Agriculturae*, Gottfried sought to augment the classical husbandry literature available to a lay audience by borrowing from Columella, Aristotle, Isidore of Seville, and Avicenna, and supplementing it with contemporary expertise on horticulture, which he gleaned from several authorities during his travels across Europe. The fact that several of these persons remain unidentified, such as Mayster Richard, Mayster Boncompagno, men from Bologna, Panmera (possibly Palmyra) and Salerno, did evidently not impede the authority of the work.

Gottfried's treatise, a mix between classical and medieval Mediterranean viticulture and pomology was popular in northern Europe perhaps because it made Palladius available to a non-Latinate audience, but certainly also because grafting was considered to be a refined pastime, as indicated at the start of this chapter. Notably, as Gottfried derives his information from Mediterranean sources, *Godfridus super Palladium* was hardly useful for practical application in Britain, as several instructions concern the cultivation of pomegranates, figs, peaches and "grysmolles" (presumably apricots), which would not have been particularly suited to a colder climate.<sup>553</sup> While in the German version, Gottfried does include a paragraph on fig and nut trees, it comes with the disclaimer that these trees do not adapt well to the Northern European climate: "Von olboumen und ficboumen durch des vroslis wegin in di sin landin ist nicht czu redinde".<sup>554</sup> Although the climate of Germany is not substantially different from the British Isles, the English translator leaves out the original warning about the climate being "nicht czu redinde" (unsuitable).<sup>555</sup> By comparison, in an Iberian version of Gottfried's work, as Maria Antònia Martí

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<sup>552</sup> See Cylkowski, "A Middle English Treatise", p. 304.

<sup>553</sup> Findings from Roman Britain suggest that the consumption of pomegranates was extremely rare, and limited to London, see Van der Veen et al., "New Plant Foods", p. 31. It is thus very likely that they were imported rather than cultivated.

<sup>554</sup> Escayol, "Two Iberian Versions", p. 136.

<sup>555</sup> Eis, *Gottfried's Pelzbuch*, p. 128.

Escayol has pointed out, the latter part of the treatise that was dedicated to the medicinal properties of wine, is missing.<sup>556</sup> This seems to suggest that the medical aspect of the work was of little interest to the redactor. The Spanish translators seem to have revised *GSP* with careful attention, pointing out that Gottfried's observations regarding the unsuitability of the Northern European climate for the cultivation of certain trees do not apply to the Mediterranean region. Moreover, Escayol asserts that the Spanish translator changed the narrative from first to third person, so as to make clear that the treatise originates from a different geographical region than Spain.<sup>557</sup> Still it would seem that re-adapting a Northern-European text about Mediterranean agriculture back into a Mediterranean context is quite a circuitous task. Apparently, *GSP* possessed some authoritative status, most likely because of the far-reaching reputation of the agronomist Palladius.

Another case in point for the impracticality of Gottfried's instructions is his advice to recreate the "wondrous thyngis" that he has encountered on his journey, such as melons, gourds, and cucumbers shaped like a human head (l. 157).<sup>558</sup> Although it is theoretically possible that Gottfried learned about these techniques on his travels, writing about marvellous crops seems to be a staple of medieval travelogues. John Mandeville, for example, claims to have encountered a legendary oak that lived since the beginning of time and which possessed the capacity to cure people from epilepsy.<sup>559</sup> One manuscript containing Gottfried's work, Oxford, Bodleian Library, e. Musaeo 116 (230) collates *GSP* with Mandeville's *Travels*, probably not because the compiler was planning to go on a pilgrimage or create an orchard, but to marvel at the wonders of Creation in their own home.<sup>560</sup> Many of Gottfried's more fantastical instructions are directly copied from the

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<sup>556</sup> Escayol, "Two Iberian Versions", p. 134.

<sup>557</sup> Escayol, "Two Iberian Versions", p. 137.

<sup>558</sup> The recent popularity of so-called 'Buddha Pears' attests that the technique is technically possible, see "Pear-shaped Business Plan Reaps Fruit of Success", *Reuters*, 24 September 2009, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-china-pears/pear-shaped-business-plan-reaps-fruit-of-success-idUKTRE58N1U820090924>.

<sup>559</sup> M. C. Seymour, ed. *The Egerton Version of Mandeville's Travels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 38.

<sup>560</sup> The first part of this composite volume dates from the first half of the fifteenth century and comprises Geoffrey Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe* and John Mandeville's *Travels*. One of the later additions is *Godfridus super Palladium*, which has been written in a later hand, as well as Latin wine recipes. The second part of the manuscript is made up of the *Liber uricisiarum*, a text on uroscopy that has been linked to the Dominican friar Henry Daniel, which is followed by astrological notes. The name of Thomas Folville appears on f.65r and the note "foluyll: fisician" on f.148v, indicating that the second manuscript was owned by this sixteenth-century medical practitioner. The early ownership of the first manuscript is unknown, apart from the name "Walter" combined with the date 31 December 1470 that is

late Roman husbandry writer Palladius: for instance, writing a word in the core of a fruit and putting it back into the flesh so that every fruit on the tree will produce writ-bearing kernels. In addition, Gottfried copies Palladius' instructions on how to hide pearls, gems, or coins inside apples and to grow nut kernels in place of fruit stones (ll. 67, 116). Such ancient novelties likely attracted the nobility's interest: Spanish translators of *GSP* added that apples with a jewel core "look good" and guarantee "fun at big banquets".<sup>561</sup> The version of *GSP* in MS Brogyntyn II.1 suggests to "mark well the apple that you dyd put in the thyng what euer it be" to spare one a trip to the local barber-surgeon, presumably. While English gentlemen and women would likely have entertained similar ideas about banqueting as their Spanish peers, archaeobotanical evidence confirms that cucumbers, almonds, and peaches were imported rather than grown on their own estates.

There is, therefore, only a slim probability that Gottfried's northern readers actually performed his horticultural experiments before the invention of greenhouses. In fact, only one of Gottfried's instructions (which he supposedly learned from a knight) might have been executed successfully in England: grafting a medlar upon a hawthorn (ll. 240-3). Another of Gottfried's main feats is intensifying the colour of fruit. Presumably, owning a tree with sumptuously coloured fruit would allow orchardists to show off their skill, which subsequently reflected the affluence of their masters. Because the decidedly impractical nature of most of Gottfried's grafting instructions, nonetheless, it seems likely that a medieval gentleman (in the making) could enjoy the wonders of grafting without engaging in the activity—a kind of armchair arboriculture.

Moreover, the second half of *GSP* might also partly account for the popularity of the work, as it is concerned with the preservation of wine and dried fruits. The inclusion of recipes for restoring sour wine illustrates a thrifty attitude to this expensive product. Gottfried's tips for conservation also include recipes for time-consuming (and therefore expensive) confectionery, such as cherry, plum, and bullace sweetmeats (ll. 375-395). Similar to modern-day fruit leather or

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written on f. ii., which makes it unclear at what point both manuscripts were bound together as one codex.  
<sup>561</sup> Escayol, "Two Iberian Versions", p. 138.

*pâte de fruit*, these fruit-based sweets were served after dinners and used as a medicine. Moreover, Gottfried's section about "wyn most strong and most nobil" (ll. 479) underlines the association between the social status of his audience and the high-quality foods they desired. The treatise's focus on luxury items, such as almonds, seedless grapes and cherries, implies that its audiences would not be averse to a decadent dinner-table.

Like Palladius' original work, *GSP* also appealed to a scientific and intellectual readership. In most manuscript witnesses, the treatise is conjoined with another grafting tract compiled by the same Nicholas Bollard, who acted as Gottfried's Middle English translator. Fourteen manuscripts contain this highly organised work of science that is concerned with the astrological dimension of arboriculture, which is now known under the title *The Craft of Grafting*. It is possible that the Latin original of this tract functioned in a scholarly setting, as medieval universities included agriculture in its technical curricula (the *artes mechanicae*).<sup>562</sup> There is certainly an educational undertone to Bollard's Middle English treatise that is lacking from Gottfried's tract. Bollard's treatise is aimed at scholarly "experts", who are in turn encouraged to teach their newly obtained grafting knowledge to "borell clerkes" and "borell folk", inexperienced scholars and other persons.<sup>563</sup> According to Bollard, these novices must not be burdened with zodiacal calculations but simply familiarise themselves with grafting in due season: "And þat borell clerkes may vnderstande thies auctours [i.e. Aristotle's] wordes, let hem vnderstande hem thus, þat is to wyten for þe equinoccion of Somer let hem take ver and for þe equinoccion of wynter let hem take heruest".<sup>564</sup> By studying this text, young learners who understood the words for spring, 'ver', and autumn 'heruest' would learn the Latin term equinox, which would help them understand Aristotle's theory about planting.

Bollard's unique selling point seems to be the ages of the moon which tell when grafting is most profitable, as these are found in most copies of the text. Yet, astrological works were

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<sup>562</sup> See Elspeth Whitney, "Artes Mechanicae" in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* eds. F.A.C. Mantello, A.C. Rigg (Washington: CUA, 1996), 431-435, p. 432.

<sup>563</sup> Braekman, "Bollard", p. 30.

<sup>564</sup> Braekman, "Bollard", p. 30.

ubiquitous in late-medieval England, and some of them also cover the subject of grafting.<sup>565</sup> The Guild-Book of the Barber-Surgeons of York, for example, contains a zodiacal lunary which proffers the advice to plant trees when the moon is in the sign of Virgo or in Capricorn.<sup>566</sup> Bollard's text corroborates the idea that Virgo is especially good for planting all sorts of trees: the period between middle of September to the middle of December is an "open time for planting". Besides this, he offers more specific instructions: the time for planting *pepins* (either apples or grapes) is right when the moon appears in the sign of Tauro, and young trees will thrive in the signs of Cancer, Leo, and Libra.

Notably, several late-medieval manuscripts skip Bollard's astrological introduction and present only those parts of the treatise that are concerned with grafting and the days when it is best to do so. Two of the manuscripts, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 591 (215) and Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1. (2), add an altogether different introduction: "Here begynnyth a shorte tretice for a man to knowe wyche time of the yere hit is best to graffe or to plante treys and also to make a tre to bere all maner frute of diverys colourys and odwrys with many other thyngys".<sup>567</sup> This version of the text is apparently devoid of its scholarly purpose: it is not aimed at "borell clerks" but "a man". The directness of this introduction seems to indicate that the text was adapted for an audience that was less interested in astrology, and more likely to have a practical interest in grafting. However, manuscript evidence does not confirm this. For instance, MS Bodley 591, a manuscript that was compiled by a single scribe between ca. 1460 and 1480, has a strong focus on (women's) medicine and midwifery, but also astrology. It is possible that the manuscript was compiled by or for a barber-surgeon who used the grafting text for reference, perhaps on the medicinal properties of trees.

Moreover, the introduction in the Brogyntyn manuscript promises the arboricultural

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<sup>565</sup> See Braekman, "Bollard", p. 20.

<sup>566</sup> Irma Taavitsainen, "A Zodiacal Lunary for Medical Professionals", in *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England*, ed. Lister M. Matheson (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1994), pp. 295-6.

<sup>567</sup> MS Brogyntyn II.1., 28r.

enthusiast “all maner frute of diverys colourys and odwrys” and, besides this, “many other thyngys”. It conveys the idea that a man who knows how to graft holds the key to a cornucopia of aromatic and multicoloured fruit. Indeed, many of the instructions that feature in the abridged version of Bollard’s treatise, focus on the transformation rather than the propagation of fruit. Like Gottfried, who writes that his teacher, Mayster Richard, injected trees with tinted water so that their fruit would take on any colour, Bollard suggests dyeing fruit blue by inserting the painting pigment “asur of Almayne”, a ferrous oxide also known as Prussian blue, near the root of a tree. Apart from the twelfth-century Arabic agricultural writer Ibn al-‘Awwam, previously discussed in §1.2.ii, who wrote that this colouring technique was used on roses, no scientific literature confirms that the colour of fruit can be altered in this way.<sup>568</sup> As Prussian blue contains a cyanide compound, it rather sounds like a dangerous pursuit.<sup>569</sup> In addition, Bollard provides instructions for manipulating a single tree so that it brings forth “diuers frutys and diuers colourys and diuers sauourys to thy lykyng”. The chances of this experiment succeeding are slight, but not impossible when the right technique is used. Bollard describes a single tree that brings forth “diuers frutys and diuers colourys and diuers sauourys”, and chooses a cherry-tree as his rootstock, which is more likely to be compatible with scions of different fruit trees than an oak.<sup>570</sup> Yet the suspicion that the instructions are based on an awareness of compatibility are downplayed by the addition of “to thy lykyng”, which suggests that any graft will do.

Similar evidence is found in the writings of a fourteenth-century French bourgeois husband, also known as “le Ménagier de Paris”, who compiled a book of household tasks for his new wife (also known as *Le Ménagier de Paris*), that includes a set of grafting instructions. In his book, the husband states that his wife is to maintain the herb garden and take care of the arbour: “at the least you take pleasure and have some little skill in the care and cultivation of a garden,

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<sup>568</sup> A. Roach, “Plant Injection as a Physiological Method”, *Annals of Botany* 3:1 (1939): 155-229, p. 157.

<sup>569</sup> Leonardo da Vinci allegedly experimented in creating poisonous fruit by injecting the tree-trunks with arsenic, see Roach, “Plant Injection”, 157.

<sup>570</sup> Braekman, “Bollard”, 33.

grafting in due season and keeping roses in winter”.<sup>571</sup> One of the pieces of advice he gives her is to graft ten or twelve “divers fruits as [she] be minded to have” on the stem of an oak.<sup>572</sup> To be able to achieve this, however, more than “some little skill” is required: it would involve cleft-grafting the scions of twelve different trees onto a rootstock.<sup>573</sup> Yet, as an oak and fruit trees belong to different genera, this instruction is hardly realistic:<sup>574</sup> Mudge *et al.* define the rules for grafting as follows: “[b]roadly speaking, interclonal/intraspecific grafts are nearly always compatible, interspecific/intrageneric grafts are usually compatible, intrageneric/intrafamilial grafts are rarely compatible, and interfamilial grafts are essentially always incompatible”.<sup>575</sup> So, while intrageneric grafting is technically possible, the chances of this experiment succeeding would be highly improved if the *Ménagier* had opted for a species of *prunus* (stone fruit) as his rootstock. This would allow for an assortment of different almond, apricot, and plum cultivars to be grafted onto the same root. Though, perhaps, the *Ménagier*’s instructions for creating a tree that bears twelve different fruits was never to be taken literally by his young wife. Perhaps the husband was inspired by the aforementioned Tree of Life, that bore twelve different fruits,<sup>576</sup> and wrote his instructions with devotional intentions.<sup>577</sup> In any case, multi-grafted trees epitomise the problematic nature of medieval grafting instructions, in which theory and practice do not necessarily match.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Eileen Power, *The Goodman of Paris*, 33.

<sup>572</sup> Eileen Power, *The Goodman of Paris*, 33. “Le *Ménagier*” is known as a critical reader and it may seem surprising that he was not sceptical of the practice of grafting, as he added the note “this I do not believe” to a recipe for restoring colour in a faded dress (215). In the first century BCE, Varro already wrote that oaks are not compatible with pears, only with apples, see Mudge *et al.*, “A History of Grafting”, 455.

<sup>573</sup> Since 2011, artist and scientist Sam Van Aken has been developing trees that bear forty different types of fruit and nuts that ripen at different times of the year by means of cleft grafting, see *National Geographic*, “This Crazy Tree Grows 40 Kinds of Fruit” (video), *YouTube*, 21 July 2015. While he intended the tree to “transform reality” and “disrupt the everyday”, the positive comments underneath newspaper articles attests that the so-called Tree of 40 Fruit is generally thought to be awe-inspiring. See, for instance, “This One Tree Grows 40 Different Types of Fruit, Is Probably from The Future”, *The Huffington Post*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>574</sup> Oak only has a known compatibility with chestnut but the union is not a stable one, see Selime Ada and Engin Ertan, “Histo-cytological Study of the Graft Union of the Chestnut (*Castanea sativa* Mill)/Oak (*Quercus vulcanica* Boiss)”, *Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries* 2 (2013), 110-15.

<sup>575</sup> Ken Mudge, Jules Janick, Steven Scofield, and Eliezer E. Goldschmidt, “A History of Grafting”, *Horticultural Reviews* 35(2009): 437–93, 440.

<sup>576</sup> See Revelation 22:2.

<sup>577</sup> The husband knowingly refers to other biblical themes in his work, see Elizabeth Allen, *False Fables and Exemplary Truth in Late Middle English Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 27.

<sup>578</sup> It should be noted, however, that not all medieval sources promote intergeneric grafting: in John Trevisa’s 1398 translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus’ *De Proprietatibus Rerum* it can be read that “The beste is whan the graffe and the stocke ben lyke” (Book xvii ii l. 595), see *OED Online*, s.v. *graff* (n.<sup>1</sup>), available at

## 5.3 Manuscript networks of arboricultural literature

### 5.3.i Arboricultural treatises in late-medieval manuscripts

At least half the compilers of manuscripts that feature grafting texts, such as *Godfridus super Palladium*, Nicholas Bollard's treatise, and *Ion Gardener*, seem to have been primarily interested in the medical purposes of the treatises: information on herbs (*Ion Gardener*), wine- and vinegar-based remedies (*Godfridus*), and the uses of grafting to generate medicine from tree-resin (Bollard). As many medical texts are also concerned with astrology, the balance between the universe or macrocosm, and the human body as a microcosm, it is not surprising that Bollard's treatise, which forms a bridge between astrology, pomology, and medicine, is frequently included in medical manuscripts. For instance, Cambridge University Library Ee.1.13 (34) and Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. R.14.32 (23) both contain texts on uroscopy, the herbal *Agnus castus*, and a text on grafting. The fifteenth-century manuscript MS. R.14.32 is mostly copied in a single hand, and starts with a booklet containing an English translation of the alphabetical herbal *Agnus Castus*, ending with the lemma *zucarium* (sugar). Spaces have been left blank in between entries, which have later been added to by various scribes, also in Latin.<sup>579</sup> The second quire contains a tract on urine, the *Dieta Ypocras*, various notes on bloodletting and bodily health, a treatise against the pestilence, the making of ointment and extracts, an early recipe for an anaesthetic, fragments from Bollard's treatise, and the poem on rosemary. Lastly, the third part of the manuscript consists of the medical herbal *Circa Instans* and various scribbles.<sup>580</sup>

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<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80465> (accessed January 26, 2017).

<sup>579</sup> Linne R. Mooney, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist XI: Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, Brewer, 1995), 32.

<sup>580</sup> Mooney, *Index*, 32.



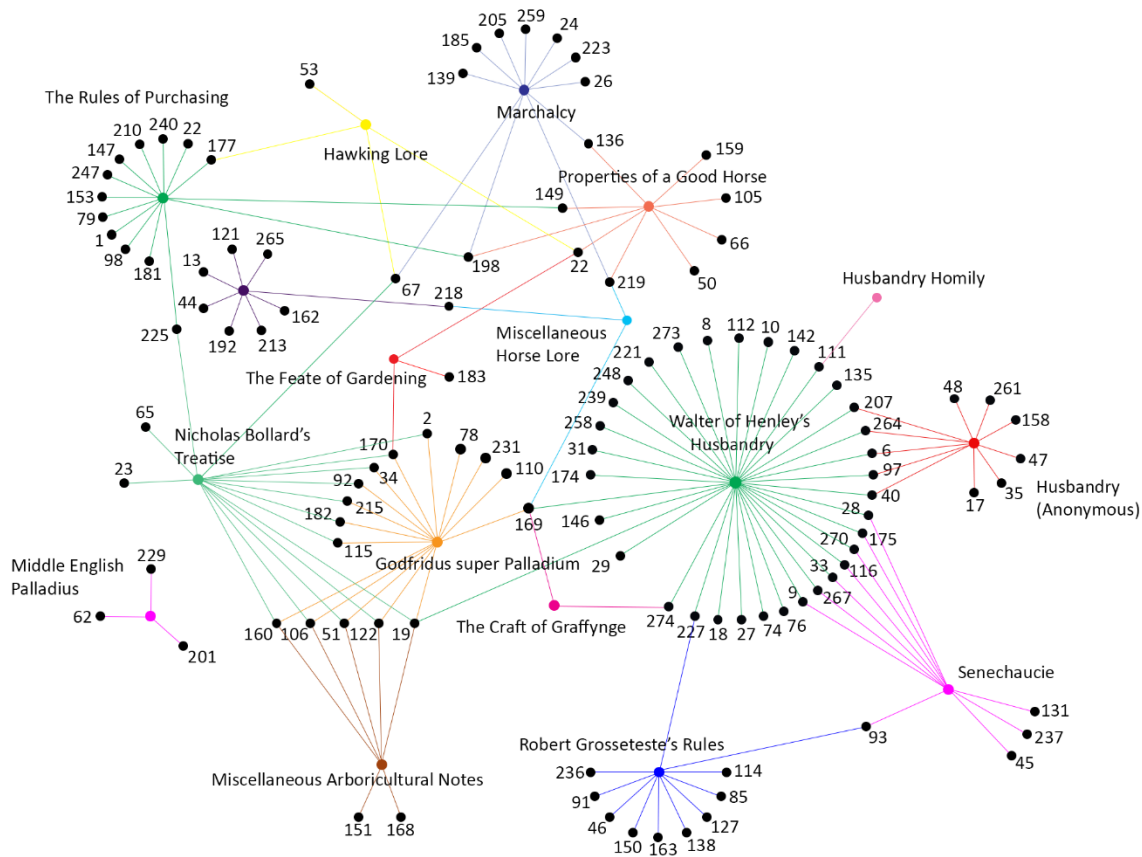


Figure 33: Colour-coded network showing connections between agricultural texts and other practical texts with a gentry interest.<sup>581</sup>

As visualised in Figure 33, another shared distribution exists between the treatises of Bollard and *Godfridus super Palladium* and various verse and prose tracts on the herb rosemary. In five manuscripts—Wellcome Library, MS 406 (183), Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 14.32 (23) and MS. O.1.13 (19), Sloane 7 (170) and Sloane 122 (160)—these works co-occur in different combinations. This widespread text on rosemary, which circulated both in a verse and a prose variant, is attributed to the friar Henry Daniel, who was also deemed responsible for the work on uroscopy that features in Oxford, Bodleian Library, e. Musaeo 116 (230). In addition, there seems to be a significant overlap between R.14.32 (23) and Sloane 7 (170).<sup>582</sup> On the basis that both

<sup>581</sup> Permalink to this image: <https://perma.cc/S4HY-7R2J>

<sup>582</sup> The contents of Sloane MS 7 are largely medical, such as texts on determining the colour of urine, and its inclusion of the poem on rosemary, fragments of the *Agnus castus* herbal, *Godfridus super Palladium* and *Ion Gardener*. According to Braekman, the scribe of this fourteenth-century manuscript has a tendency to condense the text of Bollard's treatise, see Braekman, "Bollard", 21.

manuscripts contain the text of Bollard, information on rosemary, and *Agnus Castus*, it is likely that both manuscripts were used by barber-surgeons, and that these texts belonged to a core group of physicians' manuals.

