In June 1218, a century and a half after the Norman Conquest, and more than one hundred and twenty years after his death, the body of Wulfstan, the last Anglo-Saxon bishop of Worcester, was translated with great ceremony from its tomb in the cathedral to a specially prepared shrine. The relics of St Oswald were translated at the same time, and the body of King John, who had died in 1216, was buried at his own request between the two Anglo-Saxon saints. The young King Henry III and many great lords, both ecclesiastical and secular, were present. The high altar was rededicated to the Blessed Virgin and St Oswald, and the middle altar to St Peter and St Wulfstan.¹ There may well have been present in the cathedral at this splendid ceremony a particular monk of the cathedral priory who had a special interest in the great saints and teachers of Anglo-Saxon England, and in the language which they used. This monk, over what was apparently a considerable number of years, worked his way many times through the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the cathedral library, reading, annotating and glossing. His presence is marked by his wavering, tremulous script which is at times quite firm and upright and at other times faint and shaky, but always distinctive and identifiable. About twenty manuscripts in which this tremulous script may be seen have come down to us,² and whether he worked on others, and if so how many, will never be known. His name is unknown, but he has become known to many latter-day readers of these manuscripts as the ‘Tremulous Worcester Scribe’ or the ‘Tremulous Hand’.³ It could well be that the term ‘scribe’ is

² These are listed in N.R. Ker, Medieval libraries of Great Britain: a list of surviving books, Royal Historical Guides and Handbooks, iii (London: Royal Historical Society, 2nd edn, 1964).
³ J. Zupitza first noticed the state of the glossator’s hand in his article ‘Das Nichaeische Symbolum in englischer Aufzeichnung des 12. jhds.’, Anglia, i (1878), 286-7; see also M.R. James in A descriptive catalogue of manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (Cambridge: University Press, 1912), 33.
a misnomer, since much of his glossing and annotating work is of a more technical and intellectual nature than would be expected in an ordinary scribe working in a scriptorium. The majority of the manuscripts upon which he worked were in Old English, but his hand can be seen in a number of Latin and bilingual manuscripts, and most of them can be demonstrated to have belonged to Worcester Cathedral, although they are now scattered amongst a number of libraries. Their contents were varied: numerous homilies, some penitentials, and a herbal in Old English, the Old English translation of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical history of the English church and people*, a bilingual Benedictine Rule, and both English and Latin versions of Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues* and his *Pastoral care*.

One particularly important manuscript survives which is entirely in the hand of this man, and this still remains in Worcester Cathedral library as MS F174. It is important, not for its intrinsic value and beauty, nor for its learned content, but for the picture which it provides of the dedication to all things English of a monk who lived in Norman times in the south-west midlands of England during the last decades of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth century. The manuscript was discovered in fragments as part of the binding of an old book in the cathedral library in the nineteenth century, and its contents are known as the Worcester Fragments. They consist of an early Middle English version of Ælfric’s *Grammar and glossary*, updated by the Tremulous Hand into his own form of English, and two texts copied out by the Hand in his own early Middle English, but not originally composed by him. The more important of these for our understanding of the Hand’s interests is a brief passage of rhythmical prose which laments the passing of the famous saints and learned men of God who translated parts of the Bible into English and taught their people in that language, unlike the *opre leoden* who now teach them, an idea which can be demonstrated to be very close to the monk’s heart. The other piece is a fairly long fragment of a didactic debate between the Soul and Body. The Tremulous Hand’s work in these manuscripts, other, of course, than in the Worcester Fragments written entirely in his own hand, takes the form of (i) linguistic glosses in Latin, with a number, many of them erased, in his own form of Middle English, (ii) some

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marks which define word divisions, and superscript letters denoting phonological differences between his form of English and the original Old English in pronouns and prefixes and (iii) many varied annotations. The Hand also (iv) makes lists of word pairs in Latin and Old English on the flyleaves of a number of the manuscripts, and (v) comprehensively 'tidies' a number of the manuscripts by adding initial letters omitted by the rubricator and by numbering chapters and sections.

Christine Franzen, in her work on the linguistic glosses, established that the Tremulous Hand was at first attempting to gloss the Old English texts in his own form of Middle English, but soon abandoned this in favour of using the Latin books in the cathedral library as 'cribs' for glossing in Latin. The question thus arises of how well he understood the original Old English, since the Latin glosses are not always correctly applied in the English text. It appears on the whole that his grasp of the form of the language was better than his recognition of the lexis, an idea which is borne out by his word pairs mentioned above, and the fact that so much of his glossing is in Latin. Dr Franzen has defined a number of differing states of the scribe's hand, and the hand in its later states corrects errors made in the earlier states, which suggests that the scribe was going through a methodical learning process.

