

THE WORK OF A LATE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH SCRIBE, WILLIAM EBESHAM¹

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TWO of the best-known documents of the Paston collection are a pathetic letter and a lengthy bill from one William Ebesham, recording various scribal tasks undertaken for Sir John Paston the elder, with payments received and outstanding, ending with those for a "Grete Booke" of which some contents are specified.² This was apparently the volume which occurs some years later in an inventory of Sir John's books,³ and it has been identified with an extant manuscript, Lansdowne 285 in the British Museum, though not without question.⁴ It is my purpose here to show that the evidence of the extent of Ebesham's work for the Pastons, and for the identity of the "Grete Booke" with Lansdowne, has been hitherto incompletely presented, and

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² B.M. Add. MS. 43491, fols. 12-13 : ed. J. Fenn, *Original Letters*, ii (1787), 10-17 ; J. Gairdner, *Paston Letters*, v (1904), 1-5, no. 695, from Fenn, who also gives a facsimile of the signature of the letter, i, Pl. v, no. 20, and the watermark, Pl. x, no. 7, the latter corresponding with Fig. 22, in use in England c. 1450-75, of E. Heawood, "Sources of early English paper supply", *The Library*, 4th ser., vol. 10, pp. 282-307. The mark of the bill, Fenn's Pl. x, no. 1, is Heawood's Fig. 18, in use c. 1444-86. For a concordance table of the numeration of Gairdner's editions see H. S. Bennett, *The Pastons and their England* (1922), pp. 265-75.

³ Gairdner, vi. 66-7, no. 987, from Fenn, ii. 300, with doubt as to which John Paston. Mr. A. J. Collins has, however, settled from the original (B.M. Add. MS. 43491, fol. 26) that it is in the hand of the first Sir John (d. 1479) : see *Annual report of the Friends of the National Libraries*, 1933-4, p. 20, revised from an article in *The Times*, 7 July 1933, pp. 15-16. It includes Caxton's *Game of Chess*, printed c. 1474/5 at Bruges ; "my boke of knyghthode" (etc.) is an addition.

⁴ *Catalogue of the Lansdowne MSS.*, ii (1819), 99-102, at first followed by Gairdner, as by Bennett, op. cit. pp. 112-13. Gairdner subsequently had doubts though he could not gainsay Ebesham's hand in Lansdowne : see edn. v, 1, n. 2, and introduction to *Sailing Directions* (Hakluyt Society, 1889) ; followed by C. F. Buhler, *Modern Language Notes*, 56 (1939), 345-51, though the latter does not seem to have seen the manuscripts.

also to describe a number of other previously unnoticed products of his pen, with supplementary records of his career and context.

I

The letter, which Sir John Fenn, the first editor, did not quote in full, on the grounds that it merely duplicated the information of the bill, and which in consequence was not amplified in James Gairdner's several editions (not in fact being available until the British Museum's acquisition of the original in 1936),¹ seems on inspection (see Plate I) to have been written at a somewhat earlier date, since its details do differ from those of the document with which it has been coupled.² If one takes the items of the bill in order, comparing them with those of the letter in question, together with evidence from several others and the make-up of the supposed surviving Great Book, the chronology and character of Ebesham's work become clearer, though there still remain some difficulties, due probably to the uncertainty of his memory and the inadequacy of his mode of accounting.

1. For copying "a litill booke of pheesyk", at some indefinite time in the past before either letter or bill, Ebesham had received 20*d.* from "Sir Thomas Leenys" (a priest mentioned without surname in the letter as Sir John's intermediary) "in Westm[inster]".³

2. For copying half "the prevy seal" (presumably the warrant, September 1464, for the foundation of Caister College

¹ See Collins, loc. cit. and A. Esdaile, *The British Museum Library* (1946), pp. 283-4.

² Professor Norman Davis, who will shortly print the full text of the letter, has observed that some notable variations of spelling between it and the bill are such as are more likely if the two were separated by some interval: *writyn/wreetyn*, *phisyke/pheesyke*, and the form *Leenys* for *Lynys* (see next note), evincing the same preference as appears in the specimens *seemplesse* found in Lansdowne MS. 285 and *seemple* in Add. MS. 10106. Other abnormal spellings are *hier* and *thies* in both Add. and Rylands MS. 395. *Ebsham* in the letter and Rylands stands against *Ebesham* in the bill and Lansdowne, and Sir John's *Ebysham*, whereas in the later Westminster documents it is *Ebsam*.

³ Transcribed *Leevys* (= Lewis) by Fenn, necessarily repeated by Gairdner, but without identification. *Leeuys* or *Leenys* in the original, obviously the Lynes, Lyndis, etc., mentioned as in the Pastons' patronage c. 1465-9, ed. nos. 610, 637, 657, and as dead by March 1470, *ibid.* 742, 805.

under Sir John Fastolf's will, or else that of July 1466 for the admission of Paston to his father's estates)¹ he had received 8*d.* from Pampyng, another of Paston's agents, who must have done the other half himself, since the letter says "with" him.²

3. For doing the whole again, on paper according to the letter (as if the previous one were on parchment), 20*d.*, but according to the bill 2*s.*, received from Sir Thomas, a discrepancy possibly due to payment by instalments; in any case the respective sums suggest that the previous "half" had been a very rough estimate.

4. For copying on parchment eight of "the grete witnesses at the first tyme", in the words of the letter (referring to the depositions in the litigation concerning Fastolf's will, 1464-7, either at the first hearings or else for this first transcription),³ at the rate of only 14*d.* each, he had received 10*s.* from Sir Thomas, though 9*s.* 4*d.* would be the precise settlement.

5. For doing urgently, at the cost of late nights as the letter pleads, the privy seal twice more on paper and once on parchment, along with three (in the letter but by the bill one) of the longest witnesses again (and various other writings, by the bill), he had been promised 10*s.* by Richard Calle, Paston's bailiff, but had had only 4*s.* 8*d.* (4*s.* 4*d.* in the bill, but obviously in error as the remainder is there, too, given as 5*s.* 4*d.*). All this is said in both documents to have taken place while Sir John was overseas "in midsummer term", that is during June and July 1468 (for the marriage of the Princess Margaret of York to Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy),⁴ thus giving us not only a *terminus a quo*

¹ Ed. cit. iv. 113-16, no. 571, and 246-7, no. 641, more probably the former.

² Professor Davis points out that his hand is common in the Paston letters, mainly on behalf of John I.

³ Cf. *ibid.* pp. 101-4, no. 565, April-December 1464, from Phillipps MS. 9309, now Bodleian Top. Norf. c. 4, by more than one hand on paper, none Ebesham's, I think: statements said to be taken in the presence of Nicholas Parker, notary and scribe, but possibly recopied. Also no. 639, pp. 236-45, of May-June 1466, from B.M. Add. MS. 27450 which is by one hand (of one Bodleian scribe?). There is mention of witnesses going up to London in February 1467, nos. 661, 663, and in April (?) William Paston writes to Sir John there "And have newe wretyn the attestacion that lakkyn. The same man that wrott the oder may wrythe that" (*ibid.* p. 274, no. 664).

⁴ Cf. *ibid.* pp. 296-9, nos. 683-4.

but also *ad quem* in dating, for the phrase, being employed without qualification, suggests that they were written before the corresponding period of the next year.

6. The bill, however, not the letter, acknowledges an extra unattached payment of 3s. 4d. at Westminster by Sir Thomas on 30 October "anno viij" (i.e. of Edward IV, 1468), which probably implies that it was drawn up in a subsequent regnal year, commencing in March, and therefore as much as six months after the letter. At least the addition of this dated transaction indicates some interval between them. It may indeed reflect a half-hearted response to Ebesham's appeal from sanctuary, presumably that of Westminster abbey, where he had taken refuge, his terms and tone lead one to surmise, from his creditors or worse!

7. For two quires of the witnesses embraced in (5) by the letter it adds an apparently inconsequential claim of 3s., although it further specifies that they contained twenty-eight leaves at 2d. a leaf. The bill which, as noted above, omits some such quantity from that item, here states an independent and accurate charge of 4s. 8d. One can only suppose that in the letter Ebesham was making some concealed and complicated apportionment of his demands and receipts, in relation to his needs and hopes.

8. As for the Great Book, the letter speaks of it in the present tense and claims 14s. for seven quires, "the third parte of the seide boke" in Ebesham's estimate ("I wote wele", coming again in the last paragraph as a very conventional and unconvincing asseveration). His forecast that the "remanent" would be in five, albeit approximate, must mean not only that the work was still incomplete but also that at least as much again is unaccounted for. This is borne out by the greater detail of the bill, in which charges for twice as many quires appear, yet not all. Examination of B.M. Lansdowne MS. 285 in terms of the bill reveals a reason for this, and answers the question of its being the Great Book more exactly than previous comparisons.

