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The Provenance of the Trevet Chronicle (fMS Eng 938)

Christine M. Rose

The fifteenth-century Middle English translation of Nicholas Trevet's fourteenth-century (ca. 1334) Anglo-Norman *Les Cronicles* survives in a unique manuscript, Houghton fMS Eng 938, a medieval English codex long overlooked by scholars. The anonymously translated Middle English version of Trevet's chronicle is of undoubted literary and historical importance for its Chaucerian connections, for the study of *translatio* and *compilatio* in the Middle Ages, and for the study of vernacular chronicles (a neglected genre becoming increasingly relevant to medievalists' critical inquiry). Moreover, further investigation into the texts and makeup of the entire codex can augment our knowledge of late-medieval English book production and book owners.¹

Houghton fMS Eng 938 first appears particularly intriguing because the tale of Constance from Trevet's Anglo-Norman work is the most likely source of Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale" from the *Canterbury Tales*.² Until now, most Chaucerian scholars have been ignorant of any Middle English rendering of Trevet's chronicle and have assumed that Chaucer used some Anglo-Norman manuscript of the work as his source-text. Yet, the existence of such a Middle English text as the chronicle, which is part of Houghton fMS Eng 938, suggests that Chaucer might also have had recourse to Trevet's tale of Constance in a Middle English version, the ancestor of the present fMS Eng 938, perhaps a manuscript copied in England and available to him in London. Linguistic evidence from the present MS suggests that it may have been copied from a translation done during his lifetime (ca. 1340–1400). Although the relatively late date of fMS Eng 938, certainly after 1420, precludes Chaucer's having read this particular English manuscript, he may have had access to an earlier version, since dittographs, repetitions of entire lines, and other scribal errors confirm that fMS Eng 938 is a copy of a Middle English exemplar. Lest we forget, Gower, too, used the Constance story

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¹ For an expert discussion of many aspects of book production in England during the late Middle Ages which points to how much yet needs to be discovered, see the collection of essays *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375–1475*, Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

² See W. F. Bryan and G. Dempster, eds. *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'* (Chicago, 1941; reprint New York, 1958), 155–206.

he found in the Trevet chronicle for the composition of one section of Book II (on Envy) of his *Confessio Amantis*.³

More than the Chaucer/Gower link, however, makes this part of the codex valuable, for the chronicle provides us with an important document in the history of English prose translation. The translator of Trevet's Anglo-Norman universal chronicle—a history of the world from Creation to 1334—combines and completes his work with the addition of a particularly English historical work, part of the Brut chronicle.⁴ In Trevet's French original, the chronicle was a learned fourteenth-century Dominican's short history of God's Providence, written for a royal patroness, Mary of Woodstock (d. 1332), a nun at Amesbury, daughter of Edward I.⁵ The anonymous Middle English translator/compiler, however, transforms the chronicle to represent not only God's plan, but the growth of the English nation as an integral part of that plan. Although the literary/historical questions about such matters as sources and influences, translation, and the writing of history in the fifteenth century present compelling challenges for the critic who studies this codex and its texts (I have elsewhere attempted to address some of these issues),⁶ my purpose here is to discuss the provenance of fMS Eng 938. This requires a detailed description of the various individual manuscripts within the codex, in order that the physical properties and what is known of the history of this codex be documented in some detail for the first time.

A knowledge of the provenance of this, or any, medieval book is crucial to understanding who was making and reading such books—whether, for example, the lives of the users were in the religious, scholarly, or devout lay spheres. Or, whether they were nouveaux riches merchants, eager to display their learning and their wealth by owning sumptuous books. It can be instructive, too, to trace the wanderings of the book from its first commissioners and executors to its current repository for the light it may cast on the medieval book trade or on subsequent owners and readers of the codex. An accurate manuscript description, including such codicological and paleographic indicators as the size of the book, the hand, the decoration, the binding, and the marginal notations can provide practical information for scholars to determine parameters for the date of composition, the location of the scribe or bookmaker or owners, and the particular use for which the book was intended. Scribal idiosyncrasies, erasures, marginalia—even wormholes attesting to the original quiring—are frequently invaluable aids for comparing the artifact with others and establishing relationships among widely dispersed manuscripts, which may extend our knowledge of bookmaking, of the transmission of a particular text, or of literacy itself.