My work on the marginal annotations made by the Tremulous Hand in the various manuscripts has shown that they provide much information about the interests of the scribe and the purpose of his work. These annotations consist of nota, narratio and exemplum marks, 'flags' of the content of passages by means of marginal headings, extracted names of exegetical authors and of Bible books, and also of the names of saints, classical and pagan gods, and historical figures. Bible passages which are contained in the Old English text are in many cases translated into Latin in the margins of the manuscripts. Some examples of these are cited in the Appendix (pp. 163-5).

The content of the annotations may be categorized under two headings:

1. Theology:
Under this heading the Tremulous Hand shows himself particularly interested in the nature of Christ and the Trinity. He marks many

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6 S.J. Crawford describes these in 'The Worcester marks and glosses of the Old English manuscripts in the Bodleian, together with the Worcester version of the Nicene Creed', Anglia, li (1927), 1-25.
7 The Tremulous Hand's annotations, together with the passages in the manuscripts to which they relate, are transcribed and discussed in my forthcoming book in the King's College London Medieval Studies series.
8 For these 'worksheets' and word pairs, see W. Schipper 'A worksheet of the Worcester "Tremulous" glossator', Anglia, cv (1987), 28-49, and also Franzen, The Tremulous Hand.
christological passages, particularly those dealing with the dual nature of Christ, and also the fact and the theology of the Resurrection. His annotations also demonstrate an interest in the topics of predestination, eschatology, the Antichrist, the nature of good and evil and its representation by angels and devils and by heaven and hell. He marks many passages concerning the supernatural battle for the soul of mankind, including his transcription of the Soul and Body debate in the Worcester Fragments, and in this connection is concerned with the concept of sin and of the ever-available grace of God for the penitent.

2. Practicalities of Faith and Life:
Here the scribe marks many passages on the monastic life and on the duties of priests and bishops. He marks passages which relate to the sacraments of baptism, the eucharist, penance, ordination, matrimony and the anointing of the sick, and also some passages about the bringing-up of children. Tithes and almsgiving figure largely in his interests, and he marks passages on teaching, miracles, witchcraft, the Jews, and on a number of encyclopaedic topics. There are even a few notes of music in his hand.

The key to much of the scribe’s work appears to lie in his frequent marking of anything to do with the English and the English language. The scene is set by his transcription of the alliterative Sanctus Beda section of the Worcester Fragments, praising the holy and learned men of England before the Conquest, who lærede ure leodon on englisc (‘who taught our people in English’), and whose teaching is now lost, and the people too. He marks a number of liturgical items in the Old English manuscripts, such as prayers, canticles and creeds which are written either in English or else in both a Latin and an English version. It may be that one reason for this is to be found in his annotation ‘englis’ beside a passage in the ‘Sermo de baptisme’ in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 113: the passage lays down that a child must learn the Creed and Pater Noster as soon as he can speak, as must those who are older on englisc buton he on laden mage (‘in English, unless he understands Latin’). Many times he flags English versions of such texts as the Lord’s Prayer, canticles, lists of the Capital Sins, the Twelve Abuses, the Sevenfold Gifts of the Spirit, and the seven prayers which are contained within the Lord’s Prayer, and many of these are heavily glossed as well.

Two significant passages which show the scribe at work in the preparation of linguistically updated texts are the two versions of the Nicene Creed which occur in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Hatton 114 and Junius 121. On a leaf at the end of MS Hatton 114 the Tremulous Hand makes careful word divisions, punctuates and glosses heavily in Latin an Old English version of the Nicene
Credit (I have silently expanded the Hand's abbreviations in these short extracts):

\[
\text{(credo in unum deum patrem omnipotentem creatorem celi)}
\]
\[
\text{Ic gelyfe on ænne god fæder almihtigne./ wyrccend heofonan.}
\]
\[
\text{terrəm omnium i}
\]
\[
\text{and eorban. and calra ge/sewenlicra þingra and ungesewnlicra}
\]
\[
\text{in unum unigenitum)}
\]
\[
\text{and/ on ænne crist hælend drihten. Þone an/cennedan}
\]
\[
\text{gode sunu. of þæn fæder ancenned; ðær ealle worulda.}
\]