The first sum under this head is 2s. 2d. for "the Coronacion & othir tretys of knyghthode in that quaire which conteyneth A xiiij levis & more" at 2d. a leaf: corresponding closely with

gathering *a*, fols. 1-12 of Lansdowne, where the last item runs on to fol. 14^r.¹ Then there is 10s. for “ the tretys of werre in iiij bookis which conteyneth lx levis ” at the same rate, identifiable with gatherings *h-m* (5 × 12), of which only fols. 83^r-137^r contain Vegetius *de re militari* in English, by the same hand as the first quire of the volume and with the words “ Quod W. Ebesham ” after the translator’s colophon (see Plate IIA), while fols. 137^r-141^r carry another piece in the same script and fols. 141^v-142^v are blank.² The next item in the bill, forty-three leaves of the Epistle of Othea for 7s. 2d., is not now to be found in Lansdowne, but it may well never have been bound up in the Great Book, since it occurs separately in Sir John Paston’s inventory of less than ten years later.³ Then follows 4s. 8d. for “ the Chalengis and the Actis of Armes ” totalling twenty-eight leaves, and in the quires *b-g* which include matter that might be so described, fols. 14^r-42^r, just over that number, and fols. 47^r-55^v are by Ebesham’s hand (disregarding the run-on from quire *a*), the latter batch being perhaps added later or otherwise accounted for, as will be argued below, while the remainder are by other hands, or additions or blanks. The penultimate charge is 3s. 9d. for forty-five leaves, “ Aftir A peny a leef, which is right wele worth ”, for *de Regimine principum*: that is, not Egidius Romanus but Lydgate and Burgh’s verse rendering of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*, which occupies fols. 155^r-199^v, precisely forty-five,⁴ of quires *o-r*, the rest being blanks and the explanation of the lower price that the stanzaic form, shorter lines and ampler spacing involve only about half as much writing as on the prose pages of the volume. These facts are sufficiently concordant to confirm the customary identification, and any contradictions can be met without going even so far as Gairdner’s

¹ There are at first two and later three divergent sequences of foliation: a medieval roman one up to *Cxliiij*, continued by a sixteenth-century hand, here quoted in arabic notation; a post-medieval arabic series counting the first flyleaf; and another modern arabic one in pencil which omits some blanks. The first conforms best to the medieval collation, *a-r*12, except c10.

² 58½ leaves by Ebesham, 55½ being Vegetius: only 53½ by Dr. Buhler’s calculations.

³ Buhler, *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (E.E.T.S. 1939), p. xlvi, grants that the same copy may be meant, though reluctantly.

⁴ Gairdner and Buhler say forty-four only.

supposition that "Ebesham may have written out the items only from memory",¹ but rather by the unstated particulars of the commission.

Now it appears from the letter, as already noticed, that the Great Book was at that time still in process of copying, whereas by the time the bill was drawn up it must have been virtually complete, as 3s. 4d. "for the Rubrisheyng of All the booke" is the last item there, though it is possible that this was a lump sum rather than a piece payment, especially if Ebesham did it all himself, which seems likely since rubrication in Lansdowne is limited to underlining. The flourishing of initial letters in blue and red was normally a specialist's job and would have been charged separately by number and size.

The totals at the foot of the bill, divided into "Summa resc[epta]" 22s. 4d., and "Summa non soluta" 41s. 4d., tally with the figures given above, except for the words written in a smaller but obviously the same script (and more or less simultaneously) after the second sum: "unde pro M[agno] libro script[o] xxvijs. cum div[ersis ?] chal[engiis ?]", or alternatively "cum dim[idio] chal[engiorum]".² This is impossible to explain by any simple computation, deducting any of the items mentioned, such as that for the rubrication, but as the charges for the Great Book apart from the challenges and acts of arms (4s. 8d.) add up to 26s. 5d., it may mean that these were in part held over for separate settlement, either because there was still some to be done (and it has been shown that Lansdowne contains rather more by Ebesham's hand of that sort than he accounts for), or, compatible with that, because the work was shared with someone else; either or both might be implied by the readings proposed.

Further collation of Lansdowne MS. 285 confirms some of these conjectures. The quire-signatures are contemporary and consecutive throughout the fifteenth-century portion of the volume (up to fol. 199 inclusive), but it is divisible into seven booklets: ³ (i) sig. a-b, fols. 1-24, items 1-18, all by Ebesham's

¹ *Sailing Directions*, p. 8.

² Cairdner at first expanded Fenn's reading "cum diurnali chalengio" but changed to "diversis chalengiis", *ibid.* p. 6 n.

³ The items numbered as in the *Catalogue*, *loc. cit.*

hand ; (ii) sig. *c-d*, fols. 25-46, items 19-42, with different ruling but by the same hand up to fol. 42^r (the end of item 37) and additions by another hand on that page and by a second on the rest ; (iii) sig. *e*, fols. 47-58, items 43-5, by Ebesham up to fol. 55^v, the remainder originally blank but now partly occupied by a later table of contents (item 45) ; (iv) sig. *f-g*, fols. 59-82, item 46, by a different hand ; (v) sig. *h-m*, fols. 83-142, items 47-8, again by Ebesham up to fol. 141^r, the rest blank ; (vi) sig. *n*, fols. 143-54, items 49-53, of which fols. 144^r-153^v are by the same hand as fols. 42^v-46^v, fols. 153^v-154^r (item 52) by another and fol 154^{r-v} (item 53) by still another, contemporaneous, while fol. 143 is lost ; (vii) sig. *o-r*, fols. 155-202, item 54, by Ebesham to fol. 199^v, the remainder blank. The rest of the volume is mainly by sixteenth-century hands, outside our scope.

Of these sections (i)-(iv) include matter that may be called challenges and acts of arms, of which (ii) is partly and (iv) wholly by other hands than Ebesham's, and likewise (vi), of military interest. It seems that the part of (ii) not by Ebesham, all (iii) by his hand, and (iv) and (vi) are not mentioned specifically in the bill, let alone the letter. Now in a letter written in October 1469 from London to Margaret Paston in Norfolk Sir John says " Item iff Ebysham come nat hom with myn oncle W(illiam) that than ye sende me the ij Frenshe bookys that he scholde have wretyn that he may wryght them her ".¹ This, of course, may not refer at all to the Great Book but some other task, yet it is perhaps more than a coincidence that sections (ii) and (vi) of Lansdowne are partly and (iii) and (iv) wholly, so far as the original hands are concerned, in French (i.e. fols. 25^r-28^r and 42^v-82^v), while the letter just quoted may afford an explanation of the bill's inconclusiveness. Ebesham may have been saved from his plight at Westminster and sent to Norfolk earlier in 1469, but failed to copy the two French books then, and it was anticipated that he might return with William in October,

¹ Ed. cit. v. 63, no. 736, with a misprint of *be* for *he*. The king's entry into London, which it describes, took place after 7 October : see C. L. Scofield, *Life and Reign of Edward IV*, i (1923), 503. Professor Davis kindly supplies a sentence only summarized by Fenn and Gairdner, to show that William was also in London : " thys daye or to morow he comyth homwards. He and I be as good as fallyn owt. . . . "

although in the event he may not have done. This interpretation is based not simply on phraseology but equally on the discovery by Professor Davis of a letter from William from Norwich dated 7 April, without a year but more probably 1469 or 1470 than any later one, which is entirely written in Ebesham's distinctive script.¹ Thus we know that he was employed by the Pastons in both the capital and the provinces and it is conceivable that at some stage it may have been more convenient to get the missing portions of the Great Book completed by other hands. It is also possible, in view of the uniformity of the paper,² that Ebesham himself deputed a share of the work.

Not only can there be no doubt concerning Lansdowne MS. 285 that, as Gairdner thought, "the greater part of the contents was written by William Ebesham",³ but there is direct evidence of its original ownership in the words "quod Sir Jhon Paston" following *Le statut des armez de turney par le parlement dengleterre* (item 38) which has been added on the bottom half of fol. 42^r.⁴ This is not the autograph of either the first or second Sir John, for it does not agree in any respect with the plentiful extant examples of their hands, even allowing for the amateurish bastard style here adopted.⁵ And there is certainly no reason to attribute

¹ Our judgement formed from a photostat of the original, now B.M. Add. 34889, fol. 215: ed. cit. v. 230-1, no. 869, dated 1475 by Gairdner, as Margaret was at Mautby, which however seems to have been so too in 1469, on 3 April (no. 704). 1470 is possible, with nothing positive in its favour, and would involve duplicating or transferring Ebesham's visit. The only point for 1475 is the mention of the Prior of Bromholm's renewed application for money: cf. his representations about John Paston I's tomb-covering in no. 878 of that year. It should perhaps be noted here that Ebesham's tenancy at Westminster is recorded from 1475, but the silence at other times will be shown to be of no force as to his presence there.