Unhappily, the very early history of this entire codex, and of its original makers and owners, thus far remains unknown. What follows is an effort to record as far as

³ John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* in *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, EETS o.s. 81-2 (1900; reprint 1957), 2:587-1598.

⁴ *The Brut, or The Chronicles of England*, ed. Friedrich W. D. Brie, EETS o.s. 131, 136 (London, 1908).

⁵ Princess Mary was born in 1279 and was the sister of Edward II. See M. A. Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England* (London, 1849), 2:404-22; Eileen Power, *Medieval English Numeries* (Cambridge, 1922), 346-60; and Ruth J. Dean, "Nicholas Trevet, Historian," in *Medieval Learning and*

Literature, eds. J. J. G. Alexander and Margaret T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), 339-46.

⁶ I am preparing for publication, forthcoming by Garland Publishing, Inc., a critical edition of the Trevet-plus-Brut chronicle of Houghton fMS Eng 938, the introduction to which includes material on Trevet and his works, the manuscript, the tale of Constance and its Chaucerian connections, the nature of the translation, and the Brut continuation.

possible an accurate physical description of the manuscript, and to document what scanty information is available about the provenance, in the hopes that this attractive and significant codex will receive further scholarly notice.

Houghton fMS Eng 938, a fifteenth-century manuscript of English origin, contains 101 vellum folios and is relatively large, 390 mm x 275 mm. It is bound in modern green cloth, with green morocco spine and corners, and kept in a morocco slipcase.⁷ Three units compose the codex: part of a Middle English treatise on arboriculture by Nicholas Bullard; a liturgical kalendar; and a long fifteenth-century Middle English prose translation of Nicholas Trevet's Anglo-Norman fourteenth-century chronicle, with a section of the Middle English prose Brut appended to it, missing at least one folio at its terminus. The hand of the Trevet chronicle and the last date mentioned in the historical material in what is now—and may always have been—the final quire (containing the Brut section) might suggest a date of as early as 1420 for the chronicle compilation, but the decoration indicates mid-fifteenth century production, probably in London.⁸ Did this entire medieval codex grow to be what G. S. Ivy might call “a leisurely accumulation of heterogenous texts”?⁹ Or, did the maker compile it whole, for a single purpose? My sense is that the codex is a miscellany, with disparate texts assembled over time by its various owners.

The first text, a portion of a Middle English prose treatise by Nicholas Bullard, occupies folio 1^r–1^v of a continuous bifolium. The two sides of fol. 1 are discolored and badly damaged, with the writing rubbed off in places. The presence of three holes for binding thongs on the conjugate right-hand side of the bifolium, i.e. 2^r–2^v, indicate that the bifolium was used in the binding of a book. Thus, the Bullard piece was probably a discarded fragment of a text, used by a bookbinder as the endpaper and flyleaf of a large book, perhaps even the chronicle text. If it were part of the original binding of the chronicle manuscript, the position of the binding thongs indicates that this fragment of vellum would probably have been at the end of the codex. Its placement here as the first work in the codex must reflect either the haphazard addition of this worn and largely illegible piece to a miscellany of texts, or its rescue from the binding of the chronicle by a later antiquarian and its installation at the beginning of the codex as a work in its own right. The Bullard text on fol. 1^r–1^v is written in double columns of fifty lines per column; the writing space is 95 mm x 315 mm, with 6 mm between lines. The acephalous treatise is a section of a longer work on arboriculture (tree-grafting), vine-growing, and the making of fruit laxatives, extant in several fifteenth-century manuscripts.¹⁰ What must be the last eight lines of a preceding chapter appear at the top of the

⁷ See entry *54M-117F in Houghton Library, Accession Records for 1954–55; the Historical Manuscripts Commission *Sixth Report* (1877), 345; W. H. Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada* (New York, 1962), 228; and Linda Ehrsam Voigts, “A Handlist of Middle English in Harvard Manuscripts,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 33 (1985):9 and 39–43, for brief descriptions of the manuscript and some information on its provenance.