On flyleaf iv of MS Junius 121 he writes out his Middle English version:

\[
\text{Ic ileue on enne god fæder almihti. wurcend heo/uene and eorpe. and alle}
\]
\[
\text{iseienliche þing. and vniseienliche./ and on enne christ. helend drihten. þenne}
\]
\[
\text{ancenneden/ godes sunu. of þæn fæder akenned ðær alre worlde ...}
\]

It seems that the Hand needed to gloss many of the Old English words in Latin to be sure of his translation into English. His linguistic glossing work on the Old English manuscripts appears to show that he was updating the language of the homiletic, penitential and theological material in them for essentially practical use in his own time. Earlier commentators on the work of the Tremulous Hand saw him as an old man who towards the end of the twelfth century was trying to make texts written in the language of his youth understandable to his younger brethren, but Neil Ker began a process which has changed perceptions of the Tremulous Hand's date and also his purposes. Ker established that the Hand was in fact working well into the thirteenth century, possibly as late as 1250, although he thought the duct of the script was formed in the late twelfth century. This of course means that the Tremulous Hand very possibly lived and worked between the last decade or so of the twelfth century and well into the first half of the thirteenth.

An historical background to the life and times of the Tremulous Hand is provided in the Annales Prioratus de Wigornia, and they also contain records of people and events which might possibly have had a personal connection with the scribe. In 1189 the scholar Senatus became Prior of Worcester; he had previously been

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10 W. Keller, who followed Zupitza in assigning to Worcester the manuscripts worked upon by the Tremulous Hand, first put forward this rather romantic suggestion in Die Litterischen Bestrebungen von Worcestet in angelsächsischer Zeit, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprache- und Culturgeschichte der Germanischen Völker, lixiv (Strasbourg: K.J. Trübner, 1900).


precentor and librarian. He claimed to have written lives of the English saints Oswald and Wulfstan, at whose translation the Tremulous Hand could well have been present. Senatus is known to have written a concordance to the gospels, letters on the mass and treatises on penance, and he was particularly interested in the commutation of penance, a topic which the Tremulous Hand marks in his annotations. In Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 482 on fo.19 he writes his flag *mutatio penitencie* beside the Old English passage from a Penitential:

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Gif hwa for his untrumnesse: vel for his hnescnesse/ þæt fæsten and þa striðnesse abærân ne mæg þe/ his scrift him tæcð him is alyfèd þæt he mot mid/ anre mæssan alysan. mid godcundnyssse and mid his worldeæhton.
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He puts a similar flag *mutatio peccati* beside a longer passage from a Penitential in Bodleian, MS Junius 121 on fo.100v. It could well be that as a young monk the Hand came under the influence of Senatus, and the interests which he acquired from him then remained with him for the remainder of his apparently long life.

The *Annales* record the events surrounding the canonization and translation of Bishop Wulfstan in the early years of the thirteenth century. Manuscripts were still being written in English at Worcester in Wulfstan’s lifetime, and Coleman of Worcester wrote his life in English within a few years of his death. William of Malmesbury made use of this manuscript, now lost, for his *De gestis pontificum Anglorum*. Wulfstan was revered both in his lifetime and after his death for his holiness and for his powers of healing, and the monks built an elaborate tomb for him. Miracles associated with him occurred sporadically throughout the century following his death, but towards the end of the twelfth century there was a growing interest in his cult, and in 1201 there was a new outbreak of miracles at his tomb, *ut nunc xv. nunc xvi. uno die curarentur ab omnibus langoribus*. An enquiry was instituted into the miracles in the same year, and a number of monks went to Rome to testify to them. The *Annales* record that in the year 1203 *Beatissimus Wistanus canonizatus est Romæ ix. kal. Maii cum magna solemnitate.*

Wulfstan’s bones, which had been removed by a previous bishop, were replaced in their original tomb by Bishop Mauger in 1204, and King John came and prayed at the tomb in 1207. When the Interdict began in 1208 Mauger was amongst the bishops who fled to France, and he died there in 1212 without ever returning to England.
Worcester. Church life, indeed all life, in the years of the Interdict must have been bleak, although miracles seem to have continued at Wulfstan’s tomb, and in 1212 a Confraternity was established with the Welsh Abbey of Strata Florida, and many Welsh pilgrims came to Worcester.\textsuperscript{18} Even after John’s submission to the Pope in 1213 and the lifting of the Interdict there was little peace for Worcester. The city had embraced the cause of Louis of France when he landed in England in 1216, and when the royalists eventually took the city the Cathedral was plundered and the metalwork of Wulfstan’s shrine melted down to pay the fines which were levied. When King John died in October of the same year he was buried in the Cathedral between the tombs of St Oswald and St Wulfstan.