² Heawood, loc. cit. p. 295 and Fig. 71, in use c. 1450-75.

³ *Sailing Directions*, pp. 3-4.

⁴ A corrupt copy of an undated statute temp. Edward I (c. 1292 ?); *Statutes of the Realm*, i (1758), 200-1; i (1810), 230.

⁵ For this judgement, besides Gairdner's opinion, *Sailing Directions*, pp. 4-5, I have the helpful confirmation of Mr. G. R. C. Davis of the Museum. R. J. Mitchell, *John Tiptoft* (1938), pp. 101-4, alleges that Lansdowne "includes Tiptoft's *Iustes and Triumphes* [i.e. his orders as Constable of England, 29 May 1466] written out in what is believed to be Paston's own hand"; but neither the item in question, nor any other in the volume, is Tiptoft's any more than the hand is Sir John's.

to the same person, as the Lansdowne catalogue does, the two quite distinct clerical courthands responsible for extracts from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Ranulph Higden (items 52-3) on fols. 153^v-154^v, possibly prior in time to item 38. Gairdner's proposal that the passage on fol. 42^r might be an extract from another of the Pastons' books is persuasive, if we suppose that it was dictated or communicated to the copyist by one of the Sir Johns.

It is noteworthy that the first ten items of section (i) are also found, though in a different order, in a closely comparable collection, Pierpont Morgan MS. 775, which contains Stephen Scrope's version of Cristine de Pisan's *Epistle of Othea* (as intended for the Great Book) and both items (47-8) of section (v) of Lansdowne, as well as the *Secrees* (item 54). The common texts which have been printed or collated differ in such a way that an immediate joint source would be likely, if Lansdowne is not actually (as some readings suggest) derived from the Morgan manuscript, which was apparently made or augmented for Sir John Astley, a Warwickshire gentleman, whose own acts of arms (1438-42) are in both volumes, before 1461.¹ The most recent

¹ His armorial bearings occur several times in the margins and miniatures, with a label of difference, so before his father's death, and without the Garter, which he received in 1461 (see W. Dugdale, *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), p. 73). Scrope's version of *Othea* was probably made between 1450 and 1460 (see K. Chesney, *Medium Aevum*, vol. 1, pp. 38-40, and Buhler, *op. cit.*). Burgh completed Lydgate's *Secrees* after the latter's death (1449?), and his *Parvus* and *Magnus Cato* probably before that. Two poems on the coronation of Henry VI (C. F. Brown and R. H. Robbins, *Index of Middle English Verse*, nos. 1224 and 1929), presumably selected before his first deposition, 1461, do reappear in Lansdowne (which can hardly have been still on the stocks at the time of his restoration in 1470?), but with variants indicating its inferiority and probably direct dependence: as do such repetitions as "Vamborough" (for Bamburg) in the *Sailing Directions*. A. Way, *Archaeological Journal*, 4 (1847), 226-39, judges the texts in common "more ancient" than the Lansdowne copies printed by F. Douce, *Archaeologia*, vol. 17 (1814), pp. 290-6. For fuller description of the volume and its owners, with extracts and facsimiles, see Viscount Dillon, *ibid.* vol. 57 (1900), pt. i, pp. 28-70, and, particularly for subsequent pedigree, Messrs. Sotheby's sale catalogue, 30 September 1931, lot 7; cf. S. de Ricci and W. J. Wilson, *Census of Medieval & Renaissance MSS. in U.S.*, pp. 1501-2. W. H. St. J. Hope, *Heraldry for Craftsmen & Designers* (1931), p. 131 and Fig. 64, dates the arms and manuscript as c. 1420, surely a misprint (cf. his *Garter stall-plates in St. George's Chapel, Windsor*); E. Rickert, *Chaucer's*

events, however, recorded in section (i) of Lansdowne, the challenges of Lord Scales, the Bastard of Burgundy and others, 1465-7 (items 12, 15-18), are not in Morgan, nor those of May 1467 and July 1468 (items 20-37 and 19) in section (ii), the last being an episode of the festivities in Flanders attended by Sir John Paston that "midsummer term". Sections (iii) and (iv), perhaps the bulk of the two French books from Norfolk left till the last for incorporation in the Great Book, contain cognate matter of 1446 and 1462 not present in the sister or parent volume. Appropriately enough the ownership of Lansdowne MS. 285 passed to a line of heralds who added many pieces to it. The first of these, to all appearances, Thomas Wriothesley (Garter King 1504-34) could have got it direct from the second Sir John Paston (d. 1503).¹

II

Of the four pieces of Ebesham's writing treated so far, the two letters are naturally the least formal in character (as declared, too, by cancellations); the bill, set out more carefully, is nearer the manner of some of the better English passages of the volume, which, however, through the length and range of its texts in three languages, prose and verse, displays a considerable variety of size, shape and fluency, in parts inferior to the execution of the documents, as must be expected of almost any cursive script employed for literary purposes but not primarily designed nor solely used for them. If one looks at it letter by letter, and

World (1948), Plate opposite p. 156, temp. Hen. VI; M. Rickert, *Painting in Britain in the Middle Ages* (1954), p. 200 and Pl. 179, dated c. 1470, as *Census*. The main script is a good mid-century book-hand; Astley's own acts of arms are by another; his escutcheons added too?

¹ Owners listed by Gairdner, *Sailing Directions*, pp. 9-10. Wriothesley became Wallingford herald in 1489 (see A. R. Wagner, *The Records & Collections of the College of Arms* (1952), pp. 8-10). His arms and name occur in B.M. C. 10. b. 23, Caxton's *Game of Chess* (1474/5?), with a contemporary list at the end of "the names of the banerettis made at the batell of stooke" (1487), of which there exists a copy made by the younger Sir John Paston (Gairdner, no. 987). The coincidence has occasioned the conjecture that this is the actual copy of the *Game* in the elder Sir John's inventory, pursuing the same descent as Lansdowne, on which Wriothesley's crest, initials and style (as Garter) occur in the same fashion; cf. College of Arms Arundel MS. XXVI, reproduced in the *Heralds' Commemorative Exhibition Catalogue* (1936), p. 47 and Pl. 31.

likewise ligatures, abbreviations and punctuation, taking the scale in relation to the space and style with contents, bearing in mind the versatility of a practised and prolific scribe and the eclecticism with regard to native and foreign models at this period, one can see that there is an essential and indeed conspicuous integrity beneath the diversity of Ebesham's writing ; and from these cases proceed with some confidence to identify his hand in other manuscripts made at different times, with different materials, embracing different matter and envisaging different readers.

To demonstrate these contentions it will be best to start with a book not next in strict chronological order but bearing an explicit claim to be Ebesham's, at least in part, and superficially sufficiently remote in appearance from the bulk of the work so far considered as to be a suitable bridge to the other extreme of his style.

RYLANDS LATIN MS. 395 is a volume smaller in format (8 × 5 inches) than Lansdowne MS. 285 (12 × 8 inches), of composite vellum and paper gatherings, all except the last four (*h* 20, *j* 18, *k* 10, *l* 6) of twelves, with watermarks of the second half of the fifteenth century.¹ The writing is adapted to the predominantly Latin theological contents and affected by the physical conditions : it is vertically compressed and laterally spread, with a pronounced rightwards slant and angular strokes, showing some of the simplifications from recent continental influence in certain letter forms. Yet occasionally, especially in the English items, the native rotundity and relaxedness of the documents and most of Lansdowne reappear, though Ebesham's French passages in the last-named book are distinctly modified in the direction of the Rylands Latin (cf. Plates IVA and III).

The contents include three works of Richard Rolle ;² extracts from SS. Bonaventure, Augustine, Mechtild (of Hackeborn), Catharine (of Siena, in English), Brigit (of Sweden), etc. ; a note *de S. Katherina* (of Alexandria) ; the pseudo-Bonaventuran

¹ Heawood, *loc. cit.* no. 81, in use c. 1473-89, of a type assigned by C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes*, to the third quarter of the century ; and others.

² See H. E. Allen, *Writings attributed to R. Rolle* (1927), pp. 66, 205, 218. Cf. M. Tyson, *Handlist of additions to the Latin MSS.* (1928), reprinted from *BULLETIN*, vol. 12, p. 604.

gaudentes et narrat ei dñs Jhs xpo qualis p̄tm om̄i
 liberavit de inferno. et omnia que fecit in illo terdno
 et in sit honor et glia in sempiterna p̄toꝝ p̄ta Amen
 Et tunc inno go magnū pasche. hec dies quam fecit nos
 exultemus et letemur in ea. Alleluia. p̄ No. Et p̄

IIIa: Rylands Latin MS. 395, fol. 117^v., first five lines, actual size.