Further thematic connections can be observed between the manuscripts Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2), London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. viii (106), and Sloane 122 (160), as they all contain instructions for mixing coloured ink and bookmaking, and a fifth, Cambridge, University Library, Ee.1.13 (34) includes recipes for colouring garments among its alchemical texts. The mixing of colours is associated with limning or illuminating, which became a gentleman's leisure activity during the sixteenth century,<sup>583</sup> but is also associated with the duties of a noblewoman, as evinced by the recipes for pigments found in the manuscript known as the *Tollemache Book of Secrets*, compiled at the behest of the sixteenth-century noblewoman Catharine Tollemache, which also contains Nicholas Bollard's treatise, instructions for lace-making and hawking. Julia Boffey notes that the contents of this 'Book of Secrets' are notable for their "everyday usefulness" and considers it to be a household manuscript, but, as I will explain in §4.7, such books were also read for their esoteric interest.<sup>584</sup>

The section on limning in MS Brogyntyn II.1. (2) contains seventy-seven recipes, most of which are instructions for mixing pigments and tempering them, but there are five also instructions for dyeing linen, three for leather, two for lace, one for silk, and two for thread. While leather and thread are useful in bookbinding, it seems unlikely that they would have to be dyed for this purpose. Moreover, the other garments would have been too precious to be used in bookmaking. Rather, the text seems to focus on the dyeing of garments that are typically worn by women, for which we also find instructions in *Le Ménagier de Paris*. Alternatively, the compiler may have had an interest mixing gold and silver dyes: perhaps, possessing the formulae for these inks is just as high in esteem

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<sup>583</sup> See Katherine Coombs, "'A Kind of Gentle Painting': Limning in 16th-Century England", *European Visions: American Voices* (British Museum Research Publication 172, Section 3), pp. 77-84.

<sup>584</sup> Julia Boffey, "Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and Definitions of the Household Book" in A.S.G. Edwards and Ralph Hanna, eds., *British Library Studies in the History of the Book: English Medieval Books* (London: British Library, 200), pp. 124-134.

as actually making them.

In §4.4, I concluded that agricultural texts could also have served educational purposes, based on the combination of educational and agricultural interests found in gentry-owned manuscripts. However, the educational value of grafting texts is difficult to establish, partly caused by the opaqueness of compilation and usage phases in manuscripts containing grafting literature. For example, the contents of MS Harley 116 (115) suggest that this parchment manuscript may have served in an educational setting, as it opens with longer, educational texts: Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*, followed by Benedict Burgh's *Parvus Cato* and *Cato Major*, followed by moral instructions, a speculum text for "jofenes Dames" (young ladies), and several *memento mori* items. The latter part of the manuscript consists of *Godfridus super Palladium*, Lydgate's *Dietary*, medical recipes, and an epitaph of Guy of Warwick. According to Julia Boffey, the first part of this manuscript was used as a "single entity" in the early sixteenth century, characterised by the consistent application of quire signatures. The manuscript belonged to a John Kymbell of Ludwell, who gave the book to John Harrison on 9 August 1505.<sup>585</sup> A flyleaf contains the name of a certain surgeon named Tirell, and another owner mark of William Gygar, who lived during the reign of Henry VIII, is found elsewhere.<sup>586</sup> Boffey describes the manuscript as having "the air of a generally planned compendium of useful and improving material, possibly worked on simultaneously by a number of associated scribes".<sup>587</sup> There is a problem, as Boffey points out, in the "lack of quire signatures in the final gatherings of MS Harley 116[, which] suggests that the parts of the manuscript that deal with arboriculture and medicine (copied in part in a hand that appears nowhere else in the collection) were not conceived as part of the larger whole".<sup>588</sup> While there are many reader marks and doodles throughout the manuscript, the arboricultural texts do not contain any notes, so there is no way of telling whether it was actually studied.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> Boffey, "Short Texts", p. 74.

<sup>586</sup> Boffey, "Short Texts", p. 74.

<sup>587</sup> Boffey, "Short Texts", p. 75.

<sup>588</sup> Boffey, "Short Texts", p. 82.

<sup>589</sup> Dallachy, *Benedict Burgh*, Appendix, p. 73.

Multi-text manuscripts offer a reflection of the diversity of interests existing in a gentry household and their aspirations. For instance, culinary recipes are present in manuscripts BL, MSS. Sloane 122 (**160**), Sloane 442 (**168**), Add. 5467 (**92**), and Cotton Julius D. viii (**106**). The menu of a marriage banquet recorded in the Ramston manuscript (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.2.53) suggests that gentry families did, in fact, order exquisite meals for special occasions. However, the recipes included in the aforementioned manuscripts are associated with large banquets held at noble households, but it cannot be confirmed that they were used for actual entertainment or simply added out of aspiration. Sloane 442, for instance, is a paper manuscript dating from the fifteenth century containing four grafting instructions, two of which are concerned with choosing the best time for grafting, another instruction which teaches how to graft an oak upon an elm that will be green throughout the year,<sup>590</sup> and a piece of advice on accelerating the ripening of grapes.<sup>591</sup> In addition, the manuscript includes three banqueting menus which appear under the heading “for the knyghtys tabylle and for the kyngges tabylle”,<sup>592</sup> and an incipit that suggests that the cookery recipes were intended for a noble household or that the compiler of the manuscript was interested in reading about their banquet culture. The manuscript’s contents further reveal a medical interest: it includes a diagram of a vein man which complements a bloodletting tract and the Middle English translation of Gilbertus Anglicus’ *Compendium medicinae*. Overall, the selectivity of the grafting instructions seems to indicate that the compiler had the intention to use them for the improvement of his or her garden. It is, however, difficult to identify the compiler of this manuscript, although it does appear to point at a middle-class individual—possibly a physician. In addition, it is clear that MS O.1.13 (**19**), MS Peniarth 394D (**3**), Sloane 686 (**169**), and London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287 (**274**) are linked through a shared Middle English translation of *Walter of Henley*, as discussed

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<sup>590</sup> Grafting oak upon elm implies interfamilial grafting, which is not possible. As Mudge et al. discuss, the oak/elm combination can be traced back to Virgil, see “Grafting: Theory and Practice” in *Plant Propagation Concepts and Laboratory Exercises*, ed. Caula A. Beyl and Robert N. Trigiano (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2008), 273-292, p. 284.

<sup>591</sup> See Braekman, “Bollard”, p. 24.

<sup>592</sup> Marit Mikkelsen Talgø, *An Edition of the Fifteenth-century Middle English Cookery Recipes in London, British Library’s MS Sloane 442*, MA Thesis (University of Stavanger, 2015), 14. The author of this MA thesis suggests an Essex provenance on the basis of dialectal features, see p. 23.

in §3.2.ii. One of these manuscripts, MS 287, also contains *The Boke of Kerynge*, a courtesy text typically associated with gentry and mercantile audiences.<sup>593</sup>

### 5.3.ii *Arboricultural notations in late-medieval manuscripts*

Next to Gottfried von Franken and Nicholas Bollard's treatises, there are also miscellaneous practical instructions for grafting and associated horticultural practices to be found in late-medieval manuscripts. Recently, Stephen Shepherd proposed that an experienced grafter noted down instructions based on Bollard's text in a Wycliffite Bible, which is now catalogued as Dallas, Bridwell Library, MS 7. This fifteenth-century codex contains a Wycliffite New Testament as well as other religious materials. Extracts from both *Godfridus super Palladium* and Nicholas Bollard are added on the flyleaves of this manuscript, ff. 167v-167r.<sup>594</sup> On the basis of the Wycliffite materials, Shepherd suggests that the "manuscript could have served a collegiate or enclosed community in the period before the Dissolution".<sup>595</sup> He further notes that the order of the instructions differs from other known variants of *GSP* and Bollard. The scribe's selectivity, he argues, and "the manner of combination in the Bridwell text is also a likely witness to an immediacy of practical application rarely seen in the commonplace books and other compendia that typically preserve these kinds of texts".<sup>596</sup> Moreover, based on the different order and highly selective choices of the scribe, Shepherd infers "that the Bridwell scribe—an editorial eclecticist if ever there was one—was also an actual gardener".<sup>597</sup> However selective these notations may be, they still do not convincingly attest that the scribe was a seasoned gardener. The grafting notes on grafting elm upon oak do not imply "an immediacy of practical application" but, conversely, they can be related back to Virgil's grafting fictions. What the notations do suggest about its compiler is a thrifty attitude: his

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<sup>593</sup> Griffin, in *Instructional Writing*, argues that this manuscript served an aspirational, rather than utilitarian function, see pp. 48-53.

<sup>594</sup> Stephen Shepherd, "A Wycliffite Bible Possibly Owned by Sir Henry Spelman and Ole Worm", *Notes and Queries* 55.3 (2008), 269-273.

<sup>595</sup> Stephen H.A. Shepherd, "A Scribe-Grafter at Work: Middle English Horticultural Notes Appended to a Wycliffite New Testament", *Notes and Queries* (2016): 1-7, p. 5.

<sup>596</sup> Shepherd, "A Scribe-Grafter", p. 5.

<sup>597</sup> Shepherd, "A Scribe-Grafter", p. 5.

instructions for “a fayre gardyne without coste” are not found in other manuscripts.<sup>598</sup>

In addition, Braekman lists seven manuscripts containing notes pertaining to horticulture and pomology that are unique to their respective manuscripts: British Library, MSS Sloane 7 (**51**), Sloane 122 (**160**), and Sloane 442 (**168**), MS Harley 1785 (**122**), MS Royal 17 A xxxii (**151**), Cambridge, Trinity College MSS O.1.13 (**19**) and O.2.13 (**20**).<sup>599</sup> Instructions range from storing fruit and caring for apple trees in winter (MS O.2.13 and Royal 17 A xxxii) to an extensive addition to Gottfried’s advice on growing of gourds and melons (Cotton Julius D. viii). Where Gottfried and Bollard’s works explore the range of possibilities in horticulture, these independent shards of information are characterised by a utilitarian focus. In four manuscripts, Harley 1785, Sloane 122 and 686, and MS O.1.13, miscellaneous notes on horticulture appear alongside Gottfried’s and Bollard’s works, apparently to supplement these treatises.

For example, Trinity College, MS O.2.13, a paper volume that was compiled between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, contains quires of varying sizes that, together, constitute a repository of practical knowledge. The manuscripts comprises various medical, historical, and religious texts in both English and Latin, as well as fragments of the romance *Bevis of Hampton*, which were added on the flyleaf of the fourth quire.<sup>600</sup> The second quire contains a note on how to preserve cherries and plums in honey for Christmas,<sup>601</sup> and quires VI–VIII postdate the fifteenth century and focus on medicine and astrology. Because the fifth quire consists of a formulary for stewards of an estate, copied in the fifteenth century,<sup>602</sup> the manuscript appears to have circulated in a rural setting, and it is possible that it was once the possession of an estate-manager. Moreover, the inclusion of a romance and other material, such as the *Seven Sages of Rome* (also present in MSS **198**, **109** and **239** (in Welsh, see 3.3.ii) and instructions for tuning a lute (f. 97b) suggest a gentry

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<sup>598</sup> Shepherd, “A Scribe-Grafter”, p. 7.

<sup>599</sup> See Braekman, “Bollard”, pp. 23-26.

<sup>600</sup> Jennifer Fellows suggests that this excerpt has been jotted down from memory as the romance belonged to oral tradition, see “Bevis: A Textual Survey”, in *Sir Bevis of Hampton in Literary Tradition*, Jennifer Fellows, Ivana Djordević, eds., (Cambridge: Brewer, 2008), pp. 90-1.

<sup>601</sup> Fellows, “Bevis: A Textual Survey”, pp. 90-1.

<sup>602</sup> James, *Western Manuscripts*, p. 98.

ownership.

In addition, MS Sloane 122 seems to betray a utilitarian focus: it consists mostly of culinary recipes, but also features instructions for book illumination and mixing watercolours, as well as a short Latin text on the properties of rosemary, Nicholas Bollard's treatise, *John the Gardener*, and instructions for winemaking, Pseudo-Macer's herbal, astrological works, medical charms, and a text on stocking a dovecote.<sup>603</sup> The manuscript contains rules for speeding up the growth of fruit (for economic reasons, one would presume) and details the grafting of cultivars that are commonly found on British soil: vine upon vine, peach and plum on mulberry and vine, apple and pear on fig, apples on *rycardon*, *wardoun*, and quince; cherries on mulberry and sage; medlars upon brier rose, (wardon) pears on mulberry and quince, mulberries on pears and hawthorn. A tree bearing half apples and half pears is the most daring combination to be found in this manuscript, suggesting there were no hopes for a decorative wonder-tree in the garden of whoever added these instructions to Sloane 122. Because of its overbearingly practical nature, the grafting instructions in the Sloane manuscript would seem to have been copied out of a real interest in the practice of grafting. Still, except for the instructions to graft vine upon vine and different varieties of apple on an apple rootstock, none of the grafting combinations offered in this manuscript are viable. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the selection of additional grafting instructions was noted down by someone who had sourced them from personal experience.

The ending to Nicholas Bollard's treatise in Sloane 122 is notably different from the most common version of the treatise, such as the one that is present in Sloane 686, which concludes with the words "There is noo notable thing of this matere that is ne shewed in the furst and second particle, and therefore it is not to make here noo long therof. But every thing if it be wel doon wil bringe in and techen other". Bollard (or his scribe), evidently wishing to avoid repetition, refers his readers back to the first and second chapters. At the same time, his statement can be seen as a

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<sup>603</sup> In addition, the *Western Manuscripts* catalogue details that a remonstrance and petition to Charles II of the London cloth workers and dyers company was added in the seventeenth century, accompanied by continental medical discourses dating from the same century.

reflection of the process of learning in a broader sense: every instruction that has been executed well will bring to mind and enhance one's understanding of related practices. By contrast, the text in Sloane 122 concludes with an alternative statement. The reader is now advised to “bryng in the unlearned and theche hem”, strengthening the idea that Bollard's treatise may have also functioned as an educational text.

Practical ‘evidence’ of grafting also occurs in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.816, which contains a note on the best time to plant or graft, based on the “the opynone of Mr. Leonarde Dygges” (fol. 85). Leonard Dygges (ca. 1515-1559) was a scientist who published a series of books, including “explanations and instructions for predicting weather, times for planting, grafting, and bloodletting, tide tables, diagrams of the heavens”.<sup>604</sup> The note on planting was excerpted from *A Prognostication of Right Good Effect* (1555), a book of weather-lore and other tables for the diversion of “al maner men of vnderstanding”.<sup>605</sup> According to the Rawlinson catalogue, the manuscript was compiled between the years 1564 and 1569. A table of contents is prefixed, which states that some of the recipes “were takene owte of dyvers olde Englyshe bookes, and somme by late experyence provyd,” 1564. Furthermore, Rawlinson C.816 records the words of contemporary medical specialists and, therefore, the entry on planting and grafting was probably added because it was attributed to the physician Dygges. The sixteenth-century owner of the manuscript Thomas Butts (?1514-1592, possibly the son of William Butts, physician to Henry VIII), added the note “Probatum est, by late experyence”, which indicates that he tested the recipe himself.<sup>606</sup>

Evidence that gardening texts were sourced with practical use in mind presents itself in the form of two manuscripts: Stockholm, Royal Library MS Huseby 78 and BL, Harley 1785. The first is a fifteenth-century manuscript that contains several pieces of gardening advice with a culinary purpose. On f. 1v, we find information on “The maner to order all kynds of sallett herbes and

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<sup>604</sup> Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell, *A Companion to the Early Printed Books in Britain, 1476-1558* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), p. 139.

<sup>605</sup> Isla Fay, *Health and the City: Disease, Environment and Government in Norwich, 1200-1575* (York: Medieval Press, 2015), p. 125.

<sup>606</sup> Mooney, “Manuscript Evidence”, p. 188.



roottes”, which includes the advice that onion seeds and lettuce should be sown together, a practice known today as ‘companion planting’.<sup>607</sup> When the lettuce heads have been harvested, the text continues, one should sow *navet* (rutabaga or swede) seeds, and these *navets* can be harvested all winter. While turnips are now a common vegetable in Britain, they were uncommon in the Middle Ages. Huseby 78 offers further culinary advice on how to pair salads with certain fish and seafood at Lent, and after Easter with beef and mutton. On f. 2v we find another piece that further details what kind of seeds should be sown in the kitchen garden: it lists crops such as ‘winter celery’, ‘cowecoumbers’, ‘carret seedes’, ‘turnips’ (not attested before 1500), ‘summer savoury’, ‘spearwort’, ‘pymphiaux’, ‘gooseberry’ and ‘rocket’. The list seems unique to this manuscript, although there is a possibility that the text was based on a French exemplar, since the text contains several Francophone borrowings, such as ‘navet’ and ‘pymphiaux’. Unfortunately, beside the implication that the gardening advice would have benefited the culinary recipes in the manuscript, there is no indication that the owner of the manuscript grew cucumbers and navets.

Another manuscript with a horticultural focus, Harley 1785, is an octavo-sized parchment manuscript containing instructions on determining the age of the moon (f. 1) and a related table on f. 18v, as well as a statute for freeholders in the enclosed park at Waltham Forest. Directions for setting trees were added in 1485 (f. 17),<sup>608</sup> followed by *Godfridus super Palladium* (f. 20r), Nicholas Bollard’s treatise (f. 53v-54r), when to cut vines (f. 54r), notes on planting roses and a quickset hedge (typically made of hazel or hawthorn) on f. 54v, and further instructions inside the cover of the manuscript dedicated to lunar phases.<sup>609</sup> In addition, there is information about fish (f. 54v), when to sing prayers (f. 5v), the value of Spanish gold coins (f. 16r-v), and a memorandum on life and old age (f. 54v). The manuscript was owned by Robert Robinson, who was born in Lincolnshire

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<sup>607</sup> This technique is employed to fill in the spaces in between the thin onion leaves, which are prone to be overgrown by weeds.

<sup>608</sup> Braekman, “Bollard”, p. 25.

<sup>609</sup> H. Wanley and R. Nares, *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts, in the British Museum. With Indexes of Persons, Places, and Matters* (London: British Museum, 1808), p. 227.

in 1454 and apprenticed in London in 1470.<sup>610</sup> Archival records evince that Robinson worked in London as a fishmonger and merchant, which corroborates the notes from his hand concerning fish.<sup>611</sup> It is likely that Robinson owned the manuscript through most of his adult life, as he made a note concerning his 78th birthday in 1532 on f.55v. The manuscript was probably also owned by Henrycus Cane or Cave who copied his name on f. 56; perhaps, this owner also took an interest in gardening as he decorated his own name with flowers (see Figure 34, below). Possibly, it was Henry who drew what appears to be a grafted tree on the first flyleaf (see Figure 35, below). This tree displays an array of several different leaves (a heart-shaped variety that looks like a linden-tree, and a leaf that looks ever so slightly oak-like), flowers (possibly a thistle or a poppy boll), and indeterminate buds. In addition, there is a branch that has been cut off at an angle that resembles the way in which scions are cut for grafting. Written underneath the tree are four lines of an instruction for fertilising vines in February and April.<sup>612</sup>

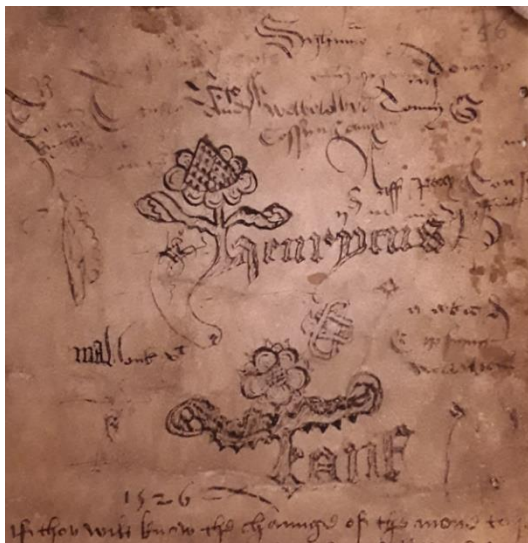


Figure 34: Owner mark of Henrycus Cane

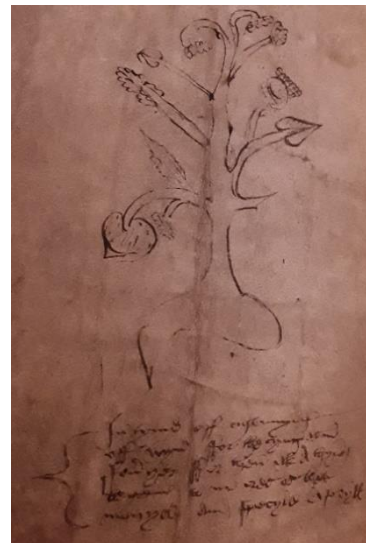


Figure 35: Tree drawn on the first flyleaf of Harley 1785

A final striking example of the horticultural interests of an Early Modern gardening enthusiast are

<sup>610</sup> Julia Boffey, “Short Texts in Manuscript Anthologies: The Minor Poems of John Lydgate in Two Fifteenth-Century Collections”, in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols, Siegfried Wenzel (Michigan: UP, 1996), 69-82, p. 73.

<sup>611</sup> National Archives, Record No. C 241/250/8.

<sup>612</sup> Those parts of the text that are legible may be transcribed as “In tyme off enstruyng / off vynes for the ?yng ?mon / feuyeryer ffor then ilk a thyng / be genne to ?worde as that / ?manye and specyle apryll”.

preserved in MS Royal 17 A xxxii (151), a manuscript containing, among other items, recipes for herbal cures and veterinary charms.<sup>613</sup> The flyleaves contain Latin words, possibly scribbled by a 3 schoolboy, and further owner marks of John Rice, who noted that the manuscript had cost him XXVd (twenty-five pence). Furthermore, it contains notes on apple-trees and cabbages, which were probably made by one of the manuscript's sixteenth-century owners, Henry Dingley of Charlton, near Crophorne in Worcestershire. Dingley or Dyneley, as he sometimes spells his name, was born around 1515 and died in 1589, and was Sheriff of Worcestershire twice, in 1553 and 1568. His whereabouts are confirmed both in archival records and several annotations of his hand are found in four manuscripts, which all share a medical and botanical interest: Wellcome Library, MS 244 (187, later owned by Henry's son Francis),<sup>614</sup> Wellcome Library, MS 5262, MS Royal 17 A xxxii (151), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 506 (249). Dingley also owned printed books, as his name is found in a copy of Leonhart Fuchs, *De historia stirpium* (1542),<sup>615</sup> and William Bullein's *A Newe Booke Entituled the Gouvernement of Health* (1558) which also contains the name of Dingley's son, George.<sup>616</sup>

The Dingleys are an example of a parish gentry family whose influence was increased through advantageous marriage. The earliest owner of the family's seat, Charlton Manor in Crophorne, was Thomas Dingley, who married a member of the influential Throgmorton family.<sup>617</sup> As the interior of the St. Michael's Church in Crophorn attests, the Dingley family were the most influential family of the parish. Henry Dingley's son Francis (Fraunces) was the Sheriff of Worcestershire in 1597, and his son Edward in 1637, is commemorated by a colourful stone

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<sup>613</sup> These were "tawhte by Hugh Bromfeld, ferrouer", i.e. a shoer of horses or veterinarian, see the *Catalogue of Royal MSS*, digitised by and available on the website of the British Library.

<sup>614</sup> This drawings which Dingley added to this manuscripts present him as an inventor of medical implements. Moreover, he claims to have tested the medicinal recipes in his book: "Wheresoever ye see this carecter HD stand in the margent of this my boke agaynst any medycine, oyle, oyntment...within this boke that have I Henry dineley prouyd withoute dowte and no other have I myself prouyd".

<sup>615</sup> This printed book is kept at the Folger Shakespeare Library under call number 245-323f.

<sup>616</sup> See Helen King, *The Disease of Virgins: Green Sickness, Chlorosis and the Problems of Puberty* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 24, 131, 144.

<sup>617</sup> Not to be confused with the Thomas Dingley (1506-1539) who almost caused the death of George Throckmorton in the sixteenth century, and was consequently convicted with treason and executed.

effigy which shows him and his wife Elizabeth with their hands folded as if in eternal prayer, and their nineteen children around the base of the tomb. His grandson and heir, Edward Dingley, is also a prominent presence in the church: his grave monument depicts him and his wife Joyce knelt down in prayer before a prie-dieu with their children depicted underneath.