William of Blois became bishop in 1218, and the Annales record many disputes between the bishop and the monks. He was a secular, which may have contributed to the ill-feeling, since the monks would doubtless have preferred a regular as their bishop, as his predecessor Sylvester had been. The later years of the bishop’s episcopate seem to have been more peaceful, and he died in 1236, when Walter de Cantilupe became bishop. Cantilupe lived until 1266, but it seems unlikely that the Tremulous Hand lived as late as this. If this is so, it is probable that Worcester at the end of his life was more settled than in his earlier days.

It has been suggested that much of the work upon which the Tremulous Hand was engaged was connected with the cathedral’s ministry to the pilgrims who came to Worcester in the first two decades of the thirteenth century to pray at Wulfstan’s tomb,\textsuperscript{19} by providing vernacular material for the use of the monks, and this may be so, although it is difficult to be sure how far the priory community would have exercised any pastoral care over the visitors to the shrine. This could have been a part of the purpose of the scribe’s work, but it seems much more likely that there was a wider perspective to it. Ker’s positive dating of the scribe’s activity makes it plain that he was glossing and annotating at a time when the provisions of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 were taking effect throughout Europe, and in England were bearing fruit in the Diocesan Statutes which were promulgated during the thirteenth century.

Many of the canons which make up the decrees of the Council are echoed in the work of the Tremulous Hand.\textsuperscript{20} The first canon issued by the Council consists of a profession of the faith of the Church: the doctrine of the Trinity, ‘one only true God ... three persons indeed but one simple essence, substance or nature

\textsuperscript{18} Mason, St Wulfstan, 249.
\textsuperscript{19} Franzen, The Tremulous Hand, 190-1.
\textsuperscript{20} The English translations of the Council’s decrees are all taken from English Historical Documents 1189-1327, iii, ed. Harry Rothwell (London: Eyre Methuen, 1975).
altogether ... the Father begetting, the Son being born, and the Holy 
Spirit proceeding; consubstantial, and co-equal, co-omnipotent, and 
co-eternal', 21 creator of all things, including the Devil and his 
companions who were created good but became evil by their own 
doing, and who tempted man to sin; salvation taught through 
Moses, the prophets and then Christ; the incarnation and the two 
natures of Christ in one person, his death and physical resurrection, 
ascension and return to judge the world; the general resurrection; 
the one true Church 'outside of which no man at all is saved'; 22 the 
sacrifice of the altar and the doctrine of transubstantiation, the 
sacrament only to be performed by a priest; the doctrine of baptism, 
and redemption by true penitence of those who have sinned after 
baptism; the married, not only 'virgins and the continent' 23 may 
aspire to eternal bliss.

This profession of faith finds many echoes in the theological 
passages annotated and flagged by the Tremulous Hand, and whilst 
this definition of the faith is probably one which could be expected 
of an orthodox cleric in almost any period of the Middle Ages, it is 
noticeable that the annotator is especially interested in the nature 
and work of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, which are 
particularly set out in the first and second canons.

Canon 4 forbids rebaptism, specifically in relation to disputes 
between the Greek and Latin churches, but the Tremulous Hand 
marks a number of passages on baptism within his texts, and in 
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 178 beside an Epiphany 
homily which refers to the illegality of a second baptism he writes 
his flag: *ne iterum baptizetur quis*.

Canon 9 decrees that bishops in cities or episcopal sees where 
there is a mixture of rites within the faith should appoint suitable 
men 'to celebrate divine service for them in the various rites and 
languages, administer the ecclesiastical sacraments to them and 
instruct them by word and example alike', 24 which seems to be a 
clear demand for ministers who will instruct their people in the 
appropriate vernacular. Here the scribe's careful marking of prayers, 
creeds and teaching material in the vernacular seems to be relevant, 
and the ideas behind this decree were echoed in many of the 
subsequent diocesan statutes.

Canon 10 urges that bishops, where they are themselves unable 
to do all the necessary preaching, should appoint suitable preachers 
of the gospel, and also if required, appoint assistants to hear 
confessions and enjoin penances, and all other things which pertain 
to the salvation of souls. In Canon 11 the decree of the Third 
Lateran Council of 1179 is reiterated, to the effect that masters

21 *EHD*, iii, 641.
22 Ibid., 642.
23 Ibid., 644.
24 Ibid., 650.
should be appointed to teach clerks and other poor scholars, and where possible a theologian and a grammarian should be provided to teach priests and others, and particularly to teach 'those things which are recognised as having to do with the cure of souls'. Here the Tremulous Hand’s educational work may well stem from the later attempts to fulfil this canon.