On me s̄ho caste hit ey said s̄ho man thy brotheꝝ
 The lissid hym so said. wote am I not thy modie
 In scholomny s̄ho fill thore. it wold be noon otheꝝ
 I not wogis more dedd. the toon or the tothe
 wit s̄ho yobibed. s̄ho s̄ho. s̄ho s̄ho was h̄ho. p̄ of s̄ho p̄ r̄ddid.
 who canot wogis. this was the lare. p̄ h̄ p̄ wogis s̄ho b̄umpst. d̄
 ¶ **Q**uoniam ego brigitta essem ad p̄sepe. Acta xxv. li. 67.
 dñm in Bethleem. vidi quatuor virgines p̄gudū
 tem. pulcherimā valde. induta albo mantello
 et subtili tunica. p̄ quā ab extra emis capite
 virgineas dare temebam. Cum p̄ter p̄len et
 multū tumidus erat. q̄ iam parata erat
 ad parandū. Cū qua senex quidm̄ honesty
 simus erat. et s̄cū habant ambo vñ bonē et asi
 nū. Qui cū intrassent speluncā. senex ille.
 ligatis bone et asino ad p̄sepe. exivit extra
 et portavit ad virginē candelam accensam.
 s̄p̄itq̄ eam in mure et exivit extra. me p̄tm
 p̄sonate inteset. Virgo q̄ illa tunc distalciā
 i. mala. mure. videri. tuou. a. distalciā.

IIIb: Rylands Latin MS. 395, fol. 120^v., approx. actual size.

Meditationes passionis Christi; three pious English poems¹ and six questions and answers on tribulation by six "masters of the Court of Rome" in English prose;² further passages from the Revelations of St. Brigit, *de Vitis Patrum*, etc.; *legenda S. Sampsonis* (of Dol); one stanza of an English poem on the Blessed Virgin;³ an extract from Grosseteste's Latin version of the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs; and one of the three known copies of the *Propositio Johannis Russell*, Edward IV's ambassador for the admission of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, his brother-in-law, to the Order of the Garter in 1470 at Bruges, printed in Caxton's second type either there or at Westminster between 1475 and 1478;⁴ with a manuscript note about sin on the first blank page (fol. 141^r), and a list of *Autores Biblie* commencing at the end of the printed text (fol. 144^r) and running on to fol. 145^v, both these by the same hand as the rest of the collection. Originally, and until about the end of the eighteenth century, the unique surviving copy, now B.M. IA 55065 (unfortunately incomplete), of an edition of the office of the Visitation of Our Lady printed by Caxton at Westminster in 1480 was also part of this volume.⁵ Just as on the Rylands

¹ Brown and Robbins, op. cit. nos. 339, 4163, 4189: the first two unique, the last only otherwise in Trinity College, Cambridge, MS. 0.9.38, a Glastonbury monk's collection, c. 1500, with Oxford and London links.

² Varying from the usual version found in a dozen manuscripts and printings by Caxton and De Worde (ed. C. Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, ii (1896), 390) nor the same as that in St. John's College, Oxford, MS. 147, fols. 124^r-125^r (see below).

³ *Index*, no. 1460 (ed. C. F. Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the 14th Century* (1924), p. 236, lines 81-8).

⁴ See E. G. Duff, *Printers of Westminster & London* (1906), p. 9; *15th-century English books* (1917), no. 367; the facsimile of this copy ed. H. Guppy (1909) and *Catalogue of the English Incunabula in the John Rylands Library* (1930), p. 73, assign it to Bruges c. 1476. L. A. Sheppard, "A new light on Caxton and Colard Mansion", *Signature* (new ser.), vol. 15 (1951), pp. 28-39, contending that the French items in Caxton's types 1 and 2 were actually printed by him rather than Mansion, at Bruges c. 1473 onwards, allows the same possibility for the *Propositio*, though not part of his case. C. F. Buhler, *The Library*, 5th ser., vol. 8, p. 54, n. 1, remarks that "it is now generally conceded that the book was printed at Westminster", which is accepted, with the date c. 1477, in the British Museum General Catalogue for its recently acquired copy, formerly at Holkham with the only other traceable besides the Rylands one.

⁵ Duff, no. 148; S. De Ricci, *Census of Caxtons* (1909), no. 43, gives no pedigree before the Museum's purchase in 1851. Rylands MS. 395 is identified,

Propositio, so here too Ebesham has copied memoranda, in Latin verse, below the conclusion of the printing and on the next leaf (the present fols. 6^v-7^r), unmistakable in script.

At the end of the *Meditationes* in Rylands, fol. 117^v, occurs the phrase "quod W. Ebsham" (see Plate IIIA) and although "quod Stevens E" comes a couple of leaves later, fol. 119^v, it is after one of three English poems the writing of which is even more plainly than in the Latin that of Lansdowne and the letters (cf. Plate IIIB, top half, with I and II,) and demonstrably mixing the features of both styles. The second name must therefore be, like Sir John Paston's in Lansdowne, that of the transmitter, previous copyist or author of the item (a unique copy) to which it is appended; and in fact there was an Edmund Stevyns, gentleman, of London, recorded in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and buried in the Charterhouse in 1517.¹

Professor Margaret Deanesly has stated that the writing of the *Incendium Amoris* in Rylands, which she assigns to the early fifteenth century (not noticing the scribe's name), is "very similar if not the same as that of the Comment on the Canticles" in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, MS. 35, a highly important

ibid. p. 91, with item 5658 of T. Osborne's sale catalogue [of the libraries of H. Finch, 4th earl of Winchelsea and others?], 1758, vol. i. p. 172, which I have been unable to find in the British Isles or United States. In the front of the manuscript, however, is an extract of item 3258 in Osborne's *Catalogue of the Libraries of Mr. Dongworth, Dr. Green, H. Anderson . . . to be sold . . . till 1st Jan. 1763* [1761?], where the *Propositio* is described as accompanied by the *Officium* "Rom. 1480. Jussu & Auctoritate Sixti Papae IV cum aliis Tractatus [sic] antiq. mss. script. circa siculo 15. 2l. 2s." The error of place is explicable by the inclusion of papal decrees dated thence, though of 1475, so that the leaves now lost may have given the correct date of printing before this part of the volume was detached. The feast was petitioned and prescribed for observance in the province of Canterbury in 1480 (see C. Wordsworth and H. Littlehales, *Old Service-books of the English Church*, 2nd edn. (1910), p. 193); the chronology of Caxton's type accords with this, and W. de Machlinia printed an edition assignable to 1480. The remainder of the volume appeared in the sale of Brand's books in 1807, going to the Marquess of Blandford, when it was described and the English poems printed by Sir E. Brydges (*Censura Literaria*, viii (1808-9), 351-4, 401-2; x. 69-70, 186-7); and by T. F. Dibdin (*Typographical Antiquities* i (1810), 11-15, with the text of the *Propositio*).

¹ *Calendar of Close Rolls 1476-1485* (1954), nos. 185 and 1116, dated 1476/7 and 1483. Will dated 29 May, proved 30 June 1517, with directions for burial quoted by W. H. St. J. Hope, *London Charterhouse* (1925), p. 98.

Rolle collection containing additions claiming to be taken from the author's autograph; "and the variants in the two manuscripts are peculiar and nearly always agree".¹ Although the palaeographical judgement is in my view untenable, the Emmanuel volume may be contemporary with the Rylands one, and the alleged textual affiliations (presumably better-founded) would imply some common antecedent for the two. Emmanuel was certainly annotated by James Grenehalgh, the industrious Carthusian student of English mystical writings, in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, and possibly also, as Miss Deanesly thought, by his friend Joan Sewell, Brigittine nun of Syon abbey (Middlesex) between 1500 and 1532.² But as the former had access, both at Sheen and elsewhere, to books belonging to several Charterhouses, and as the order was peculiarly active in such literary circulation,³ we cannot infer from the link with Emmanuel anything more definite about the hinterland of Rylands than that it was possibly metropolitan and monastic.

The contemplative bias of the collection should have been obvious from the recital of its contents, and certain pieces particularly point to a professional interest: e.g. "In Revelationibus beate Matilde legitur quod quatuor sunt que plurimum deo complacent in viris religiosis . . ." (fol 90^r). The source as well as the selection is significant, again suggestive of Carthusian or Brigittine contacts, since its English circulation was closely connected with them. The commonplace pseudo-Augustinian *De laude psalmodum* (fol. 128^r), on the saying of the divine office, also indicates a clerical owner, and there may be personal or local relevance in the saints singled out for commemoration and invocation. The most remarkable of these is the marginal note on fol. 135, by the main hand, against a brief

¹ *Incendium*, ed. M. Deanesly (1915), pp. 33-5; cf. Allen, *op. cit.* pp. 215-16.