⁸ My thanks to Kathleen Scott for her helpful consultation on the scanty decoration in this manuscript, and her confirming my notion of a mid- to late-fifteenth-century date for the decoration. Her “Design, Decoration and

Illumination,” in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain*, Griffiths and Pearsall, eds., 31–64, presents a fine discussion of these aspects of the late-medieval English book. See also note 25.

⁹ G. S. Ivy, “The Bibliography of the Manuscript Book,” in *The English Library before 1700*, ed. Francis Wormald and C. E. Wright (London: University of London Press, 1958), 59.

¹⁰ According to W. L. Braekman, in “Bollard's Middle English Book of Planting and Grafting and Its Background,” *Studia Neophilologica* 57, (1985), 19–39, and A. S. G. Edwards' review of L. Voigts, “A Handlist of Middle English in Harvard Manuscripts” (see note 7) in *The*

first column of fol. 1^r, and then the incipit, “Here ffolowith the chapitres Off the Secunde parte of the tretis,” followed by the text of the treatise over two columns and extending to four lines at the top of 1^v, column 1, when the “thride parte off the tretis” is announced and begun. At the end of the treatise, the explicit “Here endith This tretis off Nicholas Bullard,” is penned at the foot of 1^v, column 1, with column 2 remaining blank.

This text is decorated with red capitals and paraps, with only minimal line flourishings, also in red. The ink guide lines on each column are clearly visible, as are the prickings along the outer edges of the pages. The prickings are equally visible on most of the other leaves of the whole codex, indicating that the book or its individual components were not trimmed a great deal by later binders. Wormholes in fol. 1 and 2 seem to match those in the kalendar which follows, even though the two texts are now separated by paper flyleaves, likely inserted by a later binder to protect the kalendar’s gold decoration from the damaged Bullard folios. The handwriting is an Anglicana hand, with large double-bowed *a* and left-tilted stemmed *d*. The hand does not seem to be the hand of the chronicle (fols. 9^r–101^v), since the letter form of the *h* is different, although the *b* is similar.¹¹ The Bullard text is altogether a less elegant piece of copying than the chronicle or kalendar of the later folios, which are executed in handsome and careful medieval hands. The inclusion of this first householder’s treatise poses a problem for the study of the composition and provenance of the whole codex, since it is not similar in artistic value or in content to the texts with which it is bound, but, as mentioned above, a later owner may have rebound the book, and included this bit of the binding materials when he saw that it had a similar hand and layout. What is known of some former owners suggests that they were antiquarians, who may have been anxious to preserve even this damaged and obviously discarded bit of the past.

Following the Bullard treatise on 1^r and part of 1^v, fol. 2^r is blank, with fol. 2^v containing later pentrials such as three alphabets practiced by an inexperienced hand. Other miscellaneous comments on this leaf include the plea “mondieu donne moy sens et memoire” and two early owner signatures: “Yaf me John Gaydon merchand of W-re(?) [or d-re (?)] thus Bydd us(?) spyd amen wrytting the 20 daye of october in anno 1553” in a secretary hand,¹² and “yaf me Walter Wren.”¹³ At the top of the second paper flyleaf following fol. 2^v is the *ex dono*: “Jan. 20, 1710. Ex dono V.C. Gulielmo Musgrave. M.D. Exoniensis, (signed) T. Palmer.”

The second unit in the codex is a Latin liturgical kalendar (fols. 3^r–8^v) (see figure 1). The kalendar, as far as it can be determined, is a separate fascicle of the

Library, 9 (1987), 174–77, the Bullard (or Bullard) treatise in English appears partially or completely in at least fourteen manuscripts: British Library Add. 5467 (derived from Shirley), fols. 16^r–21^r; Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 591, fols. 157^v–159^r; British Library, MS Sloane 7, fols. 92^r–93^r; MS Sloane 122, fols. 83^v–88^r; MS Sloane 686, fols. 41^r–48^v; Harley 1785, fols. 46–54^r; Harley 116, fols. 162–165^v; Cotton Julius D-VIII, fols. 56^r–59^r; Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.1.13, fols. 219^v–220^r; Cambridge, University Library MS Ee.1.13, fols. 124^r–129^v; York House 45; Society of Antiquaries 101; Baillol 354 (selections); NLW MS Porkington 10 (extracts); and possibly NLW Periarth 92. Braekman’s article includes an edition of the Bullard text, based on Sloane 686, a complete text from the second half of the fifteenth century. I have not

seen these witnesses myself. Sloane 686 describes the author (Bullard) as “nuper monarchi Westm.” (see Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., Booksellers, catalog 520, item 783, 1936).