Canons 15 and 16 lay down rules for the behaviour of clerks, and 19 and 20 rules for the care and cleanliness of churches and their possessions, and for the guarding of the chrism and the elements of the eucharist. Points which relate to all of these requirements are to be found in the Tremulous Hand’s annotations.

Canon 21 was one of considerable importance to the Church in the years after the Council. All Christians who reached years of discretion were to confess annually, perform the penance laid upon them, and to receive the Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter. Solemn injunctions are laid upon the priest who acts as confessor: ‘he should be discerning and prudent ... diligently enquiring into the circumstances both of the sinner and the sin, from which to choose intelligently what sort of advice he ought to give him and what sort of remedy to apply’. Above all, confession was to be an entirely private affair between the priest and the penitent. The many passages which the Tremulous Hand marks in the Old English Penitentials are of relevance here.

Canon 27 deals with the training of priests. Bishops themselves must prepare them for ordination, or else make sure that there are suitable teachers. They must be carefully instructed in the services and sacraments of the Church, and suspension and other punishments are decreed for those who ordain ignorant and unworthy priests. I shall argue below that the Tremulous Hand was in fact engaged in the theological and pastoral training of men who aspired to the priesthood.

The subject of tithes is dealt with in Canons 32, 53, 54 and 56, and it is particularly emphasized that the parish priest should receive his just share. Canon 32 condemns the patrons of churches who take an unjust proportion of the tithe income for themselves and leave only one sixteenth for the priest, which means that in such parishes only priests with a very poor education are to be found. The Tremulous Hand notes a number of passages which deal with this topic.

Canons 50, 51 and 52 are concerned with aspects of marriage, and Canons 67, 68, 69 and 70 contain various decrees about the behaviour and treatment of Jews, and again, these are all topics which are marked in the Tremulous Hand’s annotations.

The bishops who attended the Council probably returned home with copies of its decrees, and began to disseminate the ideas

25 Ibid., 651.
26 Ibid., 655.
contained in them by means of diocesan synods which issued sets of constitutions. There was apparently no representative of Worcester Cathedral Priory at the meeting of the Council, but Sylvester, then Prior of Evesham, was at the Council, and upon his return to England in the following year he became Bishop of Worcester. It appears at least a possibility that Sylvester brought back from Rome a copy of the decrees of the Council which his successors in the bishopric used as a basis for their Constitutions. William of Blois, who succeeded Sylvester in 1218, issued his first set of Constitutions in 1219. These were among the earliest to appear in England after the Fourth Lateran Council, and were followed by William's second set of Constitutions in 1229. Walter Cantilupe held a Synod at Worcester in 1240, and apparently issued a set of Synodal Statutes there. One of the very earliest sets of Statutes to stem from decrees of the Council is that of Richard Poore for his diocese of Salisbury, issued in 1217 and enlarged in 1219. A copy of these 'in a small neat hand of the early part of Henry III's reign' is still to be found in Worcester Cathedral Library MS Q67 on fo.138, in a separate section and a different hand from the rest of the book. The points made in Poore's statutes are in fact closer to the provisions of the Fourth Lateran Council, and also to the interests of the Tremulous Hand, than those of William of Blois of 1219 and 1229, and in many respects resemble more closely those of Walter Cantilupe in 1240.

An examination of the scribe's interests as revealed in the annotations he made in the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of Worcester Cathedral library clearly demonstrates that he was working with a practical and definite purpose in mind. His linguistic glosses alone might indicate a merely antiquarian interest in the language and literature of earlier times, but an analysis of his copious annotations reveals something more than this. He lived 150 years or so after the Norman Conquest in an area where the language and traditions of the Anglo-Saxons lasted longer than in most other areas of England, in a diocese where the last Anglo-Saxon bishop ruled almost into the twelfth century and whose canonization took place in the early thirteenth century, and where Old English texts continued to be copied well into Anglo-Norman times. His interest may have had an element of the antiquarian, and none the worse for that, but more importantly it appears to stem from a commitment to English as opposed to the Norman or French culture which he saw all around him in the government of the Church and the country. His copying

29 M. Gibbs and Jane Lang, Bishops and reform 1215-1272 with special reference to the Lateran Council of 1215 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 150.
of the Sanctus Beda passage, and his flagging *De anglicis moribus relictis* of an Old English letter complaining of the neglect of English customs support this idea. If this interest in English is seen as a harking back to the past, the interest which he clearly had in topics which were the concern of the Fourth Lateran Council and the diocesan statutes which derived therefrom points him forward to the reforming spirit of the later thirteenth century and to the rebirth of English as the written language of England.