² Grenehalgh was professed at Sheen (Surrey) in 1495, was transferred to Coventry between 1500 and 1508, and died at Hull in 1529/30. He annotated books belonging to London and Mountgrace as well as Sheen and Coventry. Cf. Deanesly, pp. 78-83, and J. Russell-Smith, *Dominican Studies*, vol. 7 (1954), p. 210.

³ See E. M. Thompson, *The Carthusian Order in England* (1930), pp. 323-31; E. Colledge, *English Studies*, vol. 33 (1952), pp. 49-66.

mention of Dubricius in the life of St. Sampson of Dol : "Memorandum de ecclesia beati Dubricii in decanatu Irchynfeld in dioc. Hereforden." ¹ It is not unreasonable, in view of the associations which will appear from the subsequent descriptions of other manuscripts, to instance in this regard the career of Thomas Millyng, abbot of Westminster from 1469 to 1474 and from the latter year till his death in 1492 bishop of Hereford, but continuing his ties with the abbey and being buried there.² His name is not put forward so much as a possible owner of the Rylands volume, which can be nothing but a guess, but rather as exemplifying the type of personality that might combine and supply the *raison d'être* of such a collection, which is not exclusively inward-looking, after all that has been argued above. Edmund Stevyns, or any layman, is an unlikely candidate, but he, and Caxton, and Ebesham himself, represent the non-religious environment with which all the metropolitan monasteries, especially Westminster and even the Charterhouses, were intimately involved.

It is apposite to observe at this point, in view of the interest in Dubricius (and S. Keneburga, perhaps of Gloucester) that the scribe's name has probably no connection with the Worcestershire Evesham, as might be thought, but is in fact a current medieval form of Epsom ; his orthography shows no signs of a West Midland origin, and a namesake who was a monk of Westminster from 1510 to 1535 clearly came from the locality in Surrey.³

III

After the two books in which the scribe's signature appears, it is convenient to take those assigned to him on the evidence of writing alone in approximately chronological order, so far as it is ascertainable.

¹ In fact four of the six known ancient dedications to this saint are in the district and deanery of Archenfield : see F. Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church-dedications*, ii. (1899), 200.

² E. H. Pearce, *The Monks of Westminster* (1916), pp. 152-3.

³ *Ibid.* p. 182 : transcribed *Evsam*, *Evsham*, *Evesham*, but also *Ipsam*, etc. See *Place-names of Surrey* (E.P.N.S. 1934), p. 74. As will be seen from the scribe's signatures such a misreading is not unnatural. Cf. William Ebesham in a Gloucestershire context, 1460 (C.C.R. 1454-61, p. 487).

ADDITIONAL MS. 10106 in the British Museum is a small ($5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches) volume of vellum and paper,¹ the first and longer portion, fols. 3-49, written in a fluent style resembling that of the letters and English prose of Lansdowne MS. 285, but better than both and varying somewhat with the language, the Latin parts being more like the French of Ebesham's share in that book than the Latin of the majority of Rylands Lat. MS. 395 (cf. Plates IIB and III). The second and shorter portion of the Additional manuscript, fols. 50-78, is in a rather awkward attempt at a post-humanist book-hand based on the same sort of cursive as that of Rylands (cf. Plates IIIB and IVB), and in the last couple of more hastily written pages it reveals a high proportion of Ebesham's characteristic forms and habits. The contemporaneous notes on the fly-leaves at both ends are also mostly in a very small and informal but neat variety of his hand.

The contents afford clear evidence, if only circumstantial, of date and provenance.² The first item, *Cronica de regibus Anglie . . . usque regem Edwardum quartum* (fols. 3^r-20^v), actually ends with Henry IV, but such a slip of the pen would be a natural one during or soon after the reign of Edward (1461-83), when minds were accustomed to that combination. *The maner & the fourme of the coronacion of kynges and quenes of England* (fols. 21^r-30^v) which comes next, is a translation (also found in Morgan MS. 775 and Lansdowne MS. 285) of a recension made before 1460 of the rubrics of the *Liber Regalis*,³ the localization of which scarcely needs comment. More definite still are the associations of the following piece, *De dedicatione ecclesie beati Petri Westmonasterii*⁴ (fols. 31^r-33^r) in Latin, and the *Privilegia*

¹ The original quire-signatures run, after two fly-leaves, *a*, *b*, 3 and 7 (4?) in twelves; *vi*, *vii* and another of eight, and a final six. This might point to the loss of a fifth quire, but the first four, of mixed vellum and paper, and the last four of vellum solely are linked by a catchword by the main hand, and the texts in each half are continuous. Something may have been dropped at an early stage. The main mark in the paper resembles Heawood's Fig. 46, used c. 1462-1506.

² Cf. *Catalogue of Additions* (1843), p. 12.

³ Latin ed. C. Wordsworth, H. Bradshaw Soc., vol. 2 (1892), App. i. pp. 63-72; English in Dillon, loc. cit. pp. 47-55, with preface by J. W. Legg.

⁴ An early item found both separately (e.g. in the fifteenth-century collection Huntington Library 1342, which I am grateful to Mr. H. C. Schulz for checking)

Westmonasterii (fols. 33^r-39^v) in English, a memorial addressed to an unspecified king in defence of the abbey's rights of sanctuary.¹ The two preceding English items and the next four, *A good and a profitable table of the feythe of Cristen people* (fols. 39^v-44^r), *A good & a profitable tretys of gode levying to all maner astates of the people, made & ordeyned for gret men & myghty & her Justicis* (fols. 44^r-47^r), *The temptacions of the devill . . . of the vij dedly synnes & of her braunches, And the answers . . . of the gode angel* (fols. 47^r-49^r), and an account (fol. 49^r) of the physiognomy of Christ according to "the stories & Cronycles of Rome" (the spurious epistle of P. Lentulus), are all translations, and to the best of my knowledge unique copies, from Latin texts found in the same order in Bodley MS. 596, a volume probably compiled at Westminster in the first quarter and still thereabouts in the middle or third quarter of the century.²

The second portion of the Additional manuscript contains *Devote meditaciones de beneficiis dei . . . que vocatur [sic] Stimulus Compassionis*,³ in rhyming Latin quatrains (fols. 50^r-78^r), followed by sequences and suffrages for SS. Pantaleon, Wilgefort and Blaise (fol. 78^{r-v}), of whom the first appears to have had a revival of cult in England coming from the Low and incorporated in other works (see J. Flete, *History of Westminster Abbey*, ed. J. A. Robinson (1909), p. 3).

¹ Threats like that mentioned in the preamble were at their height during the Lollard movement; this answer was perhaps (as suggested by the Bodleian *Summary Catalogue*) made c. 1410, the last year in which there was a concerted parliamentary attack on ecclesiastical wealth and franchises; cf. T. Walsingham, *St. Albans Chronicle 1406-1420*, ed. V. H. Galbraith (1937), pp. 52-5. William Sudbury, monk of Westminster, d. 1414/15, was author of a longer defence in the Longleat manuscript described below. There is another English summary of the "privilege of Westmynstre" in Oriel College, Oxford, MS. 79, fols. 73^r-77^v.

² *Summary Catalogue*, no. 2376: section A only, "clearly connected with Westminster" (and also the city of London). Now bound with items of different provenance, this portion was once part of a much larger volume, of which the first 127 leaves had apparently gone before the escutcheon of the Baron family (of Berks.) was tricked on the present opening leaf in the mid-fifteenth century. I hope to publish elsewhere an account of the books connected with members of this family active in the court, city and home counties in the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV.

³ Ed. J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 149, col. 601 ff., among the spurious works of St. Anselm, whom Add. MS. 10106 does not mention, only an alleged commendation by St. Bernard. Cf. Trinity College, Dublin, MS. 349, fol. 36.

Countries in the later fifteenth century, the second is represented by a statue in King Henry VII's chapel at Westminster, while the third had a chapel of his own in the abbey church.¹ It is these last three items that are most obviously by Ebesham's hand and so help to demonstrate that the preceding piece is probably his. His additions on the endleaves (fols. 1^v and 79^r) include Latin verses and conventional memoranda, an English stanza on the properties of wine (by Lydgate ?),² and a note of considerable interest: "Descriptio in pede virgis [sic] regie apud Westm. Virga recta est virga regni tui"—from the rod with dove of the medieval regalia.³ On fol. 2^r is added a petition from the Abbot and convent of W[estminster] for confirmation of their privileges, mentioning Richard II among their previous royal patrons, and therefore apparently addressed to Edward IV or Richard III, or possibly Henry VII or VIII. The volume is in an original blind-stamped cover with the distinctive "carrot" or "lily" tool of a binder employed by Caxton, found on books dated c. 1477-1504, but possibly in use only c. 1483 onwards; "and as the contents have in part Westminster associations", says Mr. J. B. Oldham in a note in the manuscript (without noticing all those above), "the binding may be attributed to his shop".⁴ Of course it need not have been bound, especially in view of its format, for some time after the main texts were written.