¹¹ See M. Parkes, *English Cursive Bookhands 1250–1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 8, plates 8(i) and (ii) for a somewhat similar hand (Parkes’s “anglicana bastarda”) in Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson C398, fol. 49^r; and Bodl. Lib. MS Laud. Misc. 517, fol. 126^v.

¹² This hand, difficult to decipher in places, resembles Parkes’ plate 12(ii), a secretary bookhand of 1470.

¹³ See Anthony G. Petti, *English Literary Hands from Chaucer to Dryden* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), plate 17, Thomas More’s sixteenth-century hand, for a hand that resembles the Wren signature.

H Septuagesima et sanguis uirginis dei et anguis

S Sante Sabinae uirgine : mris

N d vii Sante nicholai epi et confessoris

O gnaia sa. audire apli

C onceptio sancte marie uirginis

S d iiii Sante hie uirginis et mris

J anuary

f fvi

f fvi

b fvi

c fvi

d fvi

e fvi

f fvi

f fvi

f fvi

b vii

c vii

d vii

e vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

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f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

f vii

S ante Siluestre : mris

N ote habet horas rom. dies nero vi

O sapientia
S oli

V igil

S ante Thome apli . ix . l. dup. fii

V igil

S ante dñi nri ihu xpi . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

S ante stephani mris . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

S ante iohannis . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

S ante iuniorum mris . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

S ante iuniorum mris . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

S ante iuniorum mris . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

S ante iuniorum mris . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

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S ante iuniorum mris . l. dup. fii chorus . r . mris

manuscript, with one month to a page on a ternion of three bifolia, carefully executed almost entirely by a single scribe in a confident, large, clear, fifteenth-century textura with line flourishings. Highly abbreviated, the text is entirely in Latin, save for a phrase at the top of 7^r opposite 5 September: “Ye last day of caniculares.” (Caniculares are the astronomical “dog days,” when the dog star Sirius is ascendant, beginning 14 July and ending 1–5 September.)

The writing space of the kalendar text is approximately the same as that of the texts before and following it, with lines drawn 7 mm apart. The kalendar, however, unlike the two other texts, is decorated on each page, having a large burnished kalends initial (KL) for each month, with foliage sprays attached, occupying about one-third to one-half of the upper border of the page. Other initials are in blue and gold, with red flourishings. A typical liturgical kalendar, with one page for each month, is divided vertically from the left into three narrow columns and one wide column. The first narrow left-hand column running down the kalendar page lists the Roman numerals of the Metonic cycle of the new moons. The second narrow column lists the dominical letters; the third column is the list of numbers for the Roman kalendar (plus words such as kalends, nones, ides). The fourth and widest column, taking up most of the writing-space of the kalendar, is the saints’ kalendar, recording the saints’ feast days and other Church holidays.¹⁴ Many entries in this part of the kalendar contain abbreviated directions concerning the number of readings for the day in the church service, and the grade of the feast. There are also astrological notations such as “sol in picibus” and “ver oritur,” and the usual Latin lines heading each month. The lettering is in black or red, depending upon the importance of the feast, with red marking “red-letter” days of special note. One later writer, in an unskillful approximation of the scribe’s textura hand, added saints’ feasts.¹⁵ A number of Reformation-era “Henrician erasures” of the word “pope” and the name of St. Thomas of Canterbury mar the text.¹⁶ This obsession with erasing “pope” and St. Thomas also continues throughout the chronicle text, which follows the kalendar in the codex. In a haphazard manner, a large percentage of the terms “Pope” or “Papal See” are erased. On a few of the ninety-two folios of the chronicle, some of these effaced words are repenned by a later hand over the erasures.¹⁷ St. Thomas’s name is obliterated in the chronicle several times, but it is left undisturbed in some places as well, and the text includes

Figure 1 (opposite page). Folio 8^r of the Trevet Chronicle, showing the last page of a Latin liturgical kalendar. Courtesy of the Houghton Library.