The spoken language, of course, continued to flourish, even if literary texts were somewhat sparse, and the vast majority of the population continued to use their native tongue as the speech of everyday life. Literate men such as Orderic Vitalis and Giraldus Cambrensis certainly knew English, and many of the higher clergy are known to have preached in English, men such as Samson of Bury St Edmunds, Ranulf Flambard, Herbert Losinga and Stephen Langton. Robert Grosseteste not only preached in English himself, but encouraged his priests to preach to the laity in the vernacular. It must, nevertheless, be acknowledged that anyone who wanted to teach Latin through the medium of English, or to provide homiletic or teaching texts, would find some difficulty. English, which had to some extent been excluded from the literary sphere, was in danger of being reduced to a point where it had no vocabulary for literary debate. The Tremulous Hand needed to find words for what I think were his educational purposes, and the traditional area in his time would have been French. He appears to have gone back to the only English texts which were available to him, and these were ones which he found in the cathedral library, in an older form of English, and he used these to provide himself with a vocabulary and with basic written material for his purposes.

The evidence of the Tremulous Hand's versions of Ælfric's *Grammar and glossary* and the Worcester Fragments suggests that he must have been a native speaker of English. The few French words which appear in his glosses are mostly, although by no means all, ones which had been assimilated into the English language by that time. It generally appears that he was able to deal with the structure of the earlier form of English which he found in his Old English texts. He was obviously sufficiently aware of the resemblance between the form of Old English and his own speech to make the phonological substitutions noted by Crawford in his 1929 article. He was able also to recognize the morphology of the language, and

30 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 178, p. 137; the passage, headed *De sanguine prohibito*, is edited by F. Kluge as 'Fragment eines angelsächsischen Briefes', *Englische studien*, viii (1885), 62.

31 These points are made by R.M. Wilson in his article 'English and French in England, 1100-1300', *History*, m.s. xxviii (1943), 37-60.


33 See note 6 above.
to make careful word divisions where the original scribe had run words together.

What then were the purposes of this monk who was literate in Latin and English and who worked so long and painstakingly in the Cathedral Library in Worcester? The theological and linguistic implications of his work strongly suggest that he was engaged in some kind of teaching in the vernacular, and in the preparation of written material for use in this work. In the years following the Interdict and the civil war the parochial life of the church was in a very low state, and the parish clergy depressed and largely ill-educated. In the words of a French scholar:

le royaume et l'Église d'Angleterre venaient, à la veille du Latran, de traverser une période tourmentée: pendant cinq ans, la guerre civile avait ravagé l'ordre politique et l'interdit avait paralysé la vie spirituelle, favorisant chez le simple clergé le relâchement et l'ignorance en le privant de l'exercice du ministère et de ses moyens normaux d'existence. 34

In the light of this situation it seems highly possible that part of the work upon which the Tremulous Hand was engaged was the training of men who were to receive holy orders, possibly local men who were to be appointed to benefices in the gift of Worcester Cathedral Priory. Hartridge in his study of the institution of vicarages in the Middle Ages 35 makes the point that if consistency of toponymies can be taken as evidence many of the clerks ordained at this time were local men: 'fifty-one clerks with identifiable toponymies were beneficed within the region by Worcester Priory or Gloucester Abbey between 1200 and 1300 ... over a fifth came from within a five-mile radius of the religious houses presenting them, and over two-thirds from within twenty miles'. 36 These men would not have been the high-flying scholastics who would be trained in the schools, but local men from the south-west midlands of England whose native language would be a form of English not too far removed from the language of the Tremulous Hand's Old English texts. The work which he has left behind may well be his source material for teaching theological and pastoral topics in English. If books for teaching tenets of the faith and pastoralia were lacking in the necessary form of the language, and if the Latin of the pupils was somewhat uncertain, the annotator might very well have been preparing teaching material himself from the old books. The Priory almost certainly possessed no books in English at this time apart

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34 ‘The kingdom and the Church of England had just, on the eve of the Lateran council, passed through a period of turbulence: for six years, civil war had ravaged the body politic and the interdict had paralysed spiritual life, encouraging amongst the ordinary clergy slackness and ignorance by depriving them of the exercise of their ministry and their usual means of life’. E.J. Arnould, Le Manuel des Pêchés (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1940).
36 Ibid., 176.
from these Old English ones. Increasingly, though, the statutes which grew from the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council emphasized the necessity for the better education of the clergy and for their better understanding of the pastoral requirements of their calling.