Dingley was an affluent book-buyer who did not treat his printed books any different from his manuscripts, as he wrote various notes and addenda in them. On the flyleaf of Fuchs' herbal Dingley wrote that he bought it for seven or eight "poundes of oure mony of Ynglonde" at St. Paul's Churchyard in 1550, which at that time was the epicentre of the international book trade in Britain.<sup>618</sup> Seven pounds is a fairly hefty sum of money; if Dingley had taken it to Smithfield Fair, just a little to the north of St. Paul's, he would have been able to buy himself a good horse.<sup>619</sup> Evidently, Dingley took pride in his book ownership, or he would not have noted the cost of his latest purchase.<sup>620</sup> Underneath the note is a charm for treating the bite of a mad dog: "writ thes wordes foloinge upon a pece of chese and gyfe it to men woman or best / aribus alibus Rivos Rivas opulusque". This instruction is a version of a medieval charm consisting of a sequence of pseudo-Latin nonse-words: *quare uare brare arabus arabris albus abbris rew few*.<sup>621</sup> The charm is exemplary of Dingley's interest in medical recipes and charms: the Royal and Rawlinson manuscripts also contain a number of charms, and Dingley added a recipe for *flos unguentorum* to the latter manuscript, a panacean ointment that was reputedly revealed to a German recluse by an Angel sent by Christ.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> Frank Arthur Mumby, *Publishing and Bookselling* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974).

<sup>619</sup> 5 pounds in 1550 equates to ca. £1,373 in 2017, according to the National Archives currency converter (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>)

<sup>620</sup> Dingley wrote the following testimony of his ownership in his copy of Fuchs' herbal: "I henry dyngley dyd bye thys Bok yn pollys churche yarde yn the yere of owre lorde god: 1550: The :26: daye of October andd hy dyd coste me :vij?: poundys of owre mony of ynglonde and I have wryten thys for a wytnes that I henry dyngley am the trew owner of thys boke or herbealle :: Yet thynke and thanke god for nowe thys sythe henry dyngley of Charleton yn the cowntey of woster and yn the perryse of crapethorne: Esquyer." See Fuchs, *De historia stirpium* (Folger Library, 245-323f), back endleaf 3r. In addition, Dingley used the same phrase, "Yet thynke and thanke god", in a note he added to British Library, MS Royal 17 A xxxii: "Yet thynke and thanke god: for now thys quod Henry Dyneley: Anno nato Christo :1560: The :XXII: daye of Ffebruary: yn the seconde yere of owre soverayne lady Quene Elyzabeth RH" on f. 119r.

<sup>621</sup> For an elaboration on this type of charm, see Karen Stollznow, *Language Myths, Mysteries, and Magic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>622</sup> Recipes for the ointment were popular in the sixteenth century, and circulated in books such as Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1389 (which notably contains the same list of perilous days as MS Huseby 78). This late fifteenth-century manuscript was owned by William Aderston, a London surgeon. However, not all of the contents of Aderston's manuscript were intended for practical use, see the blog post "But does it work? Playful magic and the question of a

Judging from Henry Dingley's manuscript ownership it is likely that he was a Catholic (possibly a recusant, since he seems to have kept his faith after the Reformation); his grandson Henry, however, was outspoken against recusancy and petitioned to the Justices of the Peace to prevent "unlawful" assemblies by the "recusants who daily increase" in his parish.<sup>623</sup> One of the manuscripts owned by Henry Dingley (the elder), MS Wellcome 5262, is notable for its many depictions of saints, which were censored by later protestant readers. As Sarah Läseke notes, the censors of this manuscript target the Catholic contents, including charms and depictions of saints. One of the most offensive texts appears on "on folio 39r, in the form of a variation on the 'Flum Jordan' charm, a common charm used to stop bleeding". As Läseke notes, it "must have reeked of Catholic superstition to post-reformation readers" and was therefore "crossed out, along with two more examples of charms of this kind in the manuscript".<sup>624</sup> These alterations must have taken place after Henry Dingley's ownership; after all, Dingley owned multiple manuscripts containing charms that were not censored, and he copied a charm himself sometime in the 1550s. There is even a suggestion that Dingley protected his own writings from the eyes of others: on one of the flyleaves of Fuchs' herbal *De historia stirpium*, Dingley copied a ciphering key, explaining to his reader (or himself) the reason for using cryptography: "Wryte in suche sorte as [s]elve me shalle rede yt: and by the table and wrytte ye may wryt and also reede yt when the moste parte of lerned schale not".<sup>625</sup> The note seems to betray a certain provocation against the "lerned", who will not be able to read what Dingley has to write—yet, I have not found evidence that Dingley used his ciphering key in any of the surviving manuscripts with Dingley's user mark.

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recipe's purpose" written by Melissa Reynolds for *The Recipes Project*, published 24 January 2019 (<https://recipes.hypotheses.org/14220>).

<sup>623</sup> The Quarter Sessions Rolls of the Justices of the Peace record the following entry: "Petition of Henry Dingley of Hanley Castell Gentle-man to the Justices of the Peace praying them to call on the Churchwardens and Constables of Hanley Castle to lay open and prevent the great abuses done there on Sabbath days and especially the great riot and unlawful assembly on Sunday last being Whit Sunday by forty persons at least many of them being recusants who daily increase in the said Parish", see *Worcester County Records: The Quarter Sessions Rolls Part I*, ed. John Willis Bund (Worcester: E. Bayliss, 1899), pp. 115-6.

<sup>624</sup> See Sarah Läseke, "In the Margins: Reading a Fifteenth Century Medical Manuscript", a blog post written for *Beyond Borders*, published 8 July 2013, available at [http://beyondborders-medievalblog.blogspot.com/2013/07/in-margins-reading-fifteenth-century\\_8.html](http://beyondborders-medievalblog.blogspot.com/2013/07/in-margins-reading-fifteenth-century_8.html).

<sup>625</sup> Ciphering recipes was common during the later middle ages, but its practice seems to have been concentrated in medieval England, see Clarke, *Lymmyng*, lxii.

While little is known about the daily occupation of Henry Dingley,<sup>626</sup> his book collection has thus far shown him to be a keen (amateur) botanist and book collector of above-average means. That Dingley also actively engaged with the contents the books he bought is attested by his annotations in Fuchs' *De historia stirpium*. The herbal features large woodcut images of plants with their Latin and German names, many of which Dingley supplied with an English plant name and additional information. For example, Dingley identifies the *viola tricolor* as 'pansy' or 'love-in-idleness', and describes fennel as "an erbe well-knownen".<sup>627</sup> Moreover, Dingley's familiarity with a wide range of wild plants is attested by his notations on finding places. On the subject of roses, for instance, he added: "The reed rose the which is well knownen of / And the sweet brier the whiche dothe growe at cracum hylle and in one *place* in the bytte hegge in gret plenty".<sup>628</sup> This note refers to Craycomb Hill near Fladbury, a peak overlooking the river Avon that was close to Dingley's estate. Moreover, Dingley notes the presence of a large plant, a water dock, close to home, which he deems particularly impressive: it "growithe by the river of Aven in many places it is a myghti great docke the levis wilbe halfe a yarde longe & longer many tymes".<sup>629</sup>

Dingley's observations, moreover, extend beyond his direct environment, as the note next to the woodcut of *Angelica sativa*, or wild celery, attests: "I did see thys growe at adyngeton in the parsons garden / of whom I had some sedes and I dyd sowe yt in my garden at my howse of Charleston where as yt dyd grow very fayre".<sup>630</sup> Dingley was so keen on obtaining the seeds of this plant that he allowed himself to knock on the door of the parsonage. It is likely that Dingley was personally acquainted to the parson of Addington since, at one point, Dingley probably lived in Addington, or took up temporal residence there, as MS Trinity College Cambridge O.8.35 contains the following note: "Henri. Dyngley anno xpī 1554 et anno Philippi et Marie primo et secundo

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<sup>626</sup> The Wellcome Library catalogue refers to the Visitation of Worcester, which records that Dingley enrolled into St. Edmund Hall in Oxford in January 1594/5 at the age of 13.

<sup>627</sup> Fuchs, *De historia stirpium* (Folger Library, 245-323f), p. 501. Available digitally at <https://staging.miranda.folger.edu/mirador/fdea8272-476f-4412-869b-817b43cf3c0e>

<sup>628</sup> Fuchs, *De historia stirpium* (Folger Library, 245-323f), p. 657.

<sup>629</sup> Fuchs, *De historia stirpium* (Folger Library, 245-323f), p. 461.

<sup>630</sup> Fuchs, *De historia stirpium* (Folger Library, 245-323f), p. 124.

vicesimo secundo die Marcii [at Adyngetoon in buckingegamshire]”.<sup>631</sup> Moreover, the Wellcome MS that was once owned by Dingley contains further notes on gardening, such as: “Anno Domini 1592 Died all the Baye trees in Englande above ground but reuiued at the Rootes for the most parte whereof I had twooe in my gardeyn”, and “Anno Domini 1598 no fructe, Apples nor peares” illustrate he was a practicing tree-grower.<sup>632</sup> Since these notes post-date Henry’s lifetime, it is possible that his son Francis, who owned the manuscript after him, inherited his father’s love for gardening. Dingley’s active gardening is also evinced by one of the manuscripts he owned: when Mooney inspected MS Rawlinson C. 506,<sup>633</sup> as previously discussed in Chapter 2.2, it still contained “leaves, strings, stems, seeds, and chaff from plants gathered and pressed between its pages”.<sup>634</sup> Besides gardening, the manuscript also contains an exhaustive collection of recipes for dyes and coloured inks, gilding books and fabric, which purports that the reader may learn how to dye “withowt techyng of all that longyth thertoo”.<sup>635</sup> Overall, Dingley’s manuscript collection illustrates that sixteenth-century gardeners did own and use medieval manuscripts with a horticultural focus, but not always to derive practical information from them. Dingley mainly used his manuscript to preserve plants for botanical study, both in the form of written observations and dried specimens. While he did engage with other texts he owned, the absence of direct interaction with the grafting texts seems to suggest that this Early Modern botanist did not find a practical use for them.

#### 5.4 Printed grafting treatises

As the previous paragraphs have shown, viewing grafting treatises as a straightforward genre of practical literature is inherently problematic. Printed sources, in particular, are more overt in the

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<sup>631</sup> See James, *Western Manuscripts*, p. 436.

<sup>632</sup> Description retrieved online from S.A.J. Moorat, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library* (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1962-1973).

<sup>633</sup> Keiser notes that “the text of the equine treatise in this manuscript closely resembles that of Cambridge, University Library, Ll.1.18 that it seems safe to assume a common exemplar, or very closely related exemplars, and similarities in dialect permit us to suppose that the two copies were made in the same geographical region”, i.e. the north-east of England, see Keiser, “Practical Books”, p. 482.

<sup>634</sup> Mooney, “Scientific and Utilitarian Texts”, p. 198.

<sup>635</sup> Mark Clarke, ed. *The Crafte of Lymnyng and The Maner of Steynyng: Middle English Recipes for Painters, Stainers, Scribes, and Illuminators* (Oxford: UP, 2016), p. lx.

relation between the cultivation of trees and one's identity. For example, a translation of Cicero's *Cato Maior de senectute* (also known as *Tully on Old Age*), which left William Caxton's workshop in 1481, demonstrates how purveying agricultural knowledge is viewed as a leisure activity for older gentlemen. The index lists chapters on the benefits of studying at an old age, followed by a chapter that discusses "How Caton commendeth labourage in tylling sowing londe and setting of trees and how old age delyteth in lyke thynges", which is succeeded by "A good Nota why aged men plante and graffen trees". Contrary to the Latin original, which contains a brief paragraph about horticulture and grafting,<sup>636</sup> the English translation contains several paragraphs that explicitly relate the enjoyments of agriculture for the elderly. The target market for this text is clearly not retired peasant farmers; rather, it is aimed at the bourgeoisie and gentry, as becomes evident when the speaker presents agricultural occupations as preferred alternatives for the outdoor sports practised by younger member of these social groups:

A man may namely thenk to be come more riche and more delectable by that occupacyon [i.e. tillage] / than by a besyness or a werk which is superfluyous vayne and ydill/ That is to will by hawking fowling of bryddes and hunting of wilde bestis which belongith vnto yong men.

As the narrator announces, he has "much to speke of the delites & pleasurs that olde men haue / in knowing, vsyng, & hawntyng the labourages of londes".<sup>637</sup> In the following section, he honours this promise in vivid detail:

the thyngys & werkys & besynesse of laboureres of the lands & feeldes be gladsome & pleasaunt not oonly by thencreces of whetyes & cornys, nor by the medowes full of gras nor by the vynes full of grapes nor by dyuers smale & yong trees bryngyng forth fruytes / But also the thynges & the werkys of the labourers be gladsome & delectable, by the gardeynes full of dyuers herbys floures & seedys, by the curtilages gardyns & orchards planted & greffed with dyuers trees, &

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<sup>636</sup> Cicero's Latin reads "*Nec vero segetibus solum et pratis et vineis et arbustis res rusticae laetae sunt, sed hortis etiam et pomariis, tum pecudum pastu, apium examinibus, florum omnium varietate. Nec consitiones modo delectant, sed etiam insitiones, quibus nihil invenit agri cultura sollertius*", which translates as "Nor does the farmer find joy only in his cornfields, meadows, vineyards, and woodlands, but also in his garden and orchard, in the rearing of his cattle, in his swarms of bees, and in the infinite variety of flowers. And not only does planting delight him, but grafting also, than which there is nothing in husbandry that is more ingenious" see Cicero, *De Senectute*, chapter XV, translated by W. A. Falconer in *On Old Age. On Friendship. On Divination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1923), pp. 66-7.

<sup>637</sup> *STC* 5293, *EEBO* scanned image no. 48.



by the norisshyng & feeding of bestis in faire grene medowes & pastures / & by the hyues of bees keypyng & norisshing of them whiche makyn wax & hony, by the dyuersitee of all flours & of dyuers colours of roses. And not olde men haue delectacyon of the trees that they sette/ or that they doo to be sette, but also they deliten themsilf to sett a tree/ & graffe it vpon another, which is the most subtile & most artificiall thyng that euir was founde by labourers of the londe.<sup>638</sup>

The repeated use of the adjective ‘diverse’ in this fragment heightens a sense of abundance, while ‘delight’ and ‘delectacyon’ in agricultural labour is hailed as the ultimate achievement for the elderly. To be sure, grafting is praised as the most ingenious and ‘subtile’ (sophisticated) of all forms of rural delight, and the speaker goes on to recommend a list of orchard trees: oils (olives or nuts for oil-production), pomegranates, oranges, figs, dates, almonds, cedar apples, peaches, apples, pears, quinces, medlars, and chestnuts. It is striking that this list of fruits does not appear in Cicero’s original tract. The text, moreover, states that the list of fruits are derived from “the studye and diligent occupacyon of a good labourer in the londe”, but it seems to have been derived from a tract of Mediterranean origin or styled as such. The English text does not offer any further information on these particular fruit trees, so readers must look elsewhere to source the necessary material. More information on some (but not all) of these exotic trees could be obtained from the grafting tracts that circulated in manuscripts, as printed tracts on grafting were not yet available in 1481. Shortly after the first publication of *On Old Age*, Wynkyn de Worde seems to have sensed a market for such works, as the first run of *The Crafte of Graffying and Plantynge of Trees* left his Antwerp printing house around 1505.<sup>639</sup>

Channeling Cicero’s idealisation of grafting in *On Old Age*, Fitzherbert in his *Boke of Husbandry* states that growing fruit is not just necessary and profitable, but also a husbandman’s delight:

It is necessary, profitable, and also a pleasure, to a husbände to haue peeres, wardens, and

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<sup>638</sup> *STC*, 5293, *EEBO* scanned image no. 46.

<sup>639</sup> *STC*, 5952.5.

aples of dyuers sortes. And also cheryes, filberdes, bulleys, dampsons, plummes, walnuttes, and such other. And therefore it is conuenient to lerne how thou shalt graffe.<sup>640</sup>

Likewise, a Dutch tract on grafting known as *Een Nyewe ende Profijtelycke Plantboecxken*, published in 1538, states the reasons for uniting foreign trees as gratifying, desirable, and pleasant to the gentleman.<sup>641</sup>

First, one must plant various kinds of trees. For every sensible husband who minds his food, provision, and necessities orders, fully diligent, that such trees will be brought to him, indeed often from far and foreign lands. [...] When these trees are planted and set desirably in a strict order, this will delight people to a great extent.<sup>642</sup>

The attraction of printed grafting texts can be further illustrated by a French tract printed ca. 1486, which raises the suspicion that it was printed for its novelty value. The booklet titled *La maniere de enter & planter en iardins plusieurs choses bien estranges*, “the manner of grafting and planting an assortment of strange things”,<sup>643</sup> is based on the work of Pietro de Crescenzi, and includes several facetious grafting combinations, such as mulberry and vine, gooseberry and cherry, cherry and sage, *Ribes* and hawthorn, apples and pears, and roses with holly. The first edition of *La Maniere* dates from 1488, and the work was subsequently reprinted by different printing houses in 1490, 1492, 1495, 1496, 1510, 1520, and 1528; hereafter, it was expanded and reissued until 1550.<sup>644</sup> Ambrosoli has discussed that several annotators engaged with the contents of these vernacular adaptations of De Crescenzi’s work: for example, an early sixteenth-century reader notes how he obtained positive

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<sup>640</sup> Fitzherbert, *Boke of Husbandry*, p. 60v.

<sup>641</sup> In Middle Dutch: “hoemen vreemde op vreemde tsamen brengen sal”, see Braekman, *Horticultuur*, p. 102.

<sup>642</sup> “Lieuue gonstige Leser, wt alle voorscreuen oorsaken ist openbaer: hoe wel een yeghelijcke potinghe oft intinghe beter is van gelijk in gelijk, so gheluket nochtans ooc in onghelijcke gelijk alst vertelt is. Ende daeromme wie dat dat oeffenen wille ende menigerhande beproeuen, die mach veel wonders sien ende doen. | Wat dinck dat biden boomen grote ghenuechte, lust, ende playsant maect. | Ten eersten datmen menigerhande sorten van boomen plante. Want een yeghelijck rechtsinnig hysuader, die op zijn voedsel, neeringhe ende nootdrufte acht heeft, die bestelt met alder neersticheyt dat hem alsulcke boomen ghebracht worden, ja oock dickwils wt verre ende vreemde landen ... Wanneer die boomen fijn chierlijcken, in een recht ordinancie, ghepoot ende gheset worden, dat verhuecht ende verfraeyt oock die menschen wter maten zeer.” See Braekman, *Horticultuur*, 103. Translation my own.

<sup>643</sup> See Braekman, *Horticultuur*, p. 24.

<sup>644</sup> Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby, Alexander Wilkinson, eds.) *French Vernacular Books / Livres vernaculaires français: Books Published in the French Language before 1601* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 441-2. For the reprinted version, see Ambrosoli, *Wild and Sown*, p. 79.

results of grafting blackthorn on cherry or willow, and growing fruit without stones.

Conversely, a late-sixteenth century reader of the work crossed out sections of the text and disagreed with the notion that the phases of the moon were of influence on the growing of vines, and disputed that stoneless cherries could be grown.<sup>645</sup> Another reader's marks on a fifteenth-century copy of this work suggest engagement with another aspect of the text: a prayer for successful planting and growing of trees.<sup>646</sup> This reader drew a line in the right margin of this particular section of the text, possibly as a finding device. The Latin prayer which it highlights, is translated below:

Item if you want to plant or graft well, say the following:

In the name ✠ of the father and the son and the holy spirit amen. Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth [*Genesis 1:28*]. Pater noster [*Lord's Prayer*]. Ave maria [*Hail Mary*]. Et ne nos [*Lord's Prayer*]. Sed Libera [*Lord's Prayer*]. Domine exaudi orationem meam. Et clamor meus [*Psalms 142*]. Oratio.

God the Holy Spirit who gives growth to all creatures, grant, we beseech thee, that that which we plant or establish in your name may gain strength, multiply, and bear fruit; [and] that the efforts of the faithful may avail. Through Christ our Lord.<sup>647</sup>

Essentially, saying this prayer aloud is similar to a performative invocation or a charm. It is comparable, for instance, to a well-known charm for crop protection, which appears in the Vitellius Psalter (London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E.xviii, ff. 15v-27-16r/8) and involves the *Pater Noster* being written on a cross made of sticks.<sup>648</sup> Likewise, the reader of *La Maniere* has to perform a ritual: the printed sign of the cross (✠) indicates that one has to cross oneself while saying parts of the Pater Noster, a Hail Mary, part of a psalm and the Oratio, successively. To my knowledge, this sequence

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<sup>645</sup> Ambrosoli, *Wild and Sown*, p. 80.

<sup>646</sup> The printed tract is catalogued as Bibliothèque Nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RES-Z-2755.

<sup>647</sup> *In nomine ✠ patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen. Crescite & multiplicamini: et replete terram. Pater noster. Ave maria. Et ne nos inducas in temptationem. Sed libera a nos a malo. Domine exaudi orationem meam. Et clamor meus ad te veniat. Oratio. Spiritus sancte deus qui omnium creature crementum dedisti: concede quesumus ut hoc quod in nomine tui plantamus aut instituimus conualescat multiplicet & fructificet: ut ad utilitatem fidelium proficiat. Per christum dominum nostrum iesum christum filium tuum que tecum vivit et regnat in unitate spiritus sancti deum. Per omnia secula. Seculorum Amen.* (Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, FC070, ca. 1496).

<sup>648</sup> Karen L. Jolly in Karkov, et. al., *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), p. 68.

of prayers is non-standard and seems to have been specifically drawn up for this treatise. In addition, the inclusion of God's blessing from Genesis 1:22 ("Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" also repeated in Genesis, 1:28), is not typically found in prayers. Curiously, also, is the fact that the role of speaker is inversed: God is no longer the agent, but the grafter, who assumes the role of creator through the act of planting a tree. As Steven Epstein has detailed, premodern people did not distinguish between the "agency of Nature" and the "hand of Providence": praying and saying charms could improve the weather or crop yields, just as much as newly acquired grafting and agricultural skills would.<sup>649</sup> The lessons provided by the study of Nature were "never as concise and lucid as the commandments of Providence"—the moral lessons people did extract from the natural world were, Epstein argues, "were the ones they, and not God, had placed there".<sup>650</sup> In other words, learning the technique of grafting meant learning that Nature could be improved, and that this was part of Providence. Thus, it is unsurprising that works on agricultural improvements are always built inside a moral framework: in the end, Nature is viewed as subordinate to Providence.

Unlike *La Manière*, grafting treatises are rarely featured as the sole subject of a printed book and, as such, their compilation resembles that of multi-text manuscripts. For example, William Copland's 1563 reprint of De Worde's *Craft of grafting* features a grafting text that is supplemented by four other items: a health regimen on the relation between the four elements, the seasons of the year, and the four humours, followed by a note on canicular days and a brief explanation of land measurement. All of these texts were seemingly lifted from Richard Arnold's *Chronicle*, also known as *The Customs of London*, (ca. 1503), a multi-text book compiled by a merchant who travelled between England and the Low Countries. Keiser presumes that the same treatises were also part of an earlier, now lost, quarto edition of *The craft of grafting and planting of trees* that was printed in Antwerp ca. 1505.<sup>651</sup> The continuous reprinting of these texts makes one wonder about the

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<sup>649</sup> Steven A. Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature* (Cambridge: UP, 2012), p. 188.

<sup>650</sup> Epstein, *The Medieval Discovery of Nature*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>651</sup> Keiser, "Practical Books", p. 490.

selection process. Why, for instance, did Copland's printing house include information on personal health and land measurement, while the recipe for stain remover, which features in between the health and measuring texts in Arnold's *Chronicle*, was left out? There are also other, perhaps more relevant texts in the *Chronicle*, such as recipes for wine, beer, and vinegar, and a trick for growing parsley in the space of a single hour, that would seem more compatible with the grafting text. Despite having access to a back-catalogue that was arguably larger than the average gentry individual, printers such as Copland evidently employed similar compilatory techniques to produce printed equivalents of multi-text manuscripts.