¹⁴ In “March 27 as Easter and the Medieval Liturgical Kalendar,” *Manuscripta* 30 (1986): 112–17, I discuss the 27 March “Resurrectio domini” inscriptions in this and other medieval kalendars.

¹⁵ Additions include St. Anthony, abbot, on 17 January and his translation of 17 March; St. Patrick on 17 March; the Annunciation on 25 March; the feast of St. Werburga’s translation on 21 June. All these additions seem to be executed by the same writer.

¹⁶ This term is applied to similar defacement of a manuscript in *Ordinale Exoniensis*, ed. J. N. Dalton (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1909), 1:xv. Roger Wieck in *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 116, notes that in 1538 Henry VIII’s proclamation against Thomas Becket insisted that “his ymages and pictures, through the whole realme, shall be putte downe and auoyded out of all churches, chapelles, and other places, and that from hense forthe, the dayes vsed to be festivall in his name, shall be

not observed, nor the service, office, antiphones, collettes, and prayers in his name redde, but rased and put out of all the bokes.”

¹⁷ This erasure pattern argues against the continued ownership of the manuscript by Catholics in England. It is interesting to speculate on how widespread this kind of erasure is in extant medieval manuscripts, for Ruth Dean notes that in the Rawlinson manuscript of the chronicle’s Anglo-Norman version (Bodleian MS Rawl. B 178), the same kind of erasures occur. See Dean, “Nicholas Trevet, Historian,” 342. In Rawl. B 178, the erased words have been reentered by a later hand, as they have been in fMS Eng 938. Kalendar entries noting Thomas of Canterbury’s feast (29 December) were often erased under Henry VIII and then re-inserted under Mary, as in the *Martiloge* of Syon Monastery, vol. 3, F. Proctor and E. Dewick, eds. (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1893).

quite a long anecdote about him. This purge seems not to have been a seriously dedicated one, and we can be thankful that the MS is not more grossly disfigured.

The kalendar appears to be of Sarum use, and despite the later additions of feasts, which in some kalendars might point to a specific church or locale, resists further localization and efforts at determining its early owners.¹⁸ The feast of the Sarum relics does not appear, but most other saints have the usual Sarum feast days. The abbreviation for "Sarum" (Srm) appears on 18 October on the feast of St. Luke. A later addition, on 18 November, records the death of Alicie Hungyrforthe, whose identity remains yet untraced. She could have been Alice Hungerford, widow, of London, whose will, dated 1 September 1491, stipulated that she be buried near her husband John Hungerford, in St. Michael's Cornhill (B.L. Add. MS 33412, fol. 153).¹⁹ Whatever the provenance of the kalendar, the additions indicate that, like the chronicle text which follows it in the codex, the kalendar was read and used, with at least one early owner eager to fill out its roster of saints and feasts.

Liturgical kalendars such as this one, which contain graded feasts, were commonly found in medieval liturgical texts as the first sections of missals, psalters, breviaries, and books of hours, but rarely figure as prefaces to vernacular chronicles (I know of no such couplings, but they may exist). The carelessness of the compilation of this kalendar—missed rubrication, incorrect Latin—suggests that perhaps it was not used by a church or religious order, but was compiled for the laity for private devotions.²⁰ As Roger Wieck has noted in his catalog of the late medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the Houghton Library, two English manuscripts, MS Richardson 34 and MS Widener 2 (both second half of the fifteenth century), are typical English fifteenth-century large-format books of hours, similar in size to the folio-sized Trevelyan codex, and both contain kalendars.²¹ Thus, the fMS Eng 938

¹⁸ John Plummer, in Chapter 13 of *Time Sanctified*, ed. Wieck (New York, 1988), and Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Boston: D. Godine, 1986), 164–5, have valuable discussions of "use" in kalendars and books of hours.