The Tremulous Hand's version of Ælfric's Grammar and glossary would be of use in teaching Latin by means of English, and this would have been as useful for young boys as for ordinands, but the records are numerous in this period of men coming before the bishop or archdeacon for examination before, and sometimes after, ordination with a very limited knowledge of Latin. The theological content of the Tremulous Hand's annotations does argue that his work was directed more towards men than children. He is using and understanding the structure of the language in the Old English texts, but he is seeking by means of his Latin glossing equivalences for words which have become obsolete or difficult to understand, as his word pairs and lists seem to indicate. He appears to have been marking the many theological and practical passages in the old texts for use in teaching those who had learned their letters in a local school, and who only understood the everyday English currency of local life, and very little Latin. These theological and practical points would have been part of his programme of education. Many of his interests are rooted in practical concerns, and many of the manuscripts upon which he wrote his glosses and annotations were essentially practical ones and therefore well suited for the training of parish priests: the Pastoral care, the penitentials and the instructions for priests. The Tremulous Hand would have been in a position to provide his pupils with vernacular biblical passages, penitential material, practical instruction concerning the Mass and its elements and many points of exegesis from Ælfric and Wulfstan and earlier theologians, particularly Augustine and Gregory, whose names he notes beside many exegetical passages in the Old English texts. He does not appear to be referring his marked quotations back to their sources, even though some of the Latin texts were in the cathedral library, but to be using the English versions of these extracts as vernacular teaching material. It could even be that the Tremulous Hand was the theologian or grammarian whose appointment was decreed by the Lateran Council in canon 11, although it is considered unlikely that this canon was ever fully implemented.

38 Hartridge, Vicarages, 306.
39 Nicholas Orme in his English schools in the Middle Ages (London: Methuen, 1973) quotes many such examples.
40 Gibbs and Lang, Bishops and reform, 156-7.
There seems little doubt that the Tremulous Hand was also trying to produce texts in English by preparing for copying or himself writing up versions of the Old English texts. His Grammar and glossary demonstrates the end result of this process, and the two versions of the Nicene Creed mentioned above show the progression of the glossator's work. He was almost certainly preparing homiletic texts in the same way. Old English homilies were updated in this way in other places in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and I think there can be little doubt that the Tremulous Hand intended, even if this intention was never entirely fulfilled, to produce texts of this kind. The passages which he marked with his exemplum and narratio annotations would provide a collection of sermon material and illustrations, and his extensive use of these terms implies a familiarity with the structure of sermons. These may have been for his own use, or for his pupils. A number of the diocesan statutes show that preaching was expected of the parish clergy. More innovatively, it is even possible that he was working to produce some early vernacular form of pastoral handbook, even if only for his own use; it was of course to be many years before such men as John Mirk produced their handbooks in the vernacular.

The annotations made by the Tremulous Hand beside so many creeds and prayers and similar texts in English appear to be connected with the growing emphasis on the necessity of explaining the salient points of the faith to the people in their own language. Richard Poore in his Salisbury statutes of 1217, a copy of which, as mentioned above, is to be found in Worcester Cathedral library, ordered that the creed was to be taught in the vernacular and the form of marriage to be explained to the contracting parties in English or French, whilst the 1229 Worcester statutes of William of Blois laid down that before being admitted to confession lay people should be instructed in the creed in their own tongue. It seems likely that the bilingual texts marked by the Tremulous Hand were capable of use in a parochial situation, or perhaps the pupils wrote them on their wax tablets for memorizing. Leonard Boyle cites an instance in Winchester in about 1260 where parish priests were 'to be examined in their ability to expound the decalogue, the sacraments, the seven deadly sins, and the articles of faith “in lingua vulgari”'. The dates and locations of these statutes are widely spread, but it seems that the thinking behind them, which stemmed originally from the Fourth Lateran Council, was current over many years and in many places. It is now possible to see the Tremulous Hand of Worcester as a man who, in post-Conquest times, because

42 Ibid., 35.
of his own linguistic circumstances in a part of England where the old language and the old ways still to some extent survived, and because of his enthusiasm for English things, was able to make use of English as a medium for the study of Latin and theology. He was looking back to the great days of the English past, the days when such men as Ælfric and Wulfstan were teaching the people in English, and attempting the same task in his own day and in his own form of the language. At the same time, he was looking forward as an innovator, using the vernacular language of the people for their instruction and religious training in accordance with the decrees of a reforming Church.