Several Early Modern printers in Britain produced treatises on the subject of grafting under the title *A booke of the arte and maner, howe to plant and graffe all sortes of trees* until 1640, when the title changed to *The country-mans recreation, or the art of planting, graffing, and gardening in three books*, demonstrative of the social esteem associated to the art of arboriculture.<sup>652</sup> Both Arnold's *Chronicle* and *The craft of grafting* contain slightly adapted versions of *GSP* and Bollard's treatise. Whereas Bollard uses cross-references and advises to choose grafts of the right thickness in order to graft diverse fruits on one stem ("And doo this with pratike and with cunningg of the furst said chapitre"),<sup>653</sup> the *Chronicle*, on the other hand, advises its readers to trust their own good reason: "as thy reson will telle thee in the working".<sup>654</sup> Furthermore, the Arnold text leaves out information that is present in his source text, such as inscribing the kernel of a stone-fruit, and information on pomegranates, the morus tree, gemstones, chestnut, medlar, melons and gourds, herbs and vegetables (sage, onions, brassica). It does include the sections on growing many roses in one's garden, growing a vine that bears both white and red grapes, as well as grapes on a plum- or cherrytree, and good earth for a vine. In effect, the text only preserves a selection of Bollard's treatise with a clear focus on novelties such as grafting trees with diverse fruits and fruits without cores. The explicit of this work, "here endeth this lytle treatyse that speaketh of planting and

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<sup>652</sup> *STC*, 5874.

<sup>653</sup> Braekman, "Bollard", p. 32.

<sup>654</sup> Douce, *The Customs of London*, p. 169.

graffeyng of trees, and dyuers other matters, and also of dyuers medycynes for mans health,” seems to imply that the diversity of contents was intentional, rather than a random assortment of disparate topics (as modern readers may conceive it). As such, Copland’s grafting book anticipates the popularity of farmer’s almanacs: books that may seem miscellaneous because of their unbridled variety of information but nonetheless share a core purpose of offering their reader a framework for a religious and wholesome life.<sup>655</sup>

Medieval farmer’s almanacs are devotional objects hidden underneath a veil of practicality. This is particularly well-illustrated by a southern Swedish *Bondealmanak*, a foldable almanac that depicts the agricultural labours associated to each calender month.<sup>656</sup> Underneath the monthly labours we find a large illustration of the crucifixion, spanning four times the surface of the other images. On the reverse is a liturgical calendar featuring images and attributes of saints, as well as a lunar calendar. This early, condensed almanac, developed into a genre in which devotional and practical information are dovetailed. Just as manuscripts such as London, BL MS Egerton 1995 (109), MS Harley 541 (144), MS Lansdowne 762 (149) and MS Balliol 354 (198), Arnold’s printed chronicle features information on life in the capital. It opens with the names of bailiffs, mayors, and other London officials, and further includes legal items, copies of papal bulls, oaths for all sorts of occupations, and a number of pieces of “how-to” information. There is a cluster of text discussing how to make all sorts of official documents (ff. 102-128), including indentures, letters of licence, and complaints to the King and his lords. In the second half of the book, the contents become more varied and unrelated to metropolitan life. For instance, on f. 156 and 157 we find the ages of the world and the ages of man, a text that is frequently found in medieval manuscripts. Moreover, on f. 164 we find “The crafte of graffing and planting of tryes, and altering of frutis, as well is colour as in taste”, followed by “a trefyse of the iiij elementes and seasons of the yere...” starting on f. 171, followed by advice on how to remove stains from clothing, how to measure land

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<sup>655</sup> See Martha W. Driver, “When Is a Miscellany Not Miscellaneous? Making Sense of the ‘Kalender of Shepherds’”, *The Yearbook of English Studies* Vol 33 (2003), 199-214.

<sup>656</sup> Copenhagen, Royal Library of Denmark, NKS 901 8°.

and a copy of a “generall curse”. Besides these texts, there are other pieces of practical advice on making *ypocras*, *clarey*, and *braget*, gunpowder, *orchell* (a red or violet dye) and cork for dyeing, pickle for sturgeon, and parsley. Furthermore, there are recipes for ink-making, soap-making, and brewing beer. The chronicle would have been useful to merchants: there is a large list of spices and other ware (silver, fine gold, party gold, harp strings, thimbles) and their costs. But the book also plays into their personal lives and aspirations: the book includes fine dining courses, interspersed with devotional verse. The *Stations of Rome* is included, as well as an itinerary from Calais to Naples via Rome and Florence—most likely a pilgrimage route. There are other pieces on information that are not directly of use to a London merchant, but are most likely included to increase the encyclopaedic quality of the book: a chapter on the laws and believes of the *Sarasyns*, for instance, taken from John Mandeville’s *Travels*, here credited as the “booke of pylgrymage and trauayle”.<sup>657</sup>

Another early almanac, Wynkyn de Worde’s 1408 *Kalender of Shepherds* feature anatomical diagrams and a health regimen, just as many medieval multi-text manuscripts feature medicinal recipes and Lydgate’s *Dietary*. The *Kalendar of Shepherds* strongly resembles medieval multi-text gentry manuscripts—Martha Driver has dubbed it a “miscellany of shepherd’s lore”. Similar to manuscripts such as Brogyntyn II.1 and Peniarth 394D, the printed book contains a liturgical calendar, astrological computations, lunar charts, religious tracts on vices and virtues (in the *Kalendar* visualised by diagrammatical yet fairly naturalistic trees) as well as medical texts illustrated by phlebotomy and zodiac men.<sup>658</sup> Keiser also notes the indebtedness of Fitzherbert’s *Boke of husbandry* to late medieval manuscript culture as this book, too, is governed by moral and spiritual concerns.<sup>659</sup> The title page of De Worde’s *Boke of husbandry* features a woodcut of two men chopping trees and William Copland’s 1563 reprint of De Worde’s book of grafting, includes the same woodcuts and initials.<sup>660</sup> Salter supposes that the pastoral scene of two axed men next to a couple

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<sup>657</sup> Francis Douce, ed. *The Customs of London, Otherwise Called Arnold’s Chronicle* (London: Rivington, 1811), p. 265.

<sup>658</sup> See Martha W. Driver, “When Is a Miscellany Not Miscellaneous? Making Sense of the ‘Kalender of Shepherds’”, *The Yearbook of English Studies* Vol 33 (2003), 199-214, p. 200.

<sup>659</sup> Keiser, “Practical Books”, pp. 491-2.

<sup>660</sup> *STC*, 5954.

of deer in a terraced landscape may have attracted potential buyers of the book.<sup>661</sup> The kind of audience this idealised image would have enticed are most likely readers who were not actively involved in agriculture. As Keiser argues,

in this sense the book does become a container of knowledge and perhaps even experience [...] an audience that is buying into a world of textually transmitted knowledge as well, possibly, as an imagined process of practical endeavour.<sup>662</sup>

The fact that both the *Boke of husbandry* and *The crafte of graffynge* feature a scene of woodcutting shows the appeal of arboriculture over other agricultural techniques. By contrast, the frontispiece of a later husbandry book, John Fitzherbert's *Husbandrye* (1530), presents an image of ploughmen working an oxen-plough. In medieval popular culture, ploughmen were not held in the same esteem as grafters, and as such Fitzherbert's work seems to be marketed at a different audience.<sup>663</sup> The same woodcut, moreover, features in a 1570 reissue of *The Sheparden Kalender*, where it serves as an illustration to the poem "Howe plowman shulde do".<sup>664</sup>

The subject of grafting is notably absent in most Early Modern farmer's almanacs (except for brief mentions of the right time to graft and plant), most likely because the subject was already dealt with in husbandry books and independently circulating treatises. One of these books is Thomas Tusser's *Hundred Good Points of Husbandry* (1507). "What lookest thou here for to have?," Tusser asks his readers: trim verses, fine rhetoric, or grave sentences? Those readers are directed to the works of Henry Howard, Geoffrey Chaucer and other English poets since, Tusser apologises with an air of feigned humility, there is "nothing but rudenesse" in his own verse. In the act of comparing himself with literary figures, however, Tusser places his verses on husbandry within a literary, rather than practical tradition. The *Hundred Good Points* are unique among the corpus of husbandry books, as its author emended and adapted his work in between print runs, but there is

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<sup>661</sup> Salter, *Popular Reading*, p. 156.

<sup>662</sup> Salter, *Popular Reading*, p. 156.

<sup>663</sup> See Ordelle G. Hill, *The Manor, the Plowman, and the Shepherd, Agrarian Themes and Imagery in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance English Literature*, (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993).

<sup>664</sup> *STC*, 22415 via *EEBO*, image no. 5.



also a firm constant among the various editions of this work: Tusser's moralising, didactic verses are always interspersed with whimsical digressions. Although Tusser's husbandry book may seem like a literary chimaera, it is not unusual within the tradition of agricultural literature, components of which have played a double-role throughout history. In between his visions of a sober and thrifty lifestyle, Tusser conjures pleasant aspects of country life, such as Christmas celebrations:

Good bread and good drink, a good fyre in the hall,  
brawne pudding and souse & good mustard withal.  
Biefe, mutton, and porke, and good Pies of the best,  
pig, veale, gose, and capon, and Turkey well drest.  
Chese, apples & nuttes, and good Charrols to heare,  
as then in the contrey is gounted good cheare.

While, unlike Early Modern printed books, medieval agricultural texts do not have frontispieces or introductory prefaces advertising leisure and edification, this absence does not mean that medieval readers did not enjoy reading about husbandry. Since early modern books resemble medieval multi-text manuscripts in many ways, it is likely that practical texts in the Middle Ages also served a dual purpose.

## 5.5 Grafting and the literature of secrets

Part of the interest in grafting texts may also be explained because of their indebtedness to the Aristotelian tradition and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* tradition, which had a profound impact on late-medieval literature. To better understand the influence of the literature of secrets on agricultural texts, the next section will investigate the appeal of so-called 'books of secrets'. First, it will discuss the development of these books in the Middle Ages, before focusing more deeply on four subjects frequently associated with the *Secretum*-tradition: alchemy, colour-making, and grafting. To establish whether Middle English multi-text manuscripts functioned as esoteric repositories, I compare and contrast them with books of secrets, both in manuscript and printed form. The purpose of this section is to provide another context in which

horticultural and agricultural texts would have been read, and further attest to the complexity of practical literature in the Middle Ages.

### *5.5.i The literature of secrets*

Various medieval practical and scientific writers make up “a heterogeneous body of learning” associated with Aristotle.<sup>665</sup> Earlier in this dissertation I briefly touched upon the presence of the *ABC of Aristotle* in gentry manuscripts, which attests that younger readers were familiarised with Aristotelian authority from an early age. In addition, one particular treatise, the *Secretum secretorum*, a pseudo-Aristotelian *speculum* text, translated from the Arabic *Kitab sirr al-Asrar* (literally: ‘Secret Book of Secrets’), became one of the most popular practical texts of the Middle Ages. Supposedly, the text was written by Aristotle for his pupil Alexander the Great, who at the time was waging a war against the Persian Empire. The text covers various aspects of the natural world, from the human body as a microcosm to the hidden properties of stones, plants, and numbers. Vernacular translations of the *Secretum secretorum*, such as Lydgate’s and Burgh’s *Secrets of Old Philosophers*, were successful in medieval Europe and the Early Modern period saw the production of several new “books of secrets”, which often borrowed from medieval practical treatises. In order to show how grafting texts slotted into the literature of secrets in medieval Britain, it is worth exploring this literary tradition in more detail. To add a final context to medieval horticultural writings, this section will consider the co-occurrence of grafting treatises and texts on other crafts that are frequently found in the literature of secrets. The latter part of this paragraph will focus on the question of whether there are late-medieval multi-text manuscripts that may have functioned as repositories of secrets in the same way as the printed books that were created during the Early Modern period. First, however, I will elaborate on the origins of books of secrets and discuss a selection of medieval texts that were frequently included in the tradition, in particular treatises on making inks and

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<sup>665</sup> Kellie Robertson, *Nature Speaks: Medieval Literature and Aristotelian Philosophy*, (Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania P, 2017), p. 2.

colours, alchemy, and controlling the behaviour of animals.

While medieval societies were dependent on the cultivation of the earth and were knowledgeable of their surroundings, the natural world was also a repository of inexplicable marvels. As stated in the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, just being out and about will teach a person something new: “[I]t suffiseth a man to know that ought to come euery daye in the worlde, for by that he may lerne newe science”.<sup>666</sup> Elements such as air, fire, water, and earth; intangible phenomena such as the weather and time; objects such as plants and stones as well as celestial, human, and animal bodies were containers of secret powers that concealed truths about creation. As a “repository of occult forces that might be manipulated [...] merely by the use of correct techniques”, the study of nature was essential in the search to obtain divine knowledge.<sup>667</sup> To learn about the necessary techniques, a medieval reader could turn to written manuals that became known as books of secrets. A “secret” does not refer to obscure or occult knowledge, but denotes experimental craft, recipes, and formulae that would give the reader a deeper understanding of nature. Books of secrets can be considered encyclopaedic, all-encompassing works of reference on a wide range of subjects, such as metallurgy, medicine, dyeing, alchemy, and making perfumes. In Dutch scholarship, the cognate term *kunstboek* or *artes-boek* is used for manuscripts and printed books that deal with subjects such as alchemy, culinary recipes, magic, paint- and medical remedies. An example of such a book is Wellcome Library, MS 517, which, besides a tract on grafting, also contains tracts on quicksilver and arithmetic, magical recipes and charms, as well as instructions for making paint, glue, and wine.<sup>668</sup> According to William Eamon, this genre possessed a particular magnetism because of its revelatory promise; a reader would not just have acquired a book of secrets to learn how to improve an artisanal technique, but rather to achieve new, esoteric insights.<sup>669</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, Helmingham MS, p. 105, ll. 31-33

<sup>667</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: UP, 1996), p. 4.

<sup>668</sup> Jansen-Sieben, *Repertorium*, pp. 400-401.

<sup>669</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, p. 5.

By the fifteenth century, secrets were more widely recorded in manuscripts, and gradually became accessible to a wider audience before they became commonplace during the era of print. To avoid unwanted meddling from inexperienced readers, the literature of secrets had until then almost exclusively circulated among a learned audience.<sup>670</sup> Eamon provides an example of a printed book from Italy, *Difficilio di ricette* (1525) a recipe book with parlor tricks and information on illusions, gardening, cosmetics, and medicine.<sup>671</sup> In Italy, these books were sold door to door by chapmen, which suggests that there was an increasing market for collections of household secrets. The production of books of secrets mushroomed during the sixteenth century, but like so many early modern genres, the tradition was built on ancient foundations and a medieval framework. As mentioned before, a prime early medieval specimen of the genre is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*, which had a profound impact on philosophy in the medieval West and circulated in translations in the late-medieval period. In addition, an early medieval example of a more narrowly focused book of secrets is a tenth-century compilation dedicated to the preservation of Roman artisanal knowledge, such as preparation of pigments and precious stones, known as *De coloribus et artibus Romanorum*. Despite its author's self-proclaimed professionalism on the subjects, Eamon notes that the treatise was most likely read in an intellectual rather than workshop setting.<sup>672</sup>

The popularity of the literature of secrets in the later Middle Ages is evinced by literary culture. For example, the characters in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* are involved in (pseudo)science to such a degree that it leads to their eventual downfall. The tale's protagonist, the amateur astronomer Nicholas, owns all sizes of relevant books, including the *Almagest*, as well as the necessary tools for making computations and prognostications, such as an astrolabe and an abacus. Yet, while his astrological abilities are limited—Nicholas only knows “a certain of conclusyons” (l. 3193)—his

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<sup>670</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, p. 83.

<sup>671</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, p. 127.

<sup>672</sup> See Eamon, *Secrets*, pp. 35, 47-8. There is no attestation of this text in any manuscript in early medieval England, see Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*. There is, however, a German MS in a British collection that contains the work: BL, MS Harley 3915. How and when the manuscript arrived in England is unknown.

predictions are numerous: the Miller, who narrates the tale, admits that he “may nate rekene hem alle” (l. 3198). Also, in spite of his fortune-telling prowess, Nicholas’ own fortune is non-existent, as he is living off his friends’ expenses. By contrast, his antipode John, the unschooled landlord who “knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude” (l. 3227, a reference to the *Disticha*), is an enterprising, rich man (l. 3188). The drunk Miller, who is also very outspoken on the subject of curiosity, has John proclaim that ignorance is bliss, especially when it comes to secrets, both of wives and of God:<sup>673</sup>

Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,  
Take upon me moore than ynogh,  
[...]  
An housbonde shal nat been inquisityf  
Of Goddes pryvetee, nor of his wyf.  
So he may fynde Goddes foyson there,  
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere. (ll. 3159-3166).

Aside from the double entendres in the word “pryvetee”, there is another, more serious concern with secrets and discretion that unfolds in the tale. The Miller’s wife Alisoun repeatedly advises Nicholas to be “privee” (l. 3295) and “ful deerne” (l. 3297) exhorting him to behave like a courtly lover, yet Nicholas replies with the self-congratulatory remark that as a clerk, he would have badly wasted his time if he could not keep a secret to outsmart a carpenter (l. 3300). Moreover, when John argues that a husband should stick to his oxen-plough and not meddle with concepts that are above his head, the anti-intellectual carpenter functions as the Miller’s mouthpiece, repeating some of his earlier words: “men sholde nat knowe of Goddes pryvetee” (l. 3454) for it will lead to madness or agony (l. 3451-2). Ironically, John’s statement that husbands should only seek the bounty of God and leave the “remanent” (i.e. his secrets, l. 3166) alone leads up his own conceit, as he is led to believe that God’s ultimate secret, the coming of the second flood, is upon him. In

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<sup>673</sup> For a discussion on the role of secrets in the Miller’s Tale, see Louise M. Bishop, “Of Goddes Pryvetee nor of His Wyf: Confusion of Orifices in Chaucer’s Miller’s Tale”, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44.3 (2002): 231–246, p. 240.

addition, Nicholas also foreshadows his own blindness by recounting the mishap of an astronomer who had searched the skies for stars, but failed to (fore)see his ill-fated fall into a marlpit (ll. 3457-3460). Chaucer *Miller's Tale* thus presents a complex web of irony in which an ambitious astrologer fails to foresee his own fate while an anti-intellectual yokel correctly predicts his own future. As Louise M. Bishop explains, *The Miller's Tale's* serves “to ‘expose’ the limits of human knowledge”: it is the ultimate warning against *curiositas*, an over-eagerness for seeking hidden knowledge.<sup>674</sup>

Texts that were supposed to reveal hidden knowledge were generally concealed from the masses out of fear that they would inflict *curiositas*,<sup>675</sup> a dangerous affliction that might lead one astray to the ultimate kind of forbidden knowledge: magic.<sup>676</sup> Nicholas is presented as a prototypical *curiosus*, whose thirst for knowledge is never fully quenched: while he has completed the liberal arts curriculum, he is now possessed by the notion of pursuing the practical discipline of astronomy (l. 3192).<sup>677</sup> Bearing in mind that the criticisms in the *Miller's Tale* are voiced through Chaucer's literary alter-ego and characters, it cannot be confirmed whether Chaucer was truly dismissive of contemporary practical texts. In his own didactic utilitarian work, the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, Chaucer disclaims that he, too, is merely an ignorant translator of the works of “olde astrologiens”.<sup>678</sup> His purpose is to teach Little Lewis “a certain nombre of conclusions” pertaining to the astrolabe (ll. 12-3). The reason for presenting only a certain number of computations, Chaucer continues, is threefold. First, the full body of knowledge on the astrolabe is not available to mere mortals (ll. 18-9): it is another of Nature's secrets. Second, he is aware that some of the ancient treatises promise conclusions that cannot be carried out (ll. 21-3), which again conveys the idea that Chaucer's skepticism of ancient treatises was grounded in personal experience. Third,

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<sup>674</sup> As Bishop argues in “Of Goddes Privetee”, p. 494, the crude humour about confused body parts and sensory misunderstandings symbolises human failings.

<sup>675</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, p. 49

<sup>676</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, p. 61.

<sup>677</sup> Thomas J. Hatton argues that, on one level, *The Millers Tale* can be read as “a disquisition of the dangers of *curiositas*”, see “Chaucer's Miller's Curious Characters”, *Enarratio* 2 (1993), 81-89. Building upon Hatton's argument in “Goddes Pryvetee and a Wyf. Curiositas and the triadic sins in the Miller's and Reeve's Tales,” *Christianity and Literature* 65.1 (2015), 4-26, Ethan Smilie maintains that the *Miller's Tale* and the *Reeve's Tale* both warn against the vice of *curiositas*.

<sup>678</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, l. 62, ed. F.N Robinson in Larry D. Benson, *The Riverside Chaucer* (Oxford: UP, 2008), p. 662.

Chaucer argues, some astrological computations are simply too difficult for a ten-year-old to comprehend (ll. 23-4). Still, Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe* should not be considered to be a singular practical treatise in an otherwise literary oeuvre: it is striking that Chaucer should use the phrase "a certain nombre of conclusions" again, a phrase he previously used in the *Miller's Tale* in relation to Nicholas' astrological abilities. Juxtaposing the two texts, it becomes evident that Nicholas, although he is in possession of all the necessary tools and literature, is no more skilled in the art of astrological computations than Chaucer's ten-year-old son will be after reading the *Treatise of the Astrolabe*. The main difference between Nicholas and Little Lewis (and the subsequent readers of the *Treatise*), it would appear, is their sense of self-awareness: while Nicholas is ignorant of his own foolishness, Chaucer's readers are made aware that the knowledge obtained by reading the *Treatise* is limited and mediated through his authorial intervention.

The proliferation of esoterism was evidently not to everyone's taste. One of Chaucer's contemporaries, John Gower, is openly dismissive of the *curiositas* that has taken possession of the self-proclaimed alchemists of his day:

Ther ben full manye now aday,  
That knowen litel what thei meene.  
It is noght on to wite and weene;  
In forme of wordes thei it trete,  
Bot yit they failen of beyete,  
For of tomoche or of tolyte  
Ther is algate founde a wyte,  
So that thei folwe noght the lyne  
Of the parfite medicine,  
Which grounded is upon nature (ll. 616-625).<sup>679</sup>

These so-called alchemists, Gower argues in his *Confessio Amantis*, do not understand the true nature of alchemy but are, instead, possessed by avarice. Their superficial knowledge will only lead to

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<sup>679</sup> John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, Book IV, 451-632 in *The English Works of John Gower*, G. C. Macaulay, ed., (London, EETS e.s. 81-82, 1901).

financial drain, as they “spille more than they spede” (l. 585). It is clear Gower directs his critique not at the practice of astronomy or alchemy itself, but at the popular exercise of these sciences by practitioners that lacked the required theoretical basis. As well as being indicative of a critical attitude towards obtaining cursory knowledge from practical works, the writings of Gower and Chaucer attest that astronomy and alchemy are more controversial than other domains of practical writing. Besides the criticism against astrology in Chaucer’s *Miller’s Tale* and alchemy in the *Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale*, there is a disapproval of esoteric sciences throughout *The Canterbury Tales* as well as a condemnation of reliance on written sources for the procurement of practical knowledge.

#### 5.5.ii Godfridus super Palladium and the literature of secrets

During the Early Modern period, grafting texts were not only printed as separate horticultural books, but they also merged into the books of secrets tradition. The links between the two genres are most evident when looking at one of the oldest versions of *GSP*, the Middle High German translation, which has been dated to the late-fourteenth century. Contrary to the English versions, the German treatise opens with a verse proem that introduces its author:

<i>Eyn meystir wys,</i>	A wise master,
<i>an synnen grys,</i>	grey of soul,
<i>Gotfrid genant,</i>	named Gottfried,
<i>syn sin was gewant,</i>	his soul was familiar [with],
<i>ny man gutir wys</i>	knowledge of how one may best
<i>allirleyge pfroprys</i>	set many scions
<i>seczın vnde proppin mochte</i>	and graft them
<i>vnd welche czıt dorczu tochte,</i>	and [know] which time is best therefore,
<i>ny her das beschrebe,</i>	as he describes it here
<i>das di kunst blebe.<sup>680</sup></i>	so the art will remain.