¹ For the first cf. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS. 57, Hours of English and Flemish workmanship, with Henry VII's insignia, c. 1490 (M. R. James, *Catalogue* (1895), p. 143); the second is in U. Chevalier, *Repertorium Hymnologicum*, no. 2105; for the third see Pearce, *op. cit.* p. 161.

² Brown and Robbins, *Index*, no. 4175, ignoring the ascription in John Stow's B.M. Add. MS. 29729. The other manuscript (apart from Add. MS. 10106), Harley 2252, is of London provenance c. 1500 (see R. H. Robbins, *Studia Neophilologica*, vol. 26, pp. 58-9). Line 2 is l. 1969 of Lydgate's *Secrees* with a similar context. The present copy has seven instead of eight lines, rearranged.

³ Destroyed in 1649. The words quoted, from Psalm 44, occur in the prayer "Accipe virgam virtutis et equitatis" in the *Liber Regalis* (see L. G. Wickham-Legg, *English Coronation Records* (1901), p. 98). That they were on the rod has not, I think, been hitherto known.

⁴ G. D. Hobson, *English Binding before 1500* (1929), pp. 19-20, distinguished two binders, the user of this tool being the second; but Mr. Oldham, *English Blind-stamped Bindings* (1952), p. 27, with a greater variety of evidence, finds it difficult to draw a line between them.

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD, MS. 147 is a volume of medium size (8 × 5 in.), like Rylands, written mainly by Ebesham, on vellum and paper, the script varying very much in angle, scale and flow and thus showing resemblances to both facets of his style (disregarding the latter part of Add. MS. 10106) so far described, though naturally having most in common with Rylands by reason of the matter and language (cf. Plates III, VB and VIA). It contains,¹ after an original table of contents, *Moralitas venerabilis Ricardi heremite super lectiones sancti Job* (fols. 1^r-123^v)²; next, by another hand, uncompleted, *A tretys that tellyth howe . . . vj Doctours . . . were accordytt to speke of trybulacion* (fols. 124^r-125^r);³ then the *Vitae & Passiones* of thirteen saints of the early Church (fols. 126^r-225^v), imperfect by the loss of one leaf at the end; and the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes passionis Christi* (fols. 226^r-263^r), which occurs also in Rylands; with later additions by another hand (fols. 263^v-265^r): lists of *sexdecim gaudia in celo, miracula, dignitates, leges, premia; sententie* from SS. Bernard and Ambrose; *septem criminalia*; and Latin verses on women⁴ and on monks at wedding-feasts.

The volume is really in two portions or sequences of quire-signatures: the first comprising Rolle's Job simply; the second the *Vitae* and the *Meditationes*, at first meant to be bound in reverse order but listed in the contents-table as they stand now.⁵ At the front of the volume is an engrossed text-hand inscription, perhaps original and certainly contemporary: "Iste liber constat [Thome Lynne] Mon. Westmonasterij", the name being erased and decipherable only under ultra-violet light; and at the end, fol. 264^v, by another hand: "Iste liber pertinet Willelmo Graunt T[este?] Willelmo Grove Monach[is?] Westm." Thomas Lynne, alias Mildenhale, said his first mass in 1455/6 and died

¹ Cf. H. O. Coxe, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum*, ii (1852), 44.

² Cf. Allen, *op. cit.* p. 132.

³ Not verbally the same as in Rylands Lat. MS. 395.

⁴ Also in the mid-fifteenth-century Westminster MS. 27.

⁵ The first half of composite vellum and paper gatherings of fourteen, not counting endleaves and losses, unsigned; then *f-p* 10 (the last leaf lost with text) also of mixed makeup, followed by *a-e* 8, all vellum, signed by the same hand.

This is the booke of ynderstanding
of knyghtes and knyghtes

God almyghty save and conforme our kynge
In all pertyn to his encreas of gloure
his Reame and hym by pollublyk byng
Doyng dyede and done to have me moore
Of his knyghtes conquest and victorye
with sceptre and sword thene both to do justice
In his lades to eny maner wyght

And in all pertyn to set his ynderstanding
In his lades to please and his lades to pe
And his lades with hardy obsequies
In pece to bepe them before they wale or clope
To pmysses treame and cheryshes them p to more
With two eders open off dystraction
As yo them fynde of dyffosion

VA: British Museum, Lansdowne MS. 285, fol. 152^r., top half, approx. 3/4 actual size.

sto. Si quis autem infirmus illud sacratissi-
mum corpus tangebatur. protinus curabat. et
visum recipiebant. demona eruebant. Lepsi
ad pristina redibant. ceterum multis in laudem
xpi lingua referabatur. claudis reddebat. messis
et omnes infirmos quacumque infirmitate detenti.
toto corpore sancto curabantur. Imperatores autem
tanta mirabilia videntes. ceperunt pro se cum
pontifice lectum portare. quatinus et ipsi stifi-
tarentur ab eodem corpore sancto. Tunc imperatores
insequuntur copiam auri et argenti in plures spe-
re turbe occupaverunt amore pecuniarum. et fuerunt
pauca grabatuum ad octidam. De plebe amore pe-
cunie seposito. magis ac magis ad tactum stifi-
mi corporis veniebant. Et sic tandem maximo la-
bore ad templum sancti Bonifacii martiris illud.

VB: St. John's College, Oxford, MS. 147, fol. 132^v., top half, 5/6 actual size.
(By permission of the President and Fellows.)

ubi tormenta & **Et** sempiternus
horror. s. visionis demonum men-
strorum sponsum. draconum. & necessu
ignis **Et** habitans inter
num

Explicat moralitas ponabit
sua hominibus de hampole
sup locutiones da Job. quo
leguntur in vigiliis mortu-
orum. ce.

Valentem traditum bimono subfodere finem
Sic prozis paritudo. hoc sermo ffit opimū
Dilexit hominū. sicut sibi tantq amoz
Quo gemit in mbitū. tu xpo coronas

VIA: St. John's College, Oxford, MS. 147, fol. 123^v., top half, 5/6 actual size.
(By permission of the President and Fellows.)

70
tandem inuenient locū quō rex alexand' obtinuit fab
grossie lapidibz cum semento. has portas ipi conseru-
rent: & sic inuenient expressum. **Et** septim' lxxij.
Ab ista t'ra dz transiit in sua regione dicitur h'oz
ubi est grom' pessima & crudelis. In hac t'ra sunt arbo-
res portantes lanam. dicitur esse lana d'no. vnde faci-
unt ibi vestes. Sunt ibi & bestie que vocant' ypotam
morantes tam in deserto qm in aqua. Aliquid in d'na p
aliqui in alia. Et est vna medietas forme h'umano &
alia forme equino. sicut alias d'ca est. Quomodo
in h'oz quocumq' app'ndendo possunt. Ibi sunt aqua
m'p'is multo plus qm aqua maris. In hac p'ia sunt
fuentes p'is. que magis habundant in hac p'ia q
alibi. Dicunt aliq' q' h'ont forma aq'ina d'p'is d'no. et
leonna apto post. forte v'oz d'no. Et v'oz gr'isso for-
tior est & maior octo leombz de p'ibz istis. Sic est &

VIB: Durham University Library, Cosin MS. V.III 7, fol. 70^r., top half, 5/6 actual size

in 1473/4,¹ which accords with the date of the volume's water-marks.² It may have been immediately or through an intermediary it passed to Grant, a member of the community c. 1469-1510, or Grove, c. 1485-92, if the latter was ever its owner.³

The last three volumes described, Rylands, Additional and St. John's, could all have been written for the use of individual monks in the fashion explicit in the third case, but the next three to be treated were unquestionably community commissions. The present WESTMINSTER ABBEY MUNIMENTS BOOK I is a vellum copy of an early fifteenth-century paper register of title-deeds and other documents concerning its property and privileges called the *Liber Niger Quaternus*, with other collections incorporated. This transcript was made at the expense of Thomas Clifford, a monk from the noble family of that name, who also compiled the table of contents, according to original rubrics, presumably while he was treasurer, but the copying was only completed after his death in 1485.⁴ It is a large volume (13 × 10 in.) entirely in the manner of Rylands and St. John's, perhaps nearer the former, with some fluctuation of size and care. The COLLEGE OF ARMS YOUNG MS. 72, which is virtually a duplicate, in format slightly smaller (12½ × 8¼ in.) and lacking the initial rubrics and table of contents, is also (so far as can be judged short of side-by-side comparison) by Ebesham's hand, in the same style, except for a partial index added later at the end.⁵ It is in a contemporary binding bearing a stamp of the Beaufort arms which is otherwise found only on a book of Wynkyn de Worde's printing dated 1495, and other tools belonging to the shop connected with Caxton.⁶ The links of

¹ Pearce, *op. cit.* p. 154.