APPENDIX

There follow some examples of the Tremulous Hand’s annotations, together with the passages to which they belong. All are taken from texts in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 198. Abbreviations are silently expanded, and the Hand’s annotations are underlined.

1. The various types of nota annotation mark passages in which the scribe is particularly interested:

_nota_ 'witodlice næfde godes gelaðung/ paulum to laewe: gif se halga martyr ste/phanus swa ne bæde;

_Notabona_ 'he wæs on eordan wuniende/ δa ḥa he ὑς cwæþ. and his lichama ne com ḥa gyt to heo/ fonan rice.' [An exegesis of John 3:13]

_Nota bona_ 'He is ure hafod. and we sind his lima; Ne bið se hlaf of anum corne/ ac of manegum; Ne þæt win of anre beriun ac of manegum;'

2. His exemplum annotation marks illustrative stories which would obviously be of use in preaching and teaching:

_exemplum_ [after a passage on the signs and miracles in the early church:] 'Se man/ þe plantað treowa odde wyrtan; swa lange he hi wæterað/ oð þæt he beod ciddæste; siddan hi growende beod he ge/swicð þære wæterunge; Swa eac ælmihtiga god./ swa lange he æteowde his wundra þam hæðenum folce./ ðoppæt hi geleaffulle wæræn;

3. The narratio annotation is used in a similar way, but usually denotes a more straightforward story, often a biblical one. The Hand’s use of these terms shows that he was aware of the terminology of sermon making.
narratio ‘... He cwæð þæt he cuðe sumne mannæ on rome/byrig his nama wæs seruulus þearfa/ on ehtum. and welig on geearnungum ... ’ [The story continues of an invalid cared for by his family and the friends of God, and whose exemplary life ended in the odour of sanctity.]

4. Some of the most interesting annotations are contained in the ‘flags’ which the Hand writes in the margins of the texts. ‘These often are signalled by de ... or quod ...

De significationibus iiiii evangeliesterum ‘Dæs mannæ gelicnyss: belimpð/ to mathee. For þan þe he ongan his godspel be cristes menniscynysse ... ’ [The passage continues with a discussion of the symbols of the four evangelists.]

De predestinatione note bona ‘for þan þe he is soð líf; he forstihte þa gecore/nan to þam ecan lífe forðan þe/ he wiste hi swilce towearde þurh his/ gife. and agenne gehyrsumnyssse;’

quod ordinati non debent compelli ad proelio ‘Nu ne sculon þa woruld campan. to þam weoruld/licum gefeoht. Þa godes þiowas neodian. fram þam gastlican gewinne.’

Saturnus commedit filium suum ‘Cweþst þu la þæt næfre nan lyfigende/ god æþanþe saturnus. his suna abite. and hei flæsc æte./ on þam iglande cræta.’

vii. opera misericordia ‘Me hin/grode and ge me gereordodon ... ’ [A list of the seven corporal works of mercy follows.]

Many Bible passages are marked, usually with the name of the book or of the author, very occasionally with a reference to the chapter, and sometimes with a Latin translation of the Old English text in the margin.

matheus. capitulum .v. ‘min name is eored. for þan þe we her manige sind.’

humilia respicit alta a longe gnoscit ‘se healica drihten sceawað/ þa eadmodan. and þa modigan feorran/ oncnæwð.’

6. Names such as Augustine, Gregory and Bede flag passages from their works.

augustinus ‘Se wisa augustinus spræc/ ymbe þæs rædinge ... ’

augustinus de ebrietate ‘ðonne cwýð sanctus augustinus toforan eallum oðrum ðingum/ ic eow bidde ... ’ [Augustine’s warnings against gebeorscipas.]

gregorius ‘sanctus gregorius se halga writere/ se ðís gewrit sette and wrat ... ’
Beda ‘Beda se snotera engla þeowa læreow þisæs halgan lif. endeyrdlice mid wul/derfullum herungum ... ’

7. There are also many names excerpted from the text. These are wide-ranging and varied, and consist of the names of saints and other historical figures, Bible characters and the classical and Germanic gods.

ælfrædus Rex ‘ ... istoria anglorum. þa ðe ælfræd cyning/ of ledene on englisc awende ... ’
saul ‘on ðære feorðan ylde geceas israhela folc him sylfum/ sawul to cyninge godes wil/lan.’
apollo ‘Þær wæs gewurðod fram ealdum/ dagum sum hæðengylď þæt wæs gehaten apollo;’