Gotfried is here presented as a wise master, who dedicated his grey (i.e. wise) soul (i.e. self) to

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<sup>680</sup> Eis, *Gottfried’s Pelzbuch*, p. 117.



writing about grafting, in order to preserve it for posterity.<sup>681</sup> One of the secrets Gottfried preserves is the following technique which he, in turn, learnt from his own master:

*Hy seczt her eyne andir behendikeit*

*Czu Babenbuerg machte man eyne groze rube. Man grub eyn loch in eyn rube, di do wuchs, vnd legite rubesamen in das loch. Do wart di rube gar groz, do si rif wart. Dy kunst mak man wol breytin, ab si wor ist, czu vil dingin der glich.*<sup>682</sup>

He [Master Richard] relates here another trick

In Babenberg [Franconia] people created a big root (*Brassica rapa*). They dug a hole in a root that grew there, and put root-seeds in the hole. When it had ripened, the vegetable became very big. This skill can be widely used, if it is true, for many things alike.

In this case, the secret is growing a big root vegetable—most likely a turnip—known only to a select few: Master Richard (the expert) and some other *Babenbergers*. Following the reasoning that all natural things share the same properties, the method may be applied to other vegetables (“czu vil dingin der glich”). However, the fact that Gottfried adds the caveat “ab si wor ist” (if it is true) shows a concern with the accuracy of this technique. Evidently, Gottfried’s treatise is not an empirically proven sequence of experiments, but a repository of specialist secrets which he deemed worthy of preservation.

Also present in the German A-version of *GSP* is the instruction for creating a peach tree that produces peaches with a mark inscribed in every stone.<sup>683</sup> In at least one German manuscript, Stiftsbibliothek Admont Cod. 504, this instruction is preceded by the following title: “Here he lays down a peculiarity of the peach tree” (*Hi seczt her eyn selczenkeit von der pfirschin*). The use of “selczenkeit”—a translation of the Latin word *raritas*—reveals that Gottfried excerpted this instruction from Palladius, ostensibly for its curiosity-value. The choice of the word ‘raritas’ may

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<sup>681</sup> *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “grīs, grīse (Adj.)”, meaning 2.2.

<sup>682</sup> Eis, *Gottfried’s Pelzbuch*, p. 130.

<sup>683</sup> The rule is first recorded in the Latin version of Palladius’ *De Agricultura*, Book 14: 11.94-98: “*Adfirmantibus Graecis persicus scripta nascetur, si ossa eius obruas et post septem dies, ubi patefieri coeperint, apertis his nucleos tollas et his cinnabari, quod libebit, inscribas. Mox ligatos simul cum suis ossibus obruas diligentius ad haerentes. Genera eorum sunt haec, duracina persica praecoqua armenia.*”, quoted from *Palladius: Das Bauernjahr*, Kai Brodersen ed., (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

also be derived from Pliny, who speaks of two grafted chestnut cultivars as a *raritas*.<sup>684</sup> What is more, when considering the use of titles in the German *GSP*, it appears that they follow a certain categorization based on their practical value. For example, several instructions (nos. 8, 11, 14, 19, 22, 32, 38, 39, 40) are classified as a “behendikeit”: a trick, ability or skill which can be gained by learning. Another classification that is used in Gottfried’s instructions is “warsamkeit”, a remarkable fact, for instance “eyne warsamkeit von deme pfirskboume” (‘a remarkable fact of the peach tree’). Thus, the phrasing of paragraph headings is concerned with revealing either a fact (*warsamkeit*), a curiosity (*selczenkeit*) or a useful trick (*behendikeit*) about trees.

Other German manuscripts also show how *GSP* ties into the book of secrets tradition. For example, in the manuscript Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 504, *GSP* is preceded by a German vernacular version of the *Travels* of Marco Polo.<sup>685</sup> The latter part of the manuscript, which was later bound to the first two texts, contains a somnarium (dream-book) and other prognostications. The contents of this German manuscript are related to the discovery of the unknown, such as soothsaying, astrology and travel. Thus, they are similar to that of Bodleian Library, MS e. Musaeo 116 (132), which besides *GSP* contains John Mandeville’s *Travels* and Chaucer’s *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. Compared to the German version, the headings that feature in the index of the Middle English version in Bodleian Library, MS e. Musaeo 116 are more matter-of-factly. The scribe of this Middle English version, moreover, made an error that reveals lack of knowledge of his or her subject matter: the text notes that a *trisomellio* is better than a peach tree (ll 125-6). Cylkowski emendates this word to *crisomellio*, a variant spelling of *chrysomelio* (“golden apple”), which here most likely denotes an apricot tree. The Middle English version offers the following headings for the *selczenkeit* and *warsamkeit* of the peach tree, respectively: “To make that wrytynge or peynture shal ben sene in the corys of the apple [i.e. the fruit of a peach-tree]”, and “to distroye wormys in alle

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<sup>684</sup> Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, (17.122), in Paolo Squatriti, *Landscape and Change in Early Medieval Italy: Chestnuts, Economy, and Culture* (Cambridge, UP, 2013), p. 104.

<sup>685</sup> The manuscript Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 504 is originally composed of two separate booklets, the first of which contains the *Travels* of Marco Polo on ff. 1r-59v, the German *GSP* on 60r-79r.

manere of treis”. Not only is the heading of the latter instruction inspecific, it also suggests the use of different ingredients to rid the tree from its infestation. Moreover, the Middle English version offers an additional cure against worms attributed to Aristotle, which is not present in the German version. This addition suggests that medieval readers recognised *GSP* as an exponent of the Aristotelian tradition, and expanded the text accordingly. Judging by the errors in the copying of this text, the accuracy of its contents are of secondary importance.

To compare, there are also German redactions of *GSP* that omit headings which allude to rarities, and skip many of the references to Gottfried’s foreign visits, multicoloured fruit, gemstones in place of kernels, inscribed peach-stones, and humanoid fruits and vegetables.<sup>686</sup> According to Johannes Gottfried Mayer, the systematic omission of these chapters points at a thematic focus that has little to do with the cultivation and refinement of fruit trees and vines, but one that would meet the interests of cellarers and wine merchants.<sup>687</sup> Moreover, he deems it likely that these versions of *GSP* were subjected to censorship, in order to remove any sense of the magical and alchemical from the text.

### 5.5.iii Grafting and alchemy

In essence, grafting and alchemy are founded on similar principles: while alchemists sought to change the properties of base metals so that they would turn into noble metals, grafters would turn uncultivated species of trees into colourful cultivars. In addition, the ulterior goal of alchemy, “to understand and imitate the natural world which was animated with the spirit of God”, could also be applied to grafting.<sup>688</sup> Before turning to a discussion of grafting in the context of alchemy, I will first briefly outline the imagery related to alchemy in the later Middle Ages.

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<sup>686</sup> Johannes Gottfried Mayer, “Abbreviatio Palladii’ oder ‘De plantatione arborum’ – das ‘Pelzbuch’ Gottfrieds von Franken. Entstehungszeit und Wirkung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen Fassungen”, *Scientiarum Historia* 27.2 (2001), 3-25, p. 6.

<sup>687</sup> Mayer, “Abbreviatio Palladii”, p. 6.

<sup>688</sup> Jonathan Hughes, *The Rise of Alchemy in Fourteenth-Century England: Plantagenet Kings and the Search for the Philosopher’s Stone* (London, Continuum, 2012), p. 48.

According to medieval alchemists, the procedure of transmutating metals into a Philosopher's Stone involved various stages. The process of refinement symbolically mirrored the resurrection of Christ and, as a whole, the practice of alchemy may be seen as an allegorical exercise: as Hughes puts it, “[t]he realization of the divine presence of pure mercury within matter led alchemists to claim that they could scientifically demonstrate the truths of the resurrection in alchemical terms as the transmutation of lead into gold”.<sup>689</sup> The way in which mercury was dismembered, buried, and decomposed mirrored the process of dying and decaying, after which a rebirth into pure gold would follow.<sup>690</sup>

Just as other medieval sciences, alchemy had already transcended its academic context in



Figure 36: Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 2872

the later Middle Ages and started to attract attention from laypeople. This is well illustrated by an ornate manuscript produced in fourteenth-century France, which almost exclusively features alchemical literature. It includes a French translation of the *Secretum secretorum*, based on an English adaptation by Roger Bacon,<sup>691</sup> and the treatise *Le Testament des nobles philosophes*, which also refers to this popular scholar. The manuscript contains several illustrations with alchemical imagery, as evinced

by figure 36. This image depicts *citrinitas*, the pre-final stage in the creation of the Philosopher's Stone, during which a silver-producing stone turns into a gold-producing one. Colours, especially red and white, are important alchemical symbols: the white stone produces silver, while the red stone transmutes metal into gold. The alchemist in learning on the right, standing underneath the white apples, has the knowledge required to make the white stage of the Philosopher's Stone, while

<sup>689</sup> Hughes, *The Rise of Alchemy*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>690</sup> Hughes, *The Rise of Alchemy*, p. 50.

<sup>691</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 2872, f. 401r.

the adept on the left holds the key to unlock the knowledge required for making the red stone. The red and white apples, the fruits of this alchemical knowledge, of course, are reserved for the initiated, and therefore well-guarded by the two lions defending the fortification. The river, moreover, is symbolic of knowledge transfer: it runs from the fortification towards the reader of the book, as well as from image to text, emphasising the interaction between the two. In sum, the image features transformations of plant life, animal life, metal, stone, and knowledge through the use of the colours red and white, all framed by a golden border that is symbolic of the alchemist's ulterior goal.



Figure 37: Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 2872

On f. 416r of the same manuscript, in between the treatise on ancient learned men and a text on the Philosopher's Stone according to the teachings of Aristotle, another image refers to the process of creating the Stone. The alchemist, who wears the same robes as the alchemist-in-learning in the previous image, now sports a red collar that signals *Rubedo* (alchemical success) and has taken the seat of the adept.

He marvels at a white ovoid shape, i.e. the Philosopher's Stone, which is falling down from a red sun in the center of the image. Walking towards him from the frame is a female figure lactating into two small bowls which she is holding in her hands: her left breast gives white milk while red blood flows from her right. Notably, the frame around the image is broken, which suggests that the female figure transcends the boundaries between text and image and functions as a messenger between the reader and the book. A reader of this manuscript may start out as an apprentice like the person seated on the right in Figure 36 but, when he has obtained enough alchemical wisdom about the two stages of the Stone, he may enter the secret fort and transform into the knowledgeable person in Figure 37. Together, these two images emphasise that for lay readers the interest in reading alchemical texts was not just about creating gold, but mainly about the notion

of transformation, both on an alchemical and a personal level. The character in the images transforms just as the now-initiated readers obtain knowledge from the text in front of them.

In their focus on the transformation of the natural world and of the self, alchemical tracts bear resemblance to grafting treatises. Moreover, the theory underlying the transformation of trees is indebted to the same (pseudo-)Aristotelian writings that inform medieval alchemy, and the works attributed to Albertus Magnus (*De Vegetabilibus*). With regards to grafting, Albertus writes that when “a certain species is implanted into the stem [or trunk] (*truncus*) of the same species, it will be changed into another species, as when a pear or apple tree is healthy and a shoot is cut from it above, and after that the stem is cut and the shoot that was cut off before is implanted into it, then it is changed into a pear or apple tree of another species”.<sup>692</sup>

A reference to the *Secretum secretorum*, which was also a source text for alchemical information, can be found in the introduction to longer version of Bollard’s treatise, such the version in MS Sloane 686: “I sey in the secretes of Aristotle that in the Equinoccions of regions the erthe is more disposed to make putrefaccions than in other tymes of the yere [...]”.<sup>693</sup> After this reference to Aristotle, Bollard focuses on the state of the earth during winter: before grafting can commence, the earth must be searched and “exploited” of putrefactions. According to Aristotle’s *De Generacione and corruptione*, putrefaction of one thing is the birth of something new, a notion that also occurs in alchemical lore: the first step in making the philosopher’s stone is also visualised as a kind of putrefaction, known as *nigredo*.<sup>694</sup>

Because of Bollard’s indebtedness to pseudo-Aristotelian natural philosophy, there are further ties between the structure of Bollard’s introduction and alchemical processes. Just as the second step in the creation of the Philosopher’s Stone, known as *albedo*, involves the purification

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<sup>692</sup> Albertus Magnus, Book V, Tract I, Chapter 7: “On Five Ways of Transmuting One Plant into Another,” in *A Source Book in Medieval Science*, Edward Grant, ed., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1974), p. 699.

<sup>693</sup> Braekman, “Bollard”, p. 30.

<sup>694</sup> For an introduction to medieval writings about the stages in alchemical operations, see Joseph L. Henderson and Dyane N. Sherwood, *Transformation of the Psyche: The Symbolic Alchemy of the Splendor Solis*, (Hove: Routledge, 2003), pp. 13-15.

of matter, so is the second part of Bollard's treatise dedicated to the purification of trees: "grafting and of the manere rectifying that we calle renwyng and amending".<sup>695</sup> The third alchemical step, *citrinitas* or yellowness, signifies the transmutation from silver to gold. Likewise, the third part in Bollard's treatise is dedicated to "alteracions and the manere of altering and chaunging of the vertu that commeth hem by kynde. Whether ye like to make hem laxative or pourgyng and soo of other".<sup>696</sup> In other words, the (medicinal) potency or "vertu" that comes naturally to a tree can be altered, similar to the way in which the essence of a metal can be transmuted. While Bollard's treatise adheres to a tripartite structure and thus does not offer a parallel to the alchemical fourth and final step, *rubedo* or redness, the structure of the second and third chapters each build up towards a final stage of a tree. The second chapter (of renewing and amending) ends with the manipulation of a tree so that it produces fruits of different tastes and colours. The last instruction of chapter three (altering the natural essence of a tree) teaches how to alter a tree into producing different kinds of medicines. Taking both of these chapters into account, it becomes clear that Bollard adheres to a structure that starts with the transformation of a natural host—a fruit tree—to generate end products (fruit and medicine) that become more advanced towards the end of the chapter.

Just as Bollard is indebted to (pseudo-)Aristotelian theory, so Gottfried also hails Aristotle as one of the main authorities on plant propagation. He refers, for instance, to Aristotle's *Book of Plants* (now attributed to Nicholas of Damascene) for information about reviving an old tree and on sweetening sour pomegranates.<sup>697</sup> The influence of the literature of secrets on *GSP*, moreover, is notable in the following lines from the introduction of the Middle English version: "The maner of setting of trees is manyfold and so comon that we wyl not at this tyme shew therof, but a prevy

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<sup>695</sup> Braekman, "Bollard", p. 30.

<sup>696</sup> Braekman, "Bollard", p. 34.

<sup>697</sup> Eis, *Gottfried's Pelzbuch*, 123. In one manuscript containing the English treatise, MS CUL, Ee.1.13 (34), f. 110r, only one reference within the text is underlined: "as Aristotle seyth in his boke of plantis". This suggests that references to Aristotle lent the text an extra sense of authority.

werkyng towchyng the same matyr yt schal be seyde aftyward in his place pleyuely”.<sup>698</sup> Apparently, tree planting is too common a topic to waste good ink on, while “a prevy werkyng” (a secret operation) is worth his reader’s while.<sup>699</sup> By contrast, the German A version of the *GSP* does open with an explanation of five different ways to graft a tree, which indicates that this information was apparently no longer necessary and removed while the work was translated into English. The Middle English version, thus, does not focus on *how* to graft, but on revealing exclusive information “pleuely”. Later publications of *GSP*, moreover, indicate that the treatise was adopted as part of the literature of secrets. To illustrate how this development took place, the next section will focus on an early printed book of secrets which borrows heavily from medieval grafting literature.

#### 5.5.iv *TBouck van Wondre*

The earliest known Dutch-language book of secrets, printed in 1513 by Thomas van der Noot under the title *TBouck van Wondre*,<sup>700</sup> mainly consists of instructions for dyeing materials. The introduction to this book proffers to be profitable, and to enlighten its readers on many fine arts. It was reissued in 1544 by Jacob van Liesvelt, who added instructions for winemaking, grafting, etching, mollifying and hardening iron and steel, and various parlour tricks. In 1583, the English writer Leonard Mascall translated a selection of recipes from *TBouck van Wondre* and a German manual (the *Kunstbüchlein*).<sup>701</sup> This English treatise was published in under the title *A booke of the arte and maner, howe to plant and graffe all sortes of trees* in 1572 and repeatedly reissued until 1640. Thereafter, the title changed to *The country-mans recreation, or the art of planting, graffing, and gardening in three books*, which is demonstrative of the growing social esteem of arboriculture in the seventeenth century and its relation to gardening.<sup>702</sup> Books like these, Eamon underlines, mainly consist of jumbled-

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<sup>698</sup> Transcribed from MS CUL, Ee.1.13 (34), f. 109r.

<sup>699</sup> The plural version is found in Bodleian Library, MS. e. Musaeo 116 (231), f 49v.

<sup>700</sup> NB, 5320, 5321, 5322. About Van der Noot’s tendency to cater to aristocratic and bourgeois audiences, see Herman Pleij, *De wereld volgens Thomas van der Noot* (Coutinho: Muiderberg, 1982), pp. 30-34; 49-52.

<sup>701</sup> *STC*, 17574, see Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, p. 129.

<sup>702</sup> *STC*, 5874.



together recipes; it is the printers who demystified trade secrets, not the craftsmen who executed them.<sup>703</sup> Not only is the compilation of printed books of secrets similar to multi-text manuscripts, it would also appear that they are frequently sourced from medieval exemplars.

While the section on grafting in *Tbouck van Wondre* (hereafter: *Tbouck*) does not start with a formal introduction, the heading “to graft artfully/ingeniously” (“subtilyč”) immediately conveys the impression that the work is concerned with aesthetics rather than profitability. While *Tbouck* adheres to *GSP* in terms of structure and contents, there are several additions and omissions that attest to its novelty value. For instance, the treatise adds advice for obtaining peaches two months before anyone else (“Om persicke te hebbē twee maende eer yeman anders”), suggesting that there is a competitive aspect to the growing of fruit.<sup>704</sup> The way to bring about the early ripening of peaches, the text suggests, is grafting a peach onto a rootstock of mulberry or vine (this, needless to say, is not possible). If anything, one-upmanship seems to be the true motivation for being the first person to grow peaches. This idea is strengthened by the fact that the book offers a similar piece advice for growing medlars ahead of anyone else: every single one of these medlars is said to be better than twenty others.<sup>705</sup> To achieve these outstanding medlars, one has to dip the scion in honey and graft it onto a gooseberry bush or mulberry tree (again, this is unlikely to yield any result). Other additional instructions in *Tbouck*, such as growing roses on holly to render the shrub green all year round, do not seem to carry any kind of reward in terms of profitability, but serve a cosmetic purpose. Overall, the attraction of the secret grafting knowledge contained in *Tbouck* seems to be constituted by the suggestion that one may have a better-looking garden than one’s neighbour.

Another addition to *Tbouck*, which is not present in *GSP* nor any Middle English grafting treatise is the information on growing date trees. In the Middle Ages, dates were imported a luxurious delicacy, and one can imagine the appeal of growing a date-palm in one’s backyard. *Tbouck*

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<sup>703</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, pp. 125-6.

<sup>704</sup> *Tbouck*, p. 46

<sup>705</sup> *Tbouck*, p. 46

does not touch upon the fact that palm trees will not survive Dutch winters, but instead offers a disclaimer that the trees will only start bearing fruit once they are a hundred years old. This assumption is erroneous, as most date palms begin to bear fruit after only four years, and cease production after around a hundred years.<sup>706</sup> In addition, *Tbouck* also contains an instruction for the preservation of figs:

*De swerte vigen zyn best eer in die sonne gedroocht ende dan leyt mense in manieren gelijc beddekens / in een vat / ende telcken male bespreyt mense met mele / Dan stopt mense in een vat en sluytet / ende also seynt mense uiten lande.*

Black figs are best before they are dried in the sun and then straightaway, they are put, in a manner like little beds, in a vat, and people coat them in flour many times. Then they are put in a closed vat and they are also sent out of the country.

This information was possibly drawn from a travel account, since Gottfried does not include information on figs as they will not survive harsh winters. The method described in *Tbouck* was most likely practiced in Spain, North-Africa, or Middle-Eastern countries, where figs were preserved for export. The information is thus not necessarily relevant for a horticulturist, since it only details how figs would end up on one's a dinner-table. This puts the "how-to" value of the *Tbouck* a different perspective: people may have enjoyed reading about the secrets of fruit-growers just as they would read about the mechanics of dyeing linen (in the first chapters of *Tbouck*) without getting their own hands dirty.

*Tbouck* also slightly differs from *GSP* in its description of marking the kernels of peach stones. While *GSP* states that the tree and all subsequent trees that are grafted from it would carry the same mark in their fruits, in *Tbouck* the procedure is said to result in peaches with streaks of the colour with which the kernel was inscribed ("En alle die persicken die van dien boom comen

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<sup>706</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. "Date Palm".

sullen binnen inden steen ghestreept zyn met dyer verwen / daer den eersten persicsteen binnen mede gescreven was”).<sup>707</sup> This, according to the text, is an established variety of peach-tree known as an inscribed or written tree (“[dusdanigen persicboom heet men *ghescreven persicboom*”). This name would appear to be ambiguous: since “ghescreven” is most commonly used for “documented/recorded in writing”, it may also be interpreted as a written tree: a tree that only exists in writing.

After the section on peaches, *Tbouck* continues with advice for the preservation of fruit. To create prunes from plums and damsons, the text advises, they must be dried in an oven after bread has been baked in it. Also, frozen apples can be revived by soaking them in cold water and warming them in front of the fire. This is followed by the advice that frozen heels, feet, and other extremities can be heated in the same way, except that the water must now be heated with hot coals, or steeped with chamomile. This seems a gratuitous piece of advice; surely, readers would know how to warm up their feet? In any case, the hot coals are also useful outdoors: using a little sulphur, one may be able to smoke apples out of their trees like bees from a hive. Smoke, according to *Tbouck*, possesses transformative qualities: a red rose can be made white by holding it over a mixture of coals and sulphur, while a white rose can turn red by the vapour of warm red wine. Instructions such as these illustrate that alchemical thinking about transformation is not limited to alchemical writings, but also influenced other genres.

#### *5.5.v Manuscripts of secrets and the gentry*

While the term “books of secrets” is generally associated with printed books,<sup>708</sup> there are certainly also manuscripts belonging to the tradition. For example, Tyler J. Reimer argues that there was a culture of manuscripts of secrets in sixteenth-century England that stood apart from printed books of secrets. These manuscripts contain outlawed kinds of love- or ritual magic, while ‘magic’ in the

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<sup>707</sup> *Tbouck*, p. 54.

<sup>708</sup> Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*, passim.

(continental) printed tradition served mainly to entertain their readers.<sup>709</sup> According to Reimer, manuscripts of secrets blurred the line between “elite and popular culture and their scribes operated as ‘cultural brokers’ by blending learned material from traditional books of secrets and ritual magic with the low magic of cunning folk and charms”.<sup>710</sup> When we look at the way in which printed books of secrets are compiled, it becomes evident that several medieval multi-text manuscripts that are frequently classified as household books may just as well be considered as books of secrets.