² Resembling C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes* (1907), nos. 5757 and 5759, dated c. 1456-9 and 1476-87 respectively.

³ Pearce, pp. 161, 171; cf. J. A. Robinson and M. R. James, *The Manuscripts of Westminster Abbey* (1909), pp. 10, 25.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 95-8; Pearce, pp. 159-60. He is described in the initial rubric as "quondam monachus"; it was in the last two years of his life that he was treasurer, though the office is not mentioned.

⁵ Cf. Robinson and James, pp. 101-2. I am indebted to Mr. G. R. C. Davis for comparative details of the two registers.

⁶ Cf. Hobson, *op. cit.* pp. 19-20 and Pl. 44; Oldham, p. 27 and nos. 239-41. There are four endleaves from a fourteenth-century manuscript of French or Anglo-Norman verse.

Westminster and the two printers with the Lady Margaret Beaufort are well known.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY LIBRARY MS. 29, Flete's Latin history of the house, is a vellum copy of medium dimensions ($10 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in.), made by Ebesham in the same style as the registers from a somewhat earlier manuscript of which a fragment survives in Trinity College, Dublin, MS. 548.¹ From an explicit reference to the Westminster register embodied in the text it is clear that MS. 29 was being transcribed during or after the completion of that volume and similarly for conventual purposes,² as the addition by another hand on a fly-leaf of a copy of a bull of Pope Julius II in favour of Henry VII's chapel confirms. The book has been rebound, but on the back of the last leaf is still stuck a piece of printed paper, probably former paste-down material, identifiable as lines 2-16 from the top half of fol. 63^v of Caxton's first edition of Le Fevre's *Recueil des histoires de Troie*, produced at Bruges c. 1474: another relic of his bindery?³

COSIN MS. V. III. 7 in the University Library, Durham,⁴ is another volume of vellum and paper similar in size ($9 \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and script to Rylands and St. John's (cf. Plates III, VB and VI), with a watermark found in English books and documents c. 1477-85,⁵ and an opening rubric in an upright quasi-texthand like that of the St. John's and Westminster manuscripts, probably also by Ebesham. Its contents are wholly Latin, commencing with the shortest and least common version of Mandeville's Travels⁶

¹ Ed. Robinson, p. 30; Robinson and James, p. 89.

² Ed. p. 136, line 27 n.: "ut patet in nigro papiro" altered in this manuscript to "in nigro libro de novo confecto ad custus Thome Clifford monachi". That it is taken straight from the Dublin copy is proved by the omission of complete lines of the latter.

³ Cf. De Ricci, *op. cit.* no. 3b; Sheppard, *loc. cit.* p. 37. Mr. L. E. Tanner kindly supplied an exact letter-by-letter copy, agreeing precisely in spelling, spacing and punctuation, to confirm a conjecture based on the type-face and subject.

⁴ Cf. T. Rud's description in *Catalogi Veteres Ecclesiae Dunelmensis*, ed. B. Botfield (Surtees Soc. 1838), pp. 162-3. Gatherings of fourteen except for the second of sixteen and a final pair.

⁵ Heawood, Fig. 70.

⁶ Identified by Professor R. A. B. Mynors; see J. W. Bennett, *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville* (1954), p. 300; also M. Letts, *Mandeville* (1949), pp. 166-7.

(fols. 1^r-84^v); *de compositione chilindri & de officio eiusdem & quadrantis*¹ (fols. 84^v-87^v); the story of the Holy Cross, the crusades and the kingdom of Jerusalem (fols. 88^r-93^v); a verse summary of the book of Judith (fol. 94^r); then, by a different contemporary hand (fols. 95^r-99^r), sequences on the phrases of the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*,² a sequence and suffrage for King Henry VI (whose cult belongs chiefly to the reign of Henry VII, centred at Windsor and Westminster c. 1494-1504),³ *Prelium mortis & vite*, and *Disputacio inter monacham & clericum*, both in distiches; and finally, by Ebesham's hand again, a stanzaic poem on monastic life⁴ (fols. 99^v-102^r), and two prose passages, *Augustinus de laude psalmodum*⁵ and *Per quem Enchiridion transfertur in psalterium* (fols. 102^{r-v}), both found also in Rylands, only there in the opposite order and separately in the middle of the volume (fols. 128^r and 126^r respectively), whereas here used to fill the last leaf in a rather cramped fashion. The recurrence implies that if one manuscript was not a direct source for the other there was a common exemplar available to the copyist, despite the possible gap in time between the two. Rylands must have been finished after 1480 and Cosin after 1485, from the way in which the last three items follow the previous pieces, but the one may be as late as the other, or the permanent resources of Westminster, or the scribe's personal *repertoire*, could have supplied these very commonplace "fillers" in compilations of this sort; for Cosin may well be grouped with the other volumes made for individual monks which have been discussed above.

The only other manuscript so far identified as in part Ebesham's work is without any particular indications of date. It

¹ As in B.M. Arundel MS. 292, fols. 109^v-112. Cf. F. M. Powicke, *The Medieval Books of Merton College* (1931), no. 531, pp. 154-5.

² The latter being Chevalier, *Repertorium*, no. 2271.

³ Printed from this copy in J. Blacman's *Memoir of Henry VI*, ed. M. R. James (1919), pp. xiii-xiv. Cf. Fitzwilliam MS. 57, referred to above, and Caxton's *XV Oos* and other prayers c. 1490. See also R. A. Knox and S. Leslie, *The miracles of Henry VI* (1936), and Pearce, p. 149, for efforts to translate him to Westminster.

⁴ Ed. Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 184, col. 1327 ff., among the spurious works of St. Bernard.

⁵ As quoted in the preamble of Remigius of Auxerre's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *ibid.* vol. 131, cols. 142-3.

is LONGLEAT HOUSE MS. 38, of about the same size as Cosin ($8\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ in.), that is somewhat smaller than Westminster MS. 29 but like it wholly of vellum.¹ The first eight leaves are lost and only fols. 9^r-49^v and 53^r-200^v are by Ebesham's hand, current but well-formed in the best manner of his Latin writing, while fols. 50^r-52^v and 201^r-308, and marginal notes in both portions, are by a second hand collaborating with his.² The text up to fol. 256^v consists of *Objectiones et argumenta contra et pro privilegiis Sanctuarii Westmonasteriensis*, quoting royal charters at length, and very possibly by the author of the following *Tractatus de sanguine Christi precioso*, which refers to the relics at Bruges, Ashridge and Westminster and is dedicated to King Richard II by William Sudbury, monk of the last-named house, with copies of relevant indulgences.³ In view of the length and documentation of these two works, it seems likely that they were transcribed for Westminster itself, since the manuscript does not look like a presentation copy to an outsider of influence.

To the cumulative conviction of the associations adduced above may be added positive records from the abbey archives of Ebesham's presence there, bridging more than twenty years yet nonetheless short of the period we already know him to have been there. William Ebsam, described as gentleman of Westminster (implying previous residence), leased a tenement in the Sanctuary in March 1475 and held it until 1478/9 when it was taken over by the king's secretary, William Hatcliff.⁴ There is no trace of his being there at the time of his plaintive letter to Sir John Paston in 1468, when he was scarcely in a position to pay for a tenancy himself. His name occurs again, along with Richard Doland, clerk of the royal works, who was living in the Sanctuary

¹ Cf. Historical MSS. Commission, *3rd Report*, App. p. 182.

² I owe thanks to the Marquess of Bath, his librarian Miss Dorothy Coates, and Dr. R. W. Hunt of the Bodleian, for help regarding this and other manuscripts.

³ *H.M.C.* has Richard III, but Sudbury died 1414/15. Mr. L. E. Tanner ascribes both works to Sudbury and has suggested to me that the short *Privilegia* in Bodley MS. 596, translated in Add. MS. 10106, may also be by him.