For example, several manuscripts containing *GSP* and Bollard’s treatise seems to support the idea that, for some readers, grafting texts function as a repository of secrets. One such manuscript is British Library, MS. Egerton 2622 (**110**), which includes Chaucer’s *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, texts concerning meteorology, medicine, remedies against the plague, arithmetic, and the Latin versions of Nicholas Bollard and *Godfridus super Palladium*.<sup>711</sup> In addition, the manuscript London, BL, Cotton Julius D. viii, a parchment codex containing catalogues of clergymen, Roman emperors, and popes also includes a treatise on the duties of the cellaress of Barking Abbey, extracts from *Godfridus super Palladium* that start in English and continue in Latin, Nicholas Bollard’s treatise, a verse on rosemary, various experiments with colours and medication, and culinary tracts entitled *De Arte Coquinaria* and *Forme of Cury*, which contains cookery recipes as well as instructions for bookmaking.<sup>712</sup> These are followed by a trilingual manual on exorcisms, a lapidary, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomics*, and zodiacal prognostications. On the face of it, this manuscript appears a random assortment of practical texts; however, when examined more closely its contents may also have collated as a repository of exclusive and esoteric knowledge. Beside the more pronounced esotericism of the *Physiognomics*,<sup>713</sup> it contains the daily duties of a cellaress, for instance, which are

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<sup>709</sup> Tyler J. Reimer, *Cultural Traditions of Sixteenth-Century English Books of Secrets*, PhD Dissertation (University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 2017), pp. 57-8.

<sup>710</sup> Reimer, *Cultural Traditions*, p. 66.

<sup>711</sup> The binding of this codex predates the sixteenth-century and is stamped with decorative hybrids, a chalice placed in between two birds, and a rooster. The manuscript is associated with the binder’s workshop of Theodore Rood and Thomas Hunte in Oxford ca. 1482, see *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the Years 1882-1887* (London: British Museum, 1889).

<sup>712</sup> The version of Bollard’s treatise is similar to that found in MS Sloane 686 and MS Harley 116, see Braekman, “Bollard”, p. 20.

<sup>713</sup> On this text see Lynn Thorndike, “The Latin Pseudo-Aristotle and Medieval Occult Science,” *The Journal of English*

normally concealed from public view, and so are the dishes served by the master cook of King Richard II that can be found in the *Forme of Cury*.

British Library, Sloane MS 122 is perhaps the most narrowly focused Middle English repository of artisanal secrets. Among the medieval texts in this manuscript are culinary recipes, ink-making instructions, herbal, astrological, and medical texts, Bollard's treatise and *The Feate of Gardening*. In addition, there is an instruction on how "To astore a dove hous", which focuses on attracting and keep pigeons by feeding them a salty, cumin-flavoured wheatcake.<sup>714</sup> The recipe for the dove-catching cake in Sloane 122 is accompanied by two little drawings, one of a dove and one of a dovecote. They attest some level of interaction with the text: perhaps the drawing represents an actual dovecote. It is also possible that the drawing functions as a finding device:<sup>715</sup> on f. 72, a tiny tree is drawn in the uppermost margin, before the introduction to GSP. The effects of cumin on pigeons is not confirmed by modern science, but, like many other animals, pigeons have a natural predilection for sodium.<sup>716</sup> It is thus possible that the cumin-cake would attract pigeons because of its high salinity. The text is clearly aimed at a new owner of a dovecote, who has yet to find a flock of doves, much in the same way as *Purchasyng* is written for a prospective land-owner. Also similar to the latter text is the focus on economy: instead of buying a number of pigeons and wait for them to reproduce, the text promotes a rapid naturalization of the dovecote by attracting wild pigeons, or doves belonging to other flocks.<sup>717</sup> While early medieval law dictated

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and *Germanic Philology* 21.2 (1922), 229-58.

<sup>714</sup> Transcribed from MS Sloane 122: "To astore a dove hous thake salt whete & comyn & boile all to geder in faire water than take the whete & the comyn & strewe in the dovehous & anon the the (sic.) dovys will ete ther of & after when thei flee among other dovys also many as may fele the same thei will follow them in to the dove hous & abide scall yif thei be norischyd with a salt kacce & a salt ? sette in the house and also with whete & comyn as sayde be fore. But put in this dovehous a certyn number of couples of yong pygenys (pigeons) such as comen ete alone & may not well flee", Today, the oil of black cumin (*nigella sativa*) is still used as pigeon medicine, but these seeds are unrelated to true cumin. It is more likely that the recipe above refers to true cumin, as black cumin seeds were commonly known as *nigella* seeds in medieval England.

<sup>715</sup> Another reader's mark is present on f. 74r in the form of a manicule that points to a paragraph on the quince tree. Furthermore, the manuscript contains other drawings, such as swans and human portraits, but these are unrelated to the text and thus unlikely to operate as a finding device.

<sup>716</sup> Contemporary pigeon-keepers who share their experiences on specialised online fora discuss their worries about pigeons that are flocking to the salt bins that are used for gritting roads.

<sup>717</sup> The practice of attracting pigeons is reminiscent of the competitive pigeon-keeping that is still practiced on the rooftops of modern-day cities in the Middle-East, such as Cairo, Beirut, and Amman. The challenge is to attract pigeons at the cost of other pigeon-keepers, essentially 'stealing' them from each other. Essentially, owning a large flock of

that dovecotes were only allowed to be built on noble estates, during the later Middle Ages, pigeons were also kept by townspeople.<sup>718</sup> Thus, depending on the time during which the text was copied, it can be viewed as a aspirational kind of text about achieving a certain status associated with owning a dovecote. It is even possible that the instruction was sourced in a book of secrets or magic, since attracting and repelling animals is a recurrent topic in these books.<sup>719</sup>

Other subjects belonging to the literature of secrets also frequently co-occur in manuscripts containing grafting treatises, most notably recipes for dyes and inks. Building on the idea that grafting treatises are not just practical how-to manuals, the co-occurrence of limning or dyeing and grafting treatises in manuscripts warrants a closer look. There are several manuscripts and printed books that preserved both of these texts. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 54, for instance, contains Nicholas Bollard's treatise, as well as a recipe against the plague and a tract with twenty-seven instructions for writing and illuminating.<sup>720</sup> There are at least three other manuscripts containing both Nicholas Bollard's treatise as well as Middle English recipes for dyes and colours: The Tollemache Book of Secrets,<sup>721</sup> Brogyntyn II.1, and Bodleian Library, MS Latin C. 66.

With regards to the Brogyntyn manuscript, Johnston has argued that "the existence of such a long text [on limning] in the midst of this literary miscellany indicates that the readers and creators of this volume may have been one and the same, for it is hard to imagine why a scribe would include such a text within a book intended for a reader not involved in textual production".<sup>722</sup> The manuscript contains initials and decorations in red and faded brownish and blue ink, so it is indeed possible that the creator of this book used some of the recipes in the limning tract. Yet, the text

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pigeons is a status marker in the same way as dovecotes were status markers for medieval landowners.

<sup>718</sup> D. J. Stone, "The Consumption and Supply of Birds in Late Medieval England" in T. Waldron *et al.*, *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition* (Oxford: UP, 2006), 148-161, p. 159.

<sup>719</sup> Animal charms or magic related to the behaviour of animals are also present in *Tbouck*: gathering rats and fish in one place, catching birds with one hand, making dogs dance, making a black horse turn white, removing all the fleas from a bed in a single turn, reviving drowned flies, repelling flies, and making a herring turn on the griddle by itself. Instructions on stocking a dovecote are also found in the "Tollemache Book of Secrets", a fifteenth-century compilation which belonged to the noble Tollemache family of Helmingham Hall. The manuscript also contains recipes for confectionary, ink-making, pastry, and medicine, lace-making, and Nicholas Bollard's treatise on grafting.

<sup>720</sup> The manuscript was owned by a Richard Bettyson in the sixteenth century.

<sup>721</sup> The manuscript has no shelf mark, as it remains in private collection of the Tollemache family.

<sup>722</sup> Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 109.

may not only have served as a useful resource: the brief introduction to the text on limning in the Brogyntyn manuscript (starting at fol. 33r) states that the reader might “wyesly consider the nature of his colours and kyndely make hys commixtions with 226atural proporcions and mentalle indagacaions connectynge from dyuers recepcions by reson of theyr naturys he schall make curious colourys etc.” Here, the reader is adviced to make his mixtures, having first researched a multitude of sources (“mentalle indagacions connectynge from dyuers recepcions”). This seems to imply that this treatise merits careful studying (one must “wyesly consider” the text), for it will allow the reader “curious colourys”. This text is not just a simple set of recipes for making ink, but an authoritative treatise grounded in knowledge of natural theory.

Similarly, several items in Bodleian Library, MS Latin C. 66 seem to have been copied out of an interest in the more curious aspects of the natural world. This manuscript has been extensively analysed by Deborah Youngs, who signaled that its owner, Humphrey Newton, had an interest in the books of secrets which likely circulated among the rural and urban gentry at that time. Newton was a gentry landowner living in rural Cheshire during the Tudor period. He started his professional life with an income of just over £10 a year (falling below of Thirsk’s gentry threshold) yet he is a prime example of a minor landowner who climbed his way into gentility through marriage. In marrying the heiress Ellen Fitton, Newton “secured an impressive estate: the main possession of Pownall Hall, eight tenancies and several hundred acres of land in the townships of Pownall and Bollin in the parish of Wilmslow”.<sup>723</sup> Judging from his personal manuscript and other life records, Newton was actively involved in the management of his estate: after his inheritance in 1497, Newton “embarked on a number of agricultural improvements: he marled his arable fields, rebuilt a corn mill, constructed a fishery, and put up a fulling mill, designed to exploit the fast flowing waters of the Bollin river and take advantage of a growing cloth industry.<sup>724</sup> While Newton seems to have been forward-looking in his agricultural endeavours, he was unaffected by reformist beliefs

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<sup>723</sup> Youngs, “Newton, Humphrey (1466–1536), landowner” *ODNB* (2014).

<sup>724</sup> Youngs, “Newton”, *ODNB*.

or political poetry and lived a “conventional existence as a member of Cheshire’s landowning society”, as Youngs calls it. She suggests that Newton’s “taste in literature was likewise characteristic of his social class, though perhaps unusually wide-ranging: his interests extended to history and astrology; he knew the poetry of Chaucer and Lydgate, and he may also have played the harp”.<sup>725</sup> However, compared to the manuscripts owned by contemporary landowners, Newton’s interests in astrology, history and music do not stand out as being eclectic. Unique, however, are the many courtly lyrics which comprise a large portion of his notebook, most of them composed by Newton himself. Furthermore, illustrative of Newton’s keenness to improve his status as a landholder is the occurrence of the Middle English *GSP* in his manuscript. Perhaps Newton warmed up to the idea of an exclusive orchard that would astound visitors to the Pownall estates. Yet, seeing as the Cheshire climate would hardly accommodate pomegranates and almonds, such endeavours would probably not have yielded anything fruitful. Newton’s manuscript also contains recipes for inks and magic tricks, for instance, which resemble those compiled by Richard Hill, the owner of MS Balliol 354 (198).<sup>726</sup> It is altogether more likely that Newton and Hill, like other members of the gentry, enjoyed reading about grafting to feed their curiosity about natural secrets.

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<sup>725</sup> Youngs, “Newton”, *ODNB*.

<sup>726</sup> This comparison was also drawn by Youngs in *Humphrey Newton*, p. 114.



## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has brought together a number of strands that were introduced in earlier chapters, and applied them to the subject of grafting treatises, a strand of agricultural literature that attests to the wider significance of ‘practical’ literature in late-medieval culture. In the third chapter, I contended that medieval tree imagery frequently visualises the tensions between nurture and nature, phenotype and genotype, truth and deception. Symbolism surrounding trees is abundant in medieval literature, particularly in the educational texts that were favoured among the gentry, which makes it likely that the readers of manuscripts containing grafting treatises were familiar with conflicting attitudes towards natural and social hybridity. As romance literature furnished grafted trees with a connotation of liminality and ambiguity, it is possible that the readers of grafting treatises entertained the idea that trees belonging to the realm of fiction could grow in their own orchards.<sup>727</sup> The codicological context of many agricultural treatises, moreover, appears to indicate that their attraction is constituted by factors that override the functionality of the actual text.

In §5.3.i-ii I discussed the development of practical texts on the subject of grafting, and concluded that, since both the classical and medieval texts on grafting betray strong ties to literary traditions, they should be considered literary rather than practical. In §5.3.i, I illustrated how grafting texts are distributed across medieval manuscripts, and how often these text feature alongside other texts that are typically linked to a bourgeois and gentry readership. In §5.3.ii I provide examples of readers who left arboricultural notations in their manuscript, sometimes writing from experience, sometimes basing themselves on the written tradition. These notes, however, do not provide conclusive evidence that medieval readers experimented with the grafting instructions that featured in their manuscripts. Even the early modern botanist Henry Dingley, who owned an expansive collection of horticultural works and recorded many of his own gardening experiences, did not leave us with any clues about his understanding of grafting. Nevertheless, as

explained in §5.5, gentry individuals were continuously targeted by Early Modern printers, who recognised their interest in how-to literature with a focus on creating unique gardenscapes. Imparting a sense of the fantastical into the titles of printed tracts, such as *La maniere de enter & planter en iardins plusieurs choses bien estranges*, however, was not just a printer's marketing strategy. In §5.6, I described how the literature on grafting dovetails the literature of secrets, through a shared focus on transformation. As I conclude at the end of this paragraph, the fact that grafting treatises feature in late-medieval manuscripts and printed books with a focus on natural secrets, indicates that grafting texts, too, uncover 'secret' knowledge that possessed the transformative quality of turning an outsider into an insider. Even if the form of grafting treatises suggests that they could have been used practically, it is also likely that they were read for the same reason as John Mandeville's *Travels* – to marvel at the wonders of the world.



## 6: Conclusion

At the outset of this dissertation I presented a conundrum for scholars of medieval agricultural literature: while it can be presumed that medieval landowners would have been inquisitive about agricultural procedures, the agronomical literature that was available to them was limited and often impractical. Unlike other genres of practical literature, such as medicine and astronomy, agricultural texts were not necessarily read by those performing agricultural procedures, as field knowledge was handed down orally from farmer to farmer. The paucity of vernacular agricultural literature on contemporary agricultural practices confirms that there was no real need to put agricultural techniques in writing. So, how should we explain the presence of agricultural texts in medieval manuscript compilations, especially those of the gentry? I set out to tackle this problem by viewing agricultural literature through different lenses. By looking at the scribes, compilers, readers and printers involved in the transmission of agricultural literature, I traced the cultural context in which these texts would have been read. In addition, by taking into account the other texts in the manuscripts containing agricultural literature, I distilled the various functions which these texts may have served in the later Middle Ages.

In the first chapter I provided an overview of premodern husbandry literature and the critical reception of the Middle English texts associated with this genre. This survey gave me cause to conclude that historical attitudes towards husbandry literature still negatively influence contemporary scholarship. As I noted in this literary survey, until the last fifty years, many scholars had assumed that agricultural literature that disseminated across the medieval west was reflective of the expertise of European agriculturalists. Contemporary scholarship has largely moved away from this view, emphasising the exchange of ideas that enabled the transfer of knowledge from East to West. Yet there are prevailing misunderstandings about the practicality of the texts that travelled to medieval Europe. If we take into account the cultural context of the genre's (classical) antecedents, it is evident that so-called utilitarian works are often influenced by literary compositions. Therefore, repositories of practical texts that were produced in the Middle Ages,

such as Keiser's *Manual*, list texts and manuscripts that do not accurately reflect medieval practices. Furthermore, the largest share of medieval manuscripts comprises only very few texts we consider to be 'literary', and those literary texts are more often than not surrounded by 'practical' texts. I reckon, therefore, that we should not treat the contents of these manuscripts in isolation: when discussing the literary texts in manuscripts, we must also include works of a factual or utilitarian nature and vice versa.

As I explained in the second chapter of this dissertation, medieval manuscripts contain hardly any user marks that evince how medieval readers engaged with agricultural texts, so we cannot precisely pinpoint how they viewed or applied the texts in front of them. The closest we may get to tracing the reception of husbandry texts is to analyse the contents of the manuscripts in which they appear. To facilitate this approach, I generated network visualisations that depict the distribution of texts in Middle English manuscripts, which provide an overview of the shared transmission of practical and literary texts. To show how a practical text can change meaning in different environs, I presented a case study of Lydgate's *Dietary*, which explicated the interplay between literary texts and practical texts in manuscripts that were owned by middle class individuals and families. Moreover, I highlight that Orlemanski's ideas about the *Dietary*'s 'generic flexibility' can be transferred to other forms of practical writing, too. This flexibility can be attested by the presence of agricultural texts in manuscripts collections that were shaped by the tastes of the late-medieval gentry, as discussed in the second half of this dissertation.

At the start of the third chapter I revisited the earliest agricultural texts produced in Britain, this time to analyse how discursive flexibility allowed these texts to circulate in different cultural contexts. As illustrated by the late-medieval manuscripts of Henley's *Husbandry*, it is evident that later readers would copy this early agricultural treatise because of its historical interest, not because of its agricultural merits. Moreover, the Welsh and Middle English manuscripts and printed books containing Henley's tract are all supplemented with chapters on tree planting, which signals a re-modelling of this 'British' production according to pseudo-agronomical fashion, no doubt

influenced by the unceasing popularity of Palladius. The transformation of the *Husbandry* attests to what extent texts are shaped by cultural moulds, a subject which I further explored in relation to the subject of grafting in the latter part of this chapter.

In chapter four I questioned the interrelatedness of husbandry texts and other texts in gentry-owned manuscripts. I approached the question from the perspective of literary gentrification, and applied the parameters associated with this process to the husbandry genre, in order to trace the influence of the gentry on the spread of husbandry books. A large number of gentry-owned manuscripts that members of the late-medieval gentry collected contain ‘conduct literature’ and other texts that promoted a modest and moderate lifestyle. This suggests that late-medieval gentry collected reading materials that reinforced their ideas about gentry identity and landownership, and may have used such texts in the education of their children and themselves.

In the fifth chapter, I turned my focus to the prominence of arborical literature in late-medieval manuscripts and printed books, and explored how the hybrid character of the genre facilitated its inclusion in books of variegated interest. While some medieval grafting treatises were owned by active gardeners, as evinced by manuscripts discussed in paragraph 5.3, the contents of these supposedly practical works are frequently non-utilitarian or simply unattainable. It is, therefore, remarkable that vernacular texts on grafting are often found in a gentry environment: grafting knowledge, it appears, was subjected to literary gentrification concurrent with its translation into different vernaculars. As I explained in the latter part of this chapter, the gentrification of practical works touched readers on an individual scale: in their capacity to bring about transformation through edification, books of (secret) knowledge, including those on grafting, would allow readers to associate themselves as part of an erudite in-group.

Together, these five chapters reflect that Middle English agricultural literature was read across ages, by families and individuals, medical practitioners and gardening enthusiasts, and in different societal circles. This dissertation has provided a synthesis of ideas from a wide range of scholarly disciplines, from the subject of gentrification to the notion of discursive flexibility, and

from the study of manuscript compilation to the palaeographical identification of manuscript owners. Despite the initial premise of this dissertation, which was narrowly defined as ‘husbandry books in manuscript and print’, my research has spilled over into different territories precisely because of the eclectic nature of the subject matter at hand. The multi-text manuscripts that feature in my research led me to consider literature from different time-periods, languages, and genres; forages on unfamiliar terrains which allowed me to look beyond conventional frameworks. An open approach, I have come to experience, is necessary for the study of practical literature in medieval manuscripts.

For instance, by consulting publications on premodern Arabic texts, I was able to understand the reason why tree-grafting became the subject of more elaborate treatises in the medieval West: the predominance of arboricultural treatises is partly owed to the selectivity of Arab agronomists working in the translation centres of al-Andalus, who censored Latin and Greek tracts according to their religious principles, but left the sections on grafting largely intact. In addition, a comparative approach of the Middle English version of the grafting treatise *Godfridus super Palladium* with the German and Iberian versions opened up new perspectives on the impracticality of this work. Looking at this text counter-chronologically, moreover, by viewing it in light of the Early Modern books of secrets, led me to conclude that a single text can simultaneously function as a piece of travel writing, a medical recipe-book, a collection of secrets, and a banquet-table book.

During my analysis of agricultural texts in Middle English compilations, I encountered several adjacent points of interest that remain open for further exploration. For instance, was the notary Henry Rowce involved in the dissemination of literary texts that feature in Lansdowne 762 or was this manuscript purely a personal item? And, perhaps even more intriguing, is Rowce’s occurrence in Rastell’s jest-book a fiction or is there any truth in his misadventure with the widow Edith? There is also more to be said about the educational value of practical literature than I have been able to cover in my second chapter: the apparent conventional didactic structure of poems such as *Purchasyng* and *The Feate of Gardening*, for instance, gives reason to suspect that they were

read by children. Further research on the format of medieval school texts may confirm or disprove this hypothesis. Furthermore, the presence of grafting treatises in medical compendia is a subject that ought to be explored more fully. In addition, the literature of secrets in the Middle Ages warrants more scholarly attention: manuscripts that are currently categorised as ‘household manuscripts’ contain sections that may be related to the tradition of secrets, which sheds a different light on the idea that such manuscripts were used practically in medieval households. We should be able to get a much more accurate view of what kinds of literature medieval readers did and did not use practically if we compare those sections on limning, ‘magical’ recipes and charms,<sup>728</sup> prognostications, and grafting concurrently with the alchemical and *secretum secretorum*-traditions. Lastly, I would like to suggest that scholars working on medieval multi-text manuscripts further expand the use of network visualisations. In my research, the use of Palladio gained me insight into the shared distribution of texts across manuscripts, but the possibilities for using network theory are far greater than I have been able to explore. This would call for an integrated approach: for instance, using an existing database such as the *DIMEV* as a starting point, a network showing how Middle English verse texts are distributed across manuscripts could be supplied with codicological and palaeographical data. Yet, before such a network could be realised, several changes are necessary: library catalogues would have to be updated and turned into an open source database, and existing databases of scribal hands (such as *Late Medieval English Scribes*) and dialectal features (*The Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*), would have to be integrated into a single open source database.

A recurrent theme within this dissertation has been the aspirational quality of practical literature. My argument was influenced by Keiser’s chapter “Practical Books for the Gentleman”, in which he states that late-medieval readers would obtain practical literature to fulfil a desire to

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<sup>728</sup> In a blog post on *The Recipes Project*, Véronique Soreau shows the interaction between magic and medicine in MS O.1.13 (19), see <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/10353>. In addition, the website *Late Medieval English Magic*, run by Laura Mitchell, catalogues all Middle English manuscripts containing charms and other ‘magical’ texts, several of which also recur in my own database of agricultural texts, see <https://magicalmedieval.wordpress.com/>.



read books that matched a gentry lifestyle. Yet how can we measure aspiration? Contemporary evidence, at least, shows how books can be doorways to a different lifestyle. In recent years, millions of cookbooks from celebrated Israeli chef Yotam Ottolenghi have flown off the shelves, enticing readers with vibrant photos of jewelled rice and luxuriously spiced meals (a typical Ottolenghi recipe calls for ingredients such as *za'atar*, preserved lemons, and pomegranate molasses). Sales figures confirm a measurable 'Ottolenghi Effect', with the demand for Middle-Eastern ingredients rapidly increasing at Waitrose, a British supermarket chain mostly frequented by middle class customers.<sup>729</sup> Direct evidence of the employment of agricultural texts in late-medieval Britain, however, has been harder to find: as archaeological evidence of the propagation of Mediterranean fruits in medieval England is scarce, there is no notable Palladius-effect to speak of. Still, we can also not be sure that the two million modern households that own an Ottolenghi book have switched their weekday menu; rather, a cookbook on a shelf could be viewed as a more visible token of aspiration than saffron in a closed cupboard. Similarly, Middle English husbandry books could appeal to the gentry's aspirations not just as containers of knowledge, but as markers of status. It is my view that they should be considered "impractical books for the gentleman", since practicality was not necessarily their main aim. To me, medieval husbandry books are best described with a Dutch word: *schijnvruchten*, a botanical term which translates into English as 'accessory-' or 'false fruits'.<sup>730</sup> Besides referring to the fruits described in grafting treatises, which are evidently false, the term also epitomises the genre as a whole: the first part of the word, *schijn* (semblance), connotes appearance and status, while *vruchten* may be interpreted as the fruits of agricultural knowledge which, when reaped, enhance one's social image. Husbandry books thus did not yield any true fruits, but made for excellent accessories.