⁴ Westminster Abbey Muniments no. 17818: original lease with small seal, damaged, and no signature; cf. Sacrist's rolls, 1475-9. I am indebted to Mr. L. E. Tanner for this and for access to and advice about Westminster manuscripts.

at this time, both styled literates (i.e. latinate laymen) of the diocese of London, and two monks, witnessing the creation of William Cornyshe (the younger royal musician of the name) as a notary public, in St. Katharine's chapel within the monastic infirmary, 23 February 1497.¹

The scribe's background is now established as well as we can hope. He was of good family and education but for a time at least reduced in circumstances and obliged to resort to the Sanctuary of Westminster,² where, after a period of service to the Pastons and one or two visits to Norfolk, he returned as an ordinary resident and pursued the same means of livelihood, amply employed by the abbey itself as well as by inmates of the community and perhaps of the neighbourhood too, no doubt fruitful in opportunities. The abbey was not without its own scribes but there must have been more than enough for them to do in a period when care of the conventual muniments and individual book-ownership were both well developed.³ The connections with his fellow tenant Caxton illustrate the early collaboration, rather than competition, of the professional pen and printing press. The company of royal clerks in which we find him suggests a comfortable and probably congenial *milieu* for his later years. It may be that if further examples of his craftsmanship come to light they will modify this picture and reveal other episodes of his career and aspects of his talents, but one may venture to anticipate that they will enlarge our sense of the potentialities of his profession at this late stage of its history.

¹ W.A.M. 6538, also produced by Mr. Tanner. Cf. W. Nelson, *J. Skelton* (1939), p. 121. Ebesham's own name is not in the published *Calendars of Papal Registers* as a notary, nor in the records of the Scriveners' Company preserved at the London Guildhall, as I was informed by Mr. Raymond Smith, late Librarian there.

² Cf. J. C. Cox, *Sanctuaries and Sanctuary-seekers of Medieval England* (1911), pp. 70-1, and Nelson, *op. cit.* p. 122. Besides the other documents concerning this privilege copied by Ebesham, the Westminster register contains the oath on fol. 139^v. Debtors availed themselves of it commonly, if irregularly.

³ Cf. Robinson and James, p. 12, and Pearce, p. 103, for E. Butler, monk 1474-89. N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (Royal Historical Soc. 1941), pp. 109-10, records a number of instances, though only two of those above.

NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Ebesham's writing, except in the second part of Add. MS. 10106, may be described in Sir Hilary Jenkinson's terminology¹ as a small splayed set hand developed from an earlier court-hand bastard and showing several features of the latter, especially in vernacular contexts. Though it always has professional confidence, it is by no means uniformly regular, even within passages of a page or less done consecutively, and over any longer stretch the variety of appearance, resulting from proportions, pen-pressure, quality of surface, as well as speed and care in the selection and formation of shapes and strokes, is very notable, without there being any perceptible points of abrupt change, such as may be found between adjacent pieces written at different times and with different pens, inks, papers or parchments, in different languages and on different subjects. Separate photographic specimens cannot give an adequate impression of these gradual changes, let alone the natural modification of the scribe's style over the years, but only slices, so to speak, chosen to present precisely the strongest contrasts yet showing the persistent resemblances and repeated variations even in such short excerpts. Though they cannot include anything like the whole range of his repertoire, they should illustrate enough of his characteristic forms and variants to convince anyone prepared to give them an attentive inspection, that his script is one flexible and idiosyncratic instrument. The most distinctive letter-shapes and abbreviations tend to recur in all examples of his work—certainly in all actual volumes—though what is predominant in one place may be subsidiary, almost accidental (and for that reason the more revealing) in another, because of either care or haste. It would be too tedious to point out examples of every significant form in each plate, so far as possible, but one may mention those which, if not basically unusual, are exceptional in execution or prominence, personal habits and preferences, not merely conventions of a school.

Of the majuscules *A* is ordinarily a double looped form, wholly rounded (in Plate I) or more commonly with a slightly

¹ *The Later Courthands in England*, i (1927), 52-3, etc.

pointed peak or elbow (I, IIB, IVA, IVB, VA, VIB), not at all unusual ; like *I*, either with a round loop (I, IIB, IIIB, IVA, IVB, VA, VIB) or a pointed one (IIA, IVA, VIB) ; but both *A* and *I* are found in an angular form with a projecting limb instead of an upper loop (IIIA), and the latter also in an elegant shape with curling head and tail (IIIB, VB, VIA). Another elegant shape is that of *M*, with an *a*-like forepart and showy tail (e.g. in Plate I), sometimes, however, with a lower loop (I, IIB). *B* and *D* are found in three forms, one basically the roman capital, the second a charter-hand type, and a third, which may be called modern, being an enlargement of a minuscule. The first is found in IVA and IIB respectively ; the second in IIA, IVA, VIB, and IIB, VIA respectively, rather unusually at this date, I think ; the third in IIIB and VIB (also page 2 of IVB) respectively. *E*, and *G* which is very like it, *Q* and *R* are constant, the last being the most distinctive (IIA, IIB, IVA, IVB, VA, VIA, VIB). *N* and *S* are almost always the same, enlarged minuscules, the latter particularly common and characteristic (I, IIA, IIB, IVA, VB, VIA), though another form of each does occur (e.g. of the latter in page 2 of IVB). *T* may be looped (I, IIA) or simply with a straight (IIA, IVA, VA) or twisted (VB) vertical bar. *W*, as will be seen from Ebesham's initial, varies in the treatment of the first stroke as do the minuscules of which it is only an adaptation.

In the lower case, if one may employ the metaphor, there are three or four sorts of several letters. Not the most obvious but everywhere present is the headless *a* in which the strokes intersecting at the top tend to project slightly beyond each other to form a spur on one or other side or both ; speed, however, produces a looped form along with it, both initially and medially, like the simple majuscule, and cross-bars and unlooped heads also occur, less frequently. The ascenders or rather down-strokes of *b*, *d*, *h*, and *l* may be either looped or straight with an introductory serif, the former being ordinary and the latter distinctive ; *d*, however, is remarkable in being predominantly of the straight variety and its oblique stroke is one of the most conspicuous features of Ebesham's script. The others vary more with the style of the passage, *h* sometimes having only an upper loop but sometimes two ; *b* and *l* are given angular feet

in the more careful work. A tag extending from the body of *d* across the stem to the right, of no meaning, occasionally occurs; the eight-like *g* sometimes has a final loop, equally purposeless, as is a horizontal stroke above or through the ascender of *h* in the ligatures *ch*, *gh*, *th*, and of *l* when it is doubled, whether or not looped. The other *g*, alternating in all passages, varies in the tail only, as to whether it is curled well to the left (like that of *M*) or to the right, or hooked up or cut short, according to the degree of the scribe's deliberateness, it seems. There are three or four forms of *r*, of which one, the modern roman one, is highly distinctive when, as is common, a hair-line rises from its shoulder to the right, or else the end of that limb is turned back above as a tag of no significance. This may have a foot or be formed as a *v*. It alternates with a long cursive form and one of inverted 2 shape, rounded or angular as appropriate. The initial stroke of *v* and *w* is usually started high above the line and is long and heavy, echoing that of *d*, but it is varied in the latter case with a curve commencing below the line and in the former with a conventional loop from the right above the letter. The big lower curve of *x* is most persistent and the form with a straight cross-bar only found in studied passages. The tail of *y* has a curve or an angle more or less indifferently, and in a medial or final position in vernacular passages the head is usually dotted. There are four types of ampersand, one dominant in each passage but with intrusions of the others, one being distinguished by the tendency of its centre-piece to degenerate, and another on the contrary by an elegant loop below the line. There are three forms of the signs for both suprascript *a* and final *ur*, a wavy line and tail for the one and a circle and tail for the other being the most individual. Punctuation, like the ticking of *i*, depends on the labour bestowed on the calligraphy.

Attention may be directed to the inferior quality of the penmanship of Plates IIA and IVA in comparison with Plate I, which is well-shaped though current: owing perhaps in part to materials (blunt pen, poor ink or porous surface in the former?). The contrast of the fluent upper and stiffer lower half of IIA, connected with the relative frequency of loops and angles, is marked all the more against the ease and regularity of the two

pages of IIB, where the difference of slightly greater formality in the second reflects the change of language. There is another regularity in IIIA, achieved almost entirely with serifs, straight strokes and angular feet ; the upper part of IIIB, with the same pen, is more relaxed, including features from I and II, while the lower part, by a broader nib at another time, adds other looped and unlooped forms. The upper and lower parts of IVA vary in language and the awkwardness of the second is surely a not yet expert attempt to render this, better realized in IIB and IIIB (both later ?). The forms of the superficially dissimilar second page of IVB are basically those of III, used experimentally, with one or two additions. In VA we have a larger and more accomplished English performance than I, IIA, or IVA, though there is a distinct change of ink and increase of currency, not deterioration, half-way through. The broken strokes of the first half are also visible in VB, a very deliberate version of the stiffer Latin manner but still with some admixture of looped forms, as in the more confident and current combinations of IIIA, IIIB and VIB, contrasting with the second page of IIB and VIA in their equally competent treatment of that language. There may have been a change from the latter, old-fashioned, style to a more modern simplified one, in which elements of the easier forms tended to recur, especially at any speed.

It may be noted in conclusion that the variations in Ebesham's signature in I, IIA and IIIA are themselves instructive.