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<sup>729</sup> See Martha De Lacey, "Hot for houmous, silly for sumac, potty for preserved lemons: Sales of Middle Eastern foods soar as Brits embrace exotic flavours", *Daily Mail*, 30 May 2013. A similar phenomenon occurred in the 1970s, when TV-chef Delia Smith recommended a brand of omelette pan, which caused such a demand that it nearly meant the end of the pan manufacturer. Moreover, this so-called 'Delia-effect' repeatedly resulted in empty supermarket isles around Christmas.

<sup>730</sup> An accessory fruit (or false fruit, a term no longer in use by botanists), assumes the guise of a fruit, and is commonly accepted as a fruit, even though it is composed of components that are not found in 'true fruits', see Stephen Blackmore, *How Plants Work: Form, Diversity, Survival* (London: Ivy Press, 2018), p. 308.

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## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 List of Manuscripts and Printed Books

#### Primary Corpus

*De Cura Rei Familiaris* (Middle English, Middle Scots)

Cambridge, University Library, Kk.1.5 (44)

London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 306 (177)

*Godfridus Super Palladium* (Middle English)

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2)

Cambridge, Trinity College, O.1.13 (19)

Cambridge, University Library, Ee.1.13 (34)

Dallas, Bridwell Library, MS 7 (51)

London, British Library, Add. 5467 (92)

London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. viii (106)

London, British Library, Harley 116 (115)

London, British Library, Sloane 122 (160)

London, British Library, Sloane 7 (170)

London, British Library, Add. 23002 (78)

London, British Library, Egerton 2622 (110)

London, British Library, Harley 1785 (122)

London, British Library, Sloane 686 (169)

London, Society of Antiquaries, 101 (182)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 591 (215)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, e. Musaeo 116, part I (132)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 506 (249)

*The Craft of Graffynge*

London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287 (274)

London, British Library, Sloane 686 (169)

*John Gardener (The Feate of Gardening)*

London, British Library, Sloane 7 (170)

London, Wellcome Hist. Med. Libr., 406 (182)

Cambridge, Trinity College, O.9.38 (22)

Grosseste's *Rules*

Canterbury, Cathedral Archives & Libr., Roll C.1293 (46)

London, British Library, Add. 33969 (85)

London, British Library, Add. 38821 (91)

London, British Library, Add. 5762 (93)

London, British Library, Harley 1005 (114)

London, British Library, Harley 273 (127)

London, British Library, Harley 548 (138)  
London, British Library, Otton Otho C. XII (150)  
London, British Library, Sloane 1986 (163)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 98 (227)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fairfax 24 (236)

*Husbandry* (Anonymous, Anglo-French)

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 301 (6)  
Cambridge, St. John's College, N.13 (recto and dorse of a roll) (17)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.20 (35)  
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.3.11 (40)  
Canterbury, Cathedral Archives & Library, Rg. B (47)  
Canterbury, Cathedral Archives & Library, Rg. J (48)  
London, British Library, Addit. 6159 (97)  
London, British Library, Royal 9 A.II (158)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1524 (207)  
Oxford, Merton College, MS 1258 (261)  
Paris, Bibl. Nat. franc. 400 (264)

*Homily on husbandry* (Anglo-French)

London, British Library, Egerton 3724 (111)

*Miscellaneous notations on arboriculture* (Middle English)

Cambridge, Trinity College, O.1.13 (19)  
Dallas, Bridwell Library MS 7 (51)  
London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. viii (106)  
London, British Library, Sloane 122 (160)  
London, British Library, Harley 1785 (122)  
London, British Library, Sloane 686 (169)  
London, British Library, Royal 1 A. xxxii (151)  
London, British Library, Sloane 442 (168)  
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287 (274)

*Nicholas Bolland's treatise on grafting* (Middle English)

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.1.13 (19)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, R.14.32 (23)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.1.13 (34)  
Dallas, Bridwell Library MS 7 (51)  
Harvard University, Eng 938 (65)  
Kensington Palace, Duke of Gloucester 45 [olim York House 45] (67)  
London, British Library, Add. 5467 (92)  
London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. viii (106)  
London, British Library, Harley 116 (115)  
London, British Library, Sloane 122 (160)

London, British Library, Sloane 7 (170)  
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 101 (182)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 591 (215)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 54 (225)

*Middle English Palladius*

Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 104 (62)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Add. A.369 (201)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Duke Humfrey d.2 (229)

*Rules of Purchasyng*

Cambridge, University Library, Hh.2.6 (1)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
Canterbury, Cathedral Library, Lit. B.2 (49)  
London, British Library, Addit. 25001 (79)  
London, British Library, Addit. 6702 (98)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 470 (147)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149)  
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xlvii (153)  
London, Lincoln's Inn, Misc. 2 (181)  
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354 (198)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61 (210)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 54 (225)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. misc. c.66 (240)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.252 (247)

*Senechaucie*

Cambridge, Gonville & Caius Coll., 365 (9)  
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.7.6 (28)  
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.9.38 (33)  
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.3.11 (40)  
Cambridge, University Library, Mm.1.27 (45)  
London, British Library, Addit. 5762 (93)  
London, British Library, Harley 1208 (116)  
London, British Library, Harley 395 (31)  
London, Corporation of London, Records Office, Liber Horn (175)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 28 (237)  
Romsey, Mottisfont Abbey, Libr. Of Mrs. Gilbert Russell, Rental of Mottisfont Priory (267)  
Trowbridge, County Record Office, W.R.O. 1203 (270)

Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* (Anglo-French)

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 301 (6)  
Cambridge, Gonville & Caius Coll., 205 (8)  
Cambridge, Gonville & Caius Coll., 365 (9)

Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O.9.26 (18)  
Cambridge, University Library Dd.7.14 (27)  
Cambridge, University Library Dd.7.6 (28)  
Cambridge, University Library Ee.1.1 (29)  
Cambridge, University Library, Add. 6860 (31)  
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.9.38 (33)  
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.3.11 (40)  
London, British Library, Add. 6159 (97)  
London, British Library, Add. 20709 (76)  
London, British Library, Add. 15056 (74)  
London, British Library, Egerton 3724 (111)  
London, British Library, Hargrave 336 (112)  
London, British Library, Harley 1208 (116)  
London, British Library, Harley 493 (135)  
London, British Library, Harley 3860 (142)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 1176 (146)  
London, College of Arms, Arundel xiv (174)  
London, Corporation of London, Records Office, Liber Horn (175)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1524 (207)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 147 (221)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 98 (227)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.471 (248)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Selden Supra 74 (258)  
Paris, Bibl. Nat. franc. 400 (264)  
Romsey, Mottisfont Abbey, Libr. Of Mrs. Gilbert Russell, Rental of Mottisfont Priory (267)  
Trowbridge, County Record Office, W.R.O. 1203 (270)  
Taunton, Somerset Record Office, DO/AH 3/6, dorse of roll (273)

Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* (Middle English)

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 394D (3)  
Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.1.13 (19)  
London, British Library, MS Sloane 686 (169)  
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287 (274)

Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* (Middle, EM Welsh)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Jesus College MS 111 (260)  
Cardiff, Central Library, MS 2.621 (10)

## **Additional Texts in Networks**

*Aaron Danielis*

London, British Library, Addit. 27329 (80)  
London, British Library, Arundel 42 (102)

*The ABC of Aristotle* [DIMEV 6054]

- Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
Cambridge, University Library Ff.5.48 (30)  
Dublin, Trinity College 509 (52)  
London, British Library, Add. 37049 (89)  
London, British Library, Add. 60577 (96)  
London, British Library, Add. 36983 (88)  
London, British Library, Harley 1304 (118)  
London, British Library, Harley 1706 (119)  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, 853 (179)  
London, British Library, Harley 5086 (136)  
London, British Library, Harley MS 541 (144)  
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Takamiya Deposit 61 (193)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. misc. c.66 (240)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 384 (224)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.196 (246)

*Abuses of the Age* [DIMEV 1506]

- Cambridge, St. John's College, B.15 (15)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
Dublin, Trinity College, 509 (52)  
Dublin, Trinity College, 517 (54)  
London, British Library, Add. 8151 (99)  
London, British Library, Add. 9066 (100)  
London, British Library, Add. 37049 (89)  
London, British Library, Add. 60577 (96)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
London, British Library, Harley 3362 (129)  
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xvii (154)  
London, Westminster Abbey, 27 (188)  
Manchester, John Rylands Library, Lat. 394 (190)  
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Takamiya Deposit 61 (193)  
Norwich, Castle Museum, 158.926 (196)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 750 (211)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 797 (217)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 95 (226)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 748 (245)  
Worcester, Cathedral Library, F.154 (272)

*Warning against executors* [DIMEV 3356, 1136, 3344]

- London, British Library, Add. 16165 (75)  
London, British Library, Harley 3038 (128)  
Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. E.1 (233)

*Political prophecy by the stars* [DIMEV 5213]  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149)  
London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C. iv (104)  
London, British Library, Harley 559 (145)  
London, British Library, Addit. 5943 (95)

*Cato Major* [DIMEV 1418]  
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 481D (4)  
Cambridge, Jesus College, Q.G.8 (12)  
Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006 (13)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.31 (36)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ff.1.6 (38)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ff.4.9 (39)  
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.4.12 (41)  
Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin 519 (55)  
Durham, University Library, Cosin V.ii.14 (57)  
Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 259 (63)  
Göttingen, University Library, Philol.163 n (64)  
London, British Library, Add. 29729 (82)  
London, British Library, Add. 34193 (86)  
London, British Library, Add. 38179 (90)  
London, British Library, Harley 116 (115)  
London, British Library, Arundel 168 (101)  
London, British Library, Harley 43 (133)  
London, British Library, Harley 172 (120)  
London, British Library, Royal 18 D. ii (156)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
London, British Library, Harley 271 (126)  
London, British Library, Harley 4733 (134)  
London, British Library, Harley 7333 (141)  
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xlvii (153)  
Manchester, Chetham's Library, 8009 (189)  
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M775 (195)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. E.15 (235)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.48 (250)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 32 (156)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 35 (200)  
Rome, English College, AVCAU MS 1405 (266)  
San Marino, Henry Huntington Library, HM 144 (268)

*Political prophecy according to the throw of the dice* [DIMEV 1215]  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
Dublin, Trinity College, 516 (53)  
London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C. iv (104)

London, British Library, Harley 559 (145)  
London, British Library, Harley 7332 (140)  
London, British Library, Sloane 2578 (65)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149)  
London (Kew), Public Record Office, SP 1/232 (70)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. Ee. B. 8 (203)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D.1062 (253)

John Skelton's *Collyn Cloute* [DIMEV 6226]  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149)  
London, British Library, Harley 2252 (124)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.813 (251)

John Lydgate's *Dietary* [DIMEV 1356]  
Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, MS 514 (5)  
Cambridge, Jesus College, Q.G.8 (12)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
Dublin, Trinity College 516 (53)  
Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 259 (63)  
Leiden, University Library, Vossius Germ. Gall. Q.9 (68)  
London, British Library, Addit. 34360 (87)  
London, British Library, Arundel 168 (101)  
London, British Library, Egerton 1995 (109)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
London, British Library, Harley 2252 (124)  
London, British Library, Harley 4011 (132)  
London, British Library, Harley 541 (144)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 699 (148)  
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xlvii (153)  
London, British Library, Stowe 982 (173)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61 (210)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 48 (214)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 683 (244)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.48 (250)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.86 (252)  
Rome, English College, AVCAU MS 1405 (266)  
Cambridge, St. John's College, G.23 (16)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.13 (20)  
Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin 537 (56)  
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' 1.1.6 (58)  
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' 23.7.11 (60)  
Edinburgh, University Library, MS 205 (61)  
London, British Library, Addit. 10099 (72)  
London, British Library, Addit. 11307 (73)  
London, British Library, Arundel 168 (101)

London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xx (107)  
London, British Library, Harley 5401 (137)  
London, British Library, Harley 941 (143)  
London, British Library, Sloane 3534 (167)  
London, British Library, Sloane 775 (171)  
London, British Library, Sloane 989 (172)  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, 444 (178)  
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 101 (182)  
London, Wellcome Library, 406 (183)  
London, Wellcome Library, 411 (184)  
Nottingham, University Library, Mellish Lm 1 (197)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Addit. B.60 (202)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 912 (220)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, e. Musaeo 52 (230)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. Theol. D.15 (241)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 35 (257)  
Oxford, University College, MS 60 (263)  
San Marino, Henry Huntington Library, HM 183 (269)  
London, Wellcome Library, 8004 (186)

John Lydgate's *Dyte of Womenhis Hornys (Horns Away!)* [DIMEV 6831]

Cambridge, Jesus College, Q.G.8 (12)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, R.3.19 (25)  
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.4.12 (41)  
London, British Library, Addit. 34360 (87)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Takamiya Deposit 61 (193)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 59 (209)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 683 (244)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.86 (252)  
London, British Library, Harley 2255 (125)

*Thomas of Erceldoune* [DIMEV 6372]

Cambridge, University Library Ff.5.48 (30)  
Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, 91 (69)  
London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E. x (108)  
London, British Library, Sloane 2578 (165)

*Four Complexions* [DIMEV 4168]

Cambridge, Trinity College, R.3.19 (25)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ff.1.6 (38)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 59 (209)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 88 (222)



*The Properties of a Good Horse* [Manual 440]

- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.9.38 (22)  
Columbia, Pimpton University, Addit 2 (50)  
Huntington, Libr HU, 1051 (66)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 8606 (219)  
London, British Library, Cotton Galba E. ix (105)  
London, British Library, Harley 5086 (136)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 762 (149)  
London, British Library, Sloane 1201 (159)  
Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)

John Lydgate's *The Horse, The Goose, and the Sheep* [DIMEV 1075]

- Cambridge, University Library, Hh.4.12 (41)  
Leiden, University Library Vossius Germ. Gall. Q.9 (68)  
London, British Library, Addit. 34360 (87)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 699 (148)  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, 306 (177)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.48 (250)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.86 (252)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 50 (208)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 754 (212)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 598 (243)  
San Marino, Henry Huntington Library, HM 144 (268)

*The Mourning of the Hunted Hare* [DIMEV 922]

- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2)  
Cambridge, University Library Ff.5.48 (30)

*Jack and his Stepdame* [DIMEV 1599]

- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1 (2)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.86 (252)  
Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.35 (37)  
London, British Library, Addit. 27879 (81)  
London, British Library, Sloane 7 (170)  
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.9.38 (22)  
London, Wellcome Library, 406 (183)

*Libeaus Desconus* [DIMEV 2824]

- London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ii (103)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61 (210)  
London, British Library, Addit. 27879 (81)  
London, Lincoln's Inn, Hale 150 (180)

Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, Naples XIII.B.29 (191)

*The Lyttyle Childrenes Lytil Boke*

London, British Library, Egerton 1995 (109)

London, British Library, Harley 541 (144)

Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)

Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.35 (37)

*Marchalsy* [DIMEV 5224]

Kensington Palace, Duke of Gloucester 45 (olim York House 45) (67)

London, British Library, Harley 5086 (136)

Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 8606 (219)

Cambridge, Trinity College, R.14.51 (24)

Cambridge, University Library Dd.4.44 (26)

London, British Library, Harley 6398 (139)

London, Wellcome Library, 5650 (185)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1437 (205)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 291 (223)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Wood empt. 18 (259)

*None so nyse* [DIMEV 5584]

Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)

London, British Library, Addit. 34360 (87)

London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 59 (209)

*The Book of Nurture* [DIMEV 2556]

London, British Library, Harley 4011 (132)

Manchester, Chetham's Library, 8009 (189)

London, British Library, Royal 17 D. xv (155)

London, British Library, Sloane 1315 (161)

London, British Library, Sloane 2027 (164)

*Occupations of the months* [DIMEV 944]

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 88 (222)

London, British Library, Addit. 22720 (77)

*Parvus Cato* [DIMEV 6321]

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 481 (4)

Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006 (13)

Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.31 (36)

Cambridge, University Library, Ff.4.9 (39)

Cambridge, University Library, Hh.4.12 (41)

Durham, University Library, Cosin V.ii.14 (57)  
Glasgow, University Library, Hunter 259 (63)  
Göttingen, University Library, Philol.163 n (64)  
London, British Library, Addit. 38179 (90)  
London, British Library, Arundel 168 (101)  
London, British Library, Harley 116 (115)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
London, British Library, Harley 271 (126)  
London, British Library, Harley 4733 (134)  
London, British Library, Harley 7333 (141)  
Manchester, Chetham's Library, 8009 (189)  
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M775 (195)  
Rome, English College, AVCAU MS 1405 (266)  
San Marino, Henry Huntington Library, HM 144 (268)  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, 306 (177)  
London, British Library, Arundel 168 (101)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. E.15 (234)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson D.328 (199)  
Untraced, Present whereabouts unknown, olim Coughton Court (271)

*Proud Gallants* [DIMEV 6831]

Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53 (21)  
London, British Library, Harley 372 (130)  
Oxford, University College, MS 154 (262)

*The virtues of Rosemary*

Cambridge, Trinity College, O.1.13 (9)  
London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. viii (106)  
London, British Library, Sloane 122 (160)  
London, British Library, Sloane 7 (170)

John Lydgate's *Stans Puer ad Mensam* [DIMEV 3588]

Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, MS 514 (5)  
Cambridge, Jesus College, Q.G.8 (12)  
Cambridge, University Library, Ff.4.9 (39)  
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.4.12 (41)  
Leiden, University Library Vossius Germ. Gall. Q.9 (68)  
London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ii (103)  
London, British Library, Harley 2251 (123)  
London, British Library, Harley 4011 (132)  
London, British Library, Lansdowne 699 (148)  
Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, MS 514 (5)  
Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 59 (209)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 48 (214)

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 683 (244)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.48 (250)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.86 (252)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 32 (255)  
Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120 (14)  
London, British Library, Addit. 5467 (92)  
London, British Library, Royal 5 A.v (157)  
London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 853 (179)  
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Takamiya Deposit 94 (194)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 686 (216)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D.328 (254)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 32 (255)

*Treatise on wine*

Oxford, Balliol College, 354 (198)  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. E.1 (233)

**Printed Books**

ISTC ib00382300  
ISTC ib00382300  
STC 10995.5  
STC 109955  
STC 109955  
STC 13195-13202  
STC 13197  
STC 1967.3  
STC 1967.5  
STC 22870  
STC 2373  
STC 24384  
STC 250007  
STC 26069  
STC 5293  
STC 5874  
STC 5952.5  
STC 5954

## 8.2 Manuscripts: Ownership and Dates

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.2.6	1		1400 - 1500
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn II.1	2	Hafodunos, Denbighshire (Wales)	After 1453
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 394D (olim Henwrt 92)	3		
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 481D	4	England. Owned by Sir John Cutts of Childerly, Cambridgeshire (d. 1615) and Thomas Gawdy of Snitterton, Norfolk	Late 15th century
Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, MS 514	5		1475 - 1525
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 301	6		ca. 1300 - 1325
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 261	7		
Cambridge, Gonville & Caius MS 205	8		1260
Cambridge, Gonville & Caius MS 365	9	Computus book of Gonville Hall	1423 - 1523
Cambridge, Gonville and Caius, MS 175	11		1425 - 1450
Cambridge, Jesus College, Q.G.8	12		1475 - 1500
Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys 2006	13	John Kyriell, William Fettyplace, later owned by Samuel Pepys, who probably bound the two parts of the manuscript together. The second MS contains two names: one of a member of the gentry, and one of a London mercer	1400 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120	14		1100 - 1200
Cambridge, St. John's College, B.15	15		1300 - 1500
Cambridge, St. John's College, G.23	16		1487
Cambridge, St. John's College, N.13 (recto and verso of a roll)	17		
Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O.9.26	18	Christ Church, Canterbury	1400 - 1450
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.1.13	19		1400 - 1800
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.13	20		1450 - 1700
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.2.53	21	The Ramston family of Chingford, Essex, see §4.5.i.	1400 - 1500
Cambridge, Trinity College, O.9.38	22	A holster-book produced in Glastonbury	1438 - 1500
Cambridge, Trinity College, R.14.32	23		1400 - 1500
Cambridge, Trinity College, R.14.51	24		1400 - 1500
Cambridge, Trinity College, R.3.19	25	London	1478 - 1483
Cambridge, University Library Ff.5.48	30	Scribe: Gilbert Pilkington, secular priest working in Lichfield, orig. from Lancashire	1450 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Add. 6860	31	Bury St. Edmunds	1300 - 1350
Cambridge, University	26		1400 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Library, Dd.4.44			
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.7.14	27		1295 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.7.6	28		1307 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.9.38	33		1300 - 1400
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.1.1	29	Used in the monastery of Luffield	1200 - 1350
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.1.13	34	Records the name John Smythe	1400 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.20	35		1280
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.31	36		1425 - 1475
Cambridge, University Library, Ee.4.35	37	Richard Calle, bailiff of the Pastons	
Cambridge, University Library, Ff.1.6	38	“Findern Manuscript”, produced for the Finderns, a gentry family from Derbyshire	1450 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Ff.4.9	39	Leicestershire	1450 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.3.11	40	Records the name of a sixteenth-century owner, F. Tate, who was a reader in the Middle Temple during the reign of James I	1000 - 1100
Cambridge, University Library, Hh.4.12	41		1475 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Ii.3.26	42	Lent to George Towkars by George Harolde (sergeant, poss. legal) in 1558	1400 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Kk.1.5	43		1490 - 1600

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Cambridge, University Library, Ll.1.18	44		1450 - 1500
Cambridge, University Library, Mm.1.27	45		1300 - 1350
Canterbury, Cathedral Archives & Libr., Roll C.1293	46		
Canterbury, Cathedral Archives & Library, Rg. B	47		
Canterbury, Cathedral Archives & Library, Rg. J	48		
Canterbury, Cathedral Library, Lit. B.2	49		
Columbia University, Plimpton Manuscript MS Addit. 2	50		
Dallas, Bridwell Library MS 7	51		c. 1400
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 509	52	Owned by John Bale, Londoner, lawyer and judge. The manuscript also contains the name of the London scrivener and chronicler Robert Bale	1400 - 1500
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 516	53	John Benet, Harlington, Bedfordshire	1435 - 1462
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 517	54		
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 519	55		
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 537	56		
Durham, University	57	Contains the names of James Elwood of Canterbury, the servant of a Mr Railton,	1400 - 1500



Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Library, Cosin V.ii.14		Thomas Payton, and Richard Massey	
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 1.1.6	58	Compiled by George Bannatyne (b. 1545), student of St. Andrews and merchant burgess of Edinburgh	c. 1568
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 19.3.1	59	The "Heege Manuscript"	1475 - 1500
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 23.7.11	60		1200 - 1500
Edinburgh, University Library, MS 205	61	A volume containing lecture notes on logic taught at Louvain. They were copied by Magnus Makculloch, a clerk of the diocese of Ross and was patronised by Archbishop Scheves of St Andrews	1450 - 1500
Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 104	62	A copy of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester's <i>Palladius</i>	1299 - 1499
Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 259	63	Written in the hand of Stephen Dodesham, Carthusian monk of Witham Charterhouse, later removed to Sheen	1399 - 1499
Göttingen, University Library, Philol.163 n	64		1500 - 1600
Harvard University, Eng 938	65		1450
Kensington Palace, Duke of Gloucester 45 (olim York House 45)	67		ca. 1450
Leiden, University Library Vossius Germ. Gall. Q.9	68	Owned by a John Kyng (possibly of Dunmowe) in the fifteenth century. The manuscript contains several owner marks	15th C
Lincoln, Cathedral Chapter Library, MS 91 (A.5.2.)	69	Copied and owned by Robert Thornton	1430 - 1450

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
London (Kew), Public Record Office, SP 1/232	70		
London, British Library Harley 2253	71	Associations with the Benedictine priory of Leominster, Hereford	1250 - 1350
London, British Library, Addit. 16165	75	Copied by John Shirley	1400 - 1450
London, British Library, Addit. 27329	80		
London, British Library, Addit. 27879	81		
London, British Library, Addit. 32085	84		1275 - 1325
London, British Library, Addit. 33969	85		
London, British Library, Addit. 34360	87	Owned by John Stow in the 16 <sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript was copied by the Hammond Scribe, who was involved in copying at least fifteen manuscript, many of which have overlapping texts (Marshall, Simone Celine, "Scribal Interpretation in the Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts", in <i>The Anonymous Tekst: The 500-year History of The Assembly of Ladies</i> , p. 37-8)	1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 36983	88	Dunstable/Warwickshire	c. 1435 -c. 1445
London, British Library, Addit. 37049	89	A Yorkshire or Lincolnshire Carthusian monastery	1460 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 38179	90		1700 - 1850
London, British Library, Addit. 38821	91		c. 1285
London, British Library,	93		1275 - 1300

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Addit. 5762			
London, British Library, Addit. 5943	95	Copied by Thomas Turke	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 60577	96	The main scribe of this manuscript is an unnamed monk at St Swithun's Priory, Winchester. The manuscript continued to circulate in the Winchester area, both in monastic, religious, and lay hands	1487 - 1574
London, British Library, Addit. 6702	98	The manuscript belonged to Roger Columbell, Esquire, of Darley Hall in the sixteenth century	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 10099	72		1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 11307	73		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 15056	74	Copied by Owen Jones	1630 - 1803
London, British Library, Addit. 20709	76	Written and owned by William Lambarde	c. 1571
London, British Library, Addit. 22720	77	At the beginning and end of the volume are entries relating to the families of Perrot, Harold, and Picton, co. Pembroke	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 23002	78		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 25001	79		1550 - 1600
London, British Library, Addit. 29729	82	Copied primarily by John Stowe	1558
London, British Library, Addit. 31042	83	Copied by Robert Thornton, owned by John Nettleton in the fifteenth century	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 34193	86		1400 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
London, British Library, Addit. 5467	92		
London, British Library, Addit. 6159	97	Estate book of Christ Church cathedral priory	1250 - 1350
London, British Library, Addit. 8151	99		1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Addit. 9066	100		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Arundel 42	102		
London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.ii	103	Presumably owned by a bourgeois family.	1425 - 1475
London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C. iv	104	Possibly related to the diocese of York.	1400 - 1450
London, British Library, Cotton Galba E. ix	105		
London, British Library, Cotton Julius D. viii	106		15th C
London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xx	107		1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E. x	108		1400 - 1550
London, British Library, Egerton 1995	109	A manuscript that appears to have been professionally produced for the London market (Boffey and Meale). It contains the inscription of a sixteenth-century owner, Thomas Coose Noyttin	Third quarter of the 15th C
London, British Library, Egerton 2622	110	Belonged in the 16th cent. to Robert Tomsun (f. 2), Thomas Lowe (f. 165 b), and John Thackam (f. 173 b).	1400 - 1500
London, British Library,	111	Register of the Mohun family, Lords Mohun	1350

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Egerton 3724		and Earls of Somerset	
London, British Library, Hargrave 336	112		1200 - 1400
London, British Library, Harley 1002	113		1450 - 1525
London, British Library, Harley 1005	114		1150 - 1200
London, British Library, Harley 116	115	The manuscript records several names of post-medieval owners.	1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 1208	116		1300 - 1325
London, British Library, Harley 1304	118	John Hall, Grocer in London, poss. Other merchants	
London, British Library, Harley 1706	119	Owned by Elizabeth Beaumont (d. 1537), daughter of Sir Richard Scrope of Bolton, who married (1486) William Beaumont (d. 1507), 2nd Viscount Beaumont, and afterwards married (circa 1508) John de Vere (1442-1512/3). Later owned by her nephew, Edmond Jernynham, and Mihcae lLobley, and Margareth Otwell, John Wylkyns, Welyam Corwell, Mari Nevill, Tomys Yeacens.	1480 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 172	120	Written by the 'Winchester scribe', who was also responsible for the 'Winchester Anthology', Add. MS 60577 (96).	1475 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 1736	121		1441 - 1451
London, British Library, Harley 1785	122	The manuscript belonged to Robert Robinson, (Lincolnshire 1454), who was apprenticed in London in 1470 (see Braekman).	1425 - 1450
London, British Library, Harley 2251	123	Probably written by the fifteenth-century stationer John Multon.	1450 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
London, British Library, Harley 2252	124	Parts of the manuscript may have been written c. 1340 by the so-called 'Harley scribe', who was active in or near Ludlow, Hereford, from 1314 to c. 1349	1475 - 1525
London, British Library, Harley 2255	125	Associated with the Benedictine abbey of St Edmund, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.	1460 - 1470
London, British Library, Harley 271	126		15th C
London, British Library, Harley 273	127	Written by a cleric or scribe from Ludlow, southern Shropshire.	Between 1314 and 1328
London, British Library, Harley 3038	128	Written at the Cistercian abbey of St Mary, Buildwas.	1176
London, British Library, Harley 3362	129		1475 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 372	127		1475 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 395	131		
London, British Library, Harley 4011	132	Contains the names of several 16 <sup>th</sup> century owners	ca. 1447
London, British Library, Harley 43	133	Thomas Chaundler (b. c. 1417, d. 1490), university principal and humanist scholar, chancellor of Wells and Oxford (from 1461), owned and partly wrote the manuscript. Another fifteenth-century owner is Johyn Bunge.	1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 4733	134	Contains the inscription of a fifteenth-century owner: 'Master John Penyngton schole master of Worcestur ys possessed of thys booke' (f. 2v).	1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 493	135		

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
London, British Library, Harley 5086	136	William Coke and his son John, 15th century: inscribed with their names (f. 129v)	1st half of the 15th century
London, British Library, Harley 5401	137		1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 541	138	Also known as the "Frowyk Chronicle", after its owner, Sir Thomas Frowyk	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 548	144		
London, British Library, Harley 559	145		1554 - 1600
London, British Library, Harley 6398	139	Inscribed 'IMS' on verso of first flyleaf. This may stand for John Murray of Sacombe. The same initials written on other Harley manuscripts (see Wright 1972, p. 291).	1425 - 1475
London, British Library, Harley 7332	140		
London, British Library, Harley 7333	141	Written by John Shirley or by one of his associates, owned by William Stoughton, 15th-century cellarer of the abbey of St Mary de Pratis	1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Harley 3860	142		
London, British Library, Harley 941	143	'Nomen scriptoris Johannes plenus amoris': the name of Johannes Edwards is inscribed on ff. 49v and 101v in two different hands.	1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Lansdowne 1176	146		1300 - 1400
London, British Library, Lansdowne 470	147		1446 - 1450
London, British Library, Lansdowne 699	148		1450 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
London, British Library, Lansdowne 762	149	London, Henry Rowce	1475 - 1550
London, British Library, Royal 1 A. xxxii	151	Henry Dingley	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xliii	152		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xvii	154	On f. 107 b is the erased 15th cent inscription of 'Nich. (?) Anger de Hicililgham [? Heckingham, co. Norf.] de parochia de Halys'. Other names include John Carlet (f. 107), Edward Banyster (f. 106b, cf. 5 F. XVII, &c.), Kattrying Houses off Moullyne in Kent, and Joh. Radclyff (f. 107 b), and [John, Lord] Lumley (f. 3),	1350 - 1400
London, British Library, Royal 17 B. xlvii	153		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Royal 17 D. xv	155	Given to Elizabeth, queen of England, during her crossing of London Bridge into the city before her coronation in 1465, possibly sold in John Multon's shop (see Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 1997).	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Royal 18 D. ii	156	Sir William Herbert, 1st earl of Pembroke (b. c. 1423, d. 1469)  Henry Percy, 4th earl of Northumberland (b. c. 1449, d. 1489)  Henry Algernon Percy, 5th earl of Northumberland (b. 1478, d. 1527)	1457 - 1530
London, British Library, Royal 5 A. v	157	Belonged to the Carthusian house of S. Anne near Coventry [founded in 1385], by the gift of Robert Odyham (ff. i b, 134).	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Royal 9 A. ii	158		
London, British Library,	159		1400 - 1500



Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Sloane 1201			
London, British Library, Sloane 122	160		1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Sloane 1315	161		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Sloane 1764	162		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Sloane 1986	163		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Sloane 2027	164	William Braundon, of Knoll, county Warwickshire	1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Sloane 2578	165	Guide family	1500 - 1600
London, British Library, Sloane 2584	166	Guide family	1200 - 1700
London, British Library, Sloane 3534	167		900 - 1800
London, British Library, Sloane 442	168		1200 - 1700
London, British Library, Sloane 686	169		1450 - 1500
London, British Library, Sloane 7	170		ca. 1400
London, British Library, Sloane 775	171		1660 - 1662
London, British Library, Sloane 989	172		1400 - 1500
London, British Library, Stowe 982	173		

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
London, College of Arms, Arundel xiv	174		-
London, Guildhall Library, MS Liber Horn	175	Made for Andrew Horn, London fishmonger turned Chamberlain of the City	1311
London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 306	177		1450 - 1500
London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 444	178		1200 - 1500
London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 853	179		1400 - 1500
London, Lincoln's Inn, MS Hale 150	180	Associated with the Master and Brothers of the Hospital of St. John, Beverley	1400 - 1425
London, Lincoln's Inn, Misc. 2 (Misc. 46)	181		1300 - 1500
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 101	182	Thomas Wardon of Westmorland	Before 1459
London, Wellcome Library, 406	183	On f. 24r is an inscription in red ink 'Est liber smerthwaytt tenet palmer [?] / lamberd lond[ini ?] scutanuyre [?]. Wrytten / and fynyschyd the ere of owre lord / MCCCCC and XI yn / the rayne of King hary the viiith / the iiid yere / the xvii day of Januer'.	1400 - 1600
London, Wellcome Library, MS 411	184		1450 - 1500
London, Wellcome Library, MS 5650	185	Associated with the church of St Michael, Appleby. Signatures, 15-17th centuries, of Lancelot Denton (f. 22r.), Georgius Harrison, Thomas Gent and Mary Williamson (ff. 22v.-23r.), Recardus Hygins (with a prayer to St Patrick, f. 23v.), Edward Johnstone (ownership inscriptions, f. 96r.-v.)	1400 - 1500
London, Wellcome Library, MS 8004	186	Possibly owned by a (guild of) barber surgeon(s) or a lay owner with an interest in	1400 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
		physical and spiritual medicine	
London, Wellcome Library, MS 244	187	Henry Dingley	1564 - 1633
London, Westminster Abbey, MS 27	188		
Manchester, Chetham's Library, 8009	189	Professionally produced for a bourgeois family	1450 - 1500
Manchester, John Rylands Library, Latin MS 394	190		
Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, Naples XIII.B.29	191		
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 163	192	"The Wagstaff miscellany", probably compiled by John Whittocksmead, MP for Somerset and Wiltshire	Ca. 1450
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Takamiya Deposit 61	193		1450 - 1475
New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, Takamiya Deposit MS 94	194		1475 - 1500
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M775	195		1450 - 1500
Norwich, Castle Museum, MS 158.926	196	Possibly owned by John Fyncham (justice of the peace for Norfolk, 1453, see Connolly, <i>Sixteenth-Century Readers</i> , p. 31)	1400 - 1500
Nottingham, University Library, Me Lm 1	197	"The Rushall Psalter"	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Balliol College, 354	198	Richard Hill, London grocer	1501 - 1533
Oxford, Bodleian Library,	199	Note-book of Walter Pollard de Plymouth	1445

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Rawlinson D.328			
Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson poet. 35	200		1450 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Addit. A.369	201	Owned by Thomas Nevet and William Nevet in the sixteenth century	1425 - 1475
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Addit. B.60	202		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. Ec. B. 8	203		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1386	204		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1437	205	The manuscript records the name of John Lytyngton at Paules Wharff and the chantry of Kyngestone in the parish-church of S. Mich. Croked-lane	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1491	206		1600 - 1700
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1524	207		1200 - 1600
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 50	208		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 59	209	Copied by John Shirley (or one of his associates)	< 1456
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 61	210	Leicester, copied by a scribe known as "Rate"	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 750	211	Vale Royal, Cheshire. Cistercian abbey of St Mary the Virgin	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 754	212	Contains user note: 'Liber M' Thome Martyne modo Johis Wybarn ex dono G.F.'	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library,	214		1400 - 1450

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Bodley 48			
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 506 (15353)	213		1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 591	215		1460 - 1480
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 686	216		1425 - 1450
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 797	217	Madan records "a nearly erased inscription (late 15th cent.?) reads 'Liber Johannis Hunte de Cherbury [Erdbury]. Eo iam demortuo pertinet magistro doctori Bury Augustiensium'"	1425 - 1450
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 8538	218		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 8606	219		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 912	220	-	1300 - 1400
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 147	221		1200 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 88	222	Northern England, possibly a priest's handbook	1417
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 291	223		c. 1445 - 1447
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 384	224		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 54	225		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 95	226		
Oxford, Bodleian Library,	227		1320 - 1330

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Douce 98			
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Duke Humfrey d.2	229	Produced for Hunphrey, Duke of Gloucester	1439 - 1447
Oxford, Bodleian Library, e. Musaeo 52	230		1450 - 1550
Oxford, Bodleian Library, e. Musaeo 116, part I	231		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. D.208	232		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. E.1	233		1460 - 1480
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. Poet. E.15	234		1425 - 1475
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fairfax 24	236		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 28	237		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 56	238		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. misc. c.66	240	Humphrey Newton, Cheshire	1466 - 1536
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. Theol. D.15	241		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 23	242		1400 - 1450
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 598	243		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 683	244		1400 - 1500

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 748	245	Owned by Henry Ferrers (1549 - 1633)	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.196	246		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.252	247		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B.471	248		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 506	249	Owned by Henry Dingley	1547
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.48	250		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.813	251	Also known as "The Welles Anthology"	1500 - 1550
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.86	252	Owned by Richard Calle, the late fifteenth-century steward of the Paston family in Norfolk.	1400 - 1550
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D.1062	253		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D.328	254	Notebook of Plymouth merchant Walter Pollard, which he started during his time at grammar school in Exeter and used for almost 40 years (see Merja Stenroos, "Like the Coins when Currencies are Combined", pp. 28-35)	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 32	255		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 35	257		
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Selden Supra 74	258		1250 - 1300
Oxford, Bodleian Library,	259		

Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Wood empt. 18			
Oxford, Jesus College Library, MS 111	260	Also known as "The Red Book of Hergest"	1400 - 1500
Oxford, Merton College, MS 1258	261		
Oxford, University College, MS 154	262		1000 - 1100
Oxford, University College, MS 60	263		
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 400	264		
Private (BL MS Facs Suppl XIII, 17)	265		
Rome, English College, AVCAU MS 1405	266	Copied by a J. Preston, who is possibly related to the Shirley-circle (see Edwards, "John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture"). Owned by Thomas Carne and Richard Turnbull in the sixteenth century	1450 - 1500
Romsey, Mottisfont Abbey, Libr. of Mrs. Gilbert Russell, Rental of Mottisfont Priory	267		
San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, HU 1051	268		1400 - 1500
San Marino, Henry Huntington Library, HM 144	268	According to Lister Matheson, the manuscript was copied by the scribe who was also responsible for London, Lambeth Palace, MS 84 and Oxford, Trinity College MS 29	1475-1500
San Marino, Henry Huntington Library, HM 183	269		



Shelf Mark	No.	Provenance	Date
Trowbridge, County Record Office, W.R.O. 1203	270		
Untraced, Present whereabouts unknown olim Coughton Court, sold Christie's, 20 Dec. 1972	271		
Worcester, Cathedral Library, F.154	272		
London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 287	274		

### 8.3 Nederlandse samenvatting

Dit proefschrift, met als vertaalde titel *Schijnvruchten: De (on)bruikbaarheid van landbouwkundige teksten in Middelenegse manuscripten en drukken*, beschrijft een onderzoek naar de rol van landbouwkundige literatuur (zogenaamde *husbandry books*) binnen de leescultuur van de lage adel (de *gentry*) in laatmiddeleeuws Groot-Brittannië. Het betoog is verdeeld over vijf hoofdstukken, die deze middeleeuwse traditie vanuit een verschillende invalshoek belichten.

Het eerste hoofdstuk, getiteld *Husbandry texts and related literature* (landbouwkundige teksten en aanverwante literatuur), biedt een overzicht van pre- en vroegmoderne Engelse teksten over landbouw en -beheer. Het hoofdstuk opent met een korte beschouwing over de vroege beginselen van agronomische literatuur in middeleeuws Groot-Brittannië en belicht daarnaast een aantal Arabische en Klassieke teksten die de westerse traditie hebben beïnvloed. Hierna volgen overzichten van de primaire bronnen die centraal staan in het onderzoek, en van hun receptiegeschiedenis. Vanwege het multidisciplinaire karakter van mijn onderzoek bestaat mijn literatuurbeschouwing uit bijdragen uit verschillende velden en vakgebieden: het bevat een selectie van wetenschappelijke artikelen en boeken die kenmerkend zijn voor bepaalde denkwijzen over praktische literatuur. Deze dissertatie heeft als doel een aantal hardnekkige misvattingen over artesliteratuur, die in stand worden gehouden door verouderde catalogi en repositoria, recht te zetten. Daarom besluit het eerste hoofdstuk met een uiteenzetting van edities en wetenschappelijke publicaties vanaf de eerste filologische uitingen in de negentiende eeuw tot aan nieuw-historische herwaardering van praktische literatuur in de jaren 80 van de twintigste eeuw. Deze beschouwing van de filologische fundamenteën van de huidige boekwetenschap geeft meer inzicht in het ontstaan van de arbitraire scheidingslijn tussen praktische en niet-praktische literatuur. Hoewel een aantal toonaangevende publicaties van hedendaagse wetenschappers deze tweedeling al langer bestrijden, is er nog steeds terrein te winnen.

Het tweede hoofdstuk, *Husbandry books in manuscript and print*, behandelt de primaire teksten die geïntroduceerd werden in het eerste hoofdstuk in het licht van de codicologie. Het eerste deel

van dit hoofdstuk beschouwt methodologieën die in het verleden zijn toegepast in boekhistorisch onderzoek naar de praktische waarde van Middelenegse artesliteratuur, en onderzoekt welke gebruikskennmerken in manuscripten tekstuele interactie aantoonbaar kunnen maken. Hierbij wordt niet alleen gekeken naar de praktische uitvoerbaarheid van artesteksten, maar juist ook naar de mogelijke literaire functie van dit soort werken. Vervolgens verschuift de focus naar de compilatie van manuscripten die zowel literaire als praktische teksten bevatten, om zo een beter beeld te krijgen van hun gebruikers, die zich voornamelijk in de groeiende middenklasse van landeigenaren bevonden. Het laatste deel van dit hoofdstuk introduceert het gebruik van netwerkvisualisaties om zo de complexiteit van laatmiddeleeuwse manuscriptcompilaties in kaart te brengen. Veel manuscripten bevatten teksten die zich in een grijs gebied tussen literair en praktisch bevinden. Één daarvan is John Lydgate's *Dietary*, dat het onderwerp vormt van de laatste casus in het tweede hoofdstuk, waarin de discursieve flexibiliteit van teksten en het belang van netwerkanalyse centraal staan.

In het derde hoofdstuk, *Husbandry books and grafting treatises*, wordt dieper ingegaan op het idee dat het multidimensionale karakter van landbouwkundige boeken en traktaten over het enten en veredelen van bomen kan worden afgelezen uit de manuscripten waarvan ze deel uitmaken. Om te illustreren dat de hybride aard van landbouwkundige boeken een lange voorgeschiedenis kent, wordt eerst ingegaan op Oud-Engelse verhandelingen over landbeheer. Deze traktaten vertonen verschillende kenmerken van literaire composities; daarbij verraadt de context waarin ze circuleerden dat ze werden bestudeerd om hun morele component en niet zozeer praktisch werden toegepast. Hieraan verwante teksten die een paar eeuwen later in de nieuwe volkstaal, het Anglo-Frans, werden geproduceerd, laten eenzelfde ontwikkeling zien: ze circuleerden zowel in wetboeken als historiografische compendia, en werden in de late middeleeuwen als onderdeel van gedrukte *husbandry books* gemodelleerd naar klassiek agronomische vorm.

Om de invloed van zowel klassieke als contemporaine literaire cultuur op landbouwkundige teksten verder in beeld te brengen, wordt hierna nader ingegaan op een subgroep binnen het

landbouwkundige corpus: traktaten over het enten van bomen. Het academisch discours op het gebied van klassieke agronomie centreert zich al langer op het idee dat agronomische geschriften onderdeel zijn van een literaire stroming. Gezien het feit dat middeleeuwse teksten over het enten van bomen schatplichtig is aan klassieke agronomie, bevraagt het laatste deel van paragraaf 3.3 in hoeverre middeleeuwse ent-traktaten als literair werden beschouwd. Zoals recent onderzoek naar het onderwerp van geënte bomen in middeleeuwse fictie al heeft aangetoond, waren middeleeuwse lezers bekend met het beeld van een geënte boom in literaire context.

Een opvallend gegeven is dat de teksten met symbolisme over geënte bomen veelal voorkomen in manuscriptcompilaties die gelezen werden door de *gentry*, een verzamelnaam voor landeigenaren die zich, ondanks het gebrek aan adellijke titel en erfelijke aanspraak op land, stilerden als individuen met evenveel aanzien als de hoge adel. Het vierde hoofdstuk, *Husbandry books and the gentry*, is daarom gewijd aan de rol van deze groep lezers op de ontwikkeling van landbouwkundige literatuur. Er is al geruime tijd veel aandacht voor de leesvoorkeuren van de *gentry*, maar het gebruik van *husbandry books* in de identiteitsvorming als landeigenaren was tot nu toe vooral gebaseerd op het idee dat deze boeken van praktisch nut waren, en minder gericht op de samenhang met andere vormen van literatuur, zoals de ridderromans en gedichten die speciaal werden geschreven voor een *gentry*-publiek. Om deze onderlinge samenhang verder te onderzoeken begint het vierde hoofdstuk met een discussie over literaire gentrificatie, een fenomeen dat voorheen alleen werd gekoppeld aan literair proza, maar ook kan worden waargenomen bij bestudering van didactische en praktische teksten. Een groot deel van de teksten die voorkomen in manuscripten van de *gentry* is educatief van aard, en wellicht gericht op de opvoeding van kinderen. Om te achterhalen of dit educatieve aspect ook van toepassing is op landbouwkundige literatuur, bevat het hoofdstuk twee casussen van manuscripten die mogelijk duiden op educatie over landbouw in *gentry*-families. Deze studies beschouwen de functie van een gedicht dat een aantal aandachtspunten bij de aankoop van land aankaart, en de manuscripten waarin het werd gekopieerd. Hierbij wordt gekeken naar de socioculturele context van de manuscripteigenaren en

het onderlinge verschil tussen een rurale en stedelijke omgeving.

Het vijfde en laatste hoofdstuk, *Grafting treatises and the gentry*, beargumenteert dat de populariteit van teksten over boomveredeling deels is veroorzaakt door een associatie met de Aristotelische natuurleer en de *secreta secretorum*. Niet alleen is het enten van bomen al van oudsher een elitaire aangelegenheid, het opdoen van kennis over de geheimen van de natuur, waartoe boomveredeling ook behoort, was ook een van de bezigheden die een individu met aanzien kon verschaffen. Het laatste deel van hoofdstuk vijf gaat daarom in op de zestiende-eeuwse gedrukte boeken over verborgen natuurkennis, en beargumenteert dat teksten over boomveredeling ook in de middeleeuwen deel uitmaakten van verzamelhandschriften met een focus op natuurkennis.