¹⁹ This information about the will of Alice Hungerford is from Quaritch catalog 520, item 783, 1936). Hungerford is a common British name, hence London's Hungerford Bridge across the Thames, which means that the name in the British Library will may not be connected to the kalendar obituary. A Lady Hungerford is said to have been a benefactress of a Benedictine monastery in Cornwall (Tywardreath) in 1477. See Roy Midmer, *English Medieval Monasteries (1066–1540)* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 314. On fol. 20^v of the late fifteenth-century *Finderne Anthology*, connected with Derbyshire, "Margery Hungerford" inscribes her name (R. H. Robbins, "The Finderne Anthology," *PMLA* 69 (1954): 626). In the early sixteenth century, Marie, Lady Hungerford, is referred to "for the bargain and exchange . . . of the manors of Bretly, Coton, Rashington, Linton, and Repton, Co. Derby" (Isaac Herbert Jeaves, *Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters* (London, 1906), no. 491, noted in Robbins, above, 627). Robert, Lord Molynes and Lord Hungerford, appears in the *Paston Letters*, ed. Norman Davis (Oxford, 1983) in a dispute with the Pastons of Norfolk over land. Walter, Lord Hungerford, d. 9 August 1449, active in the army of Henry V (C. L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* [Oxford, 1913], 55, 58, 319, 390),

had the *Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti*, All Souls MS 38 (Oxford) by the Pseudo-Elmham, addressed to him. This Walter, Lord Hungerford, also wrote a letter in 1433, during the reign of Henry VI, in English, which is reported by the Historical Manuscripts Commission *15th Report*, 162. Here is a man who is not only interested in history, as the *Vita* dedication suggests, but is literate in English. His concern for Henry V may link him with the chronicle manuscript in fMS Eng 938, since the manuscript breaks off during Henry's reign, ca. 1417. Alice Hungerford might be related to any of these above-mentioned personages of note who were living during the fifteenth century, and an important clue regarding the provenance of this codex might be added if this Alice could be positively identified as an owner, or relative of an owner, of this manuscript.

²⁰ John Harthan, in his discussion of medieval books of hours, *The Book of Hours* (New York, 1977), 15, cites just such carelessness: "Kalendars in Books of Hours follow the pattern established in Missals, Psalter, Breviaries, and other liturgical texts; but they were often carelessly compiled and invoked the wrath of clerics: it was nobody's job to check the accuracy of the lay scribes who copied them out."

²¹ Roger Wieck, *Late Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts 1350–1525 in the Houghton Library* (Harvard College Library, 1983), 92–4. My thanks to Christopher de Hamel, of Sotheby's, for his recent conversation, confirming that many large-format English fifteenth-century psalters, etc., exist with kalendars.

kalendar may have been part of such an English book of hours as MS Richardson 34 or MS Widener 2. It may even have been a shop copy, used in a stationer's or illuminator's workshop, which owned a stack of reference copies of kalendars of different uses.

Although it is unlikely that the kalendar was originally commissioned to accompany the chronicle, its typically English fifteenth-century decoration bears a strong resemblance to that of the large initials of the Trevet text which follows it in the codex. Strong evidence exists that the kalendar and Trevet texts were not always bound together, or at least not in their present positions, since the last page of the kalendar (8^v) is better preserved than the damaged first page of the Trevet text (9^r) which faces it. In fact, the whole of the initial Trevet recto leaf is worn and damaged, whereas the facing verso final kalendar leaf is wholly unworn. Because medieval books were not bound as a matter of course, the Middle English chronicle text may have been read unbound, with its quires simply wrapped in a piece of parchment and put in a press or chest after use. This absence of binding would explain the wear on the first leaf, and the detachment of the final leaf, which might have been damaged and lost through the wrapping and unwrapping of this cumbersome and heavy manuscript. In addition, if the Middle English text were separately bound, the injury to initial and final leaves could have been caused by the rubbing of heavy binding boards on the fragile parchment.

Next in the sequence of manuscripts contained in the present codex are its most exciting texts, those most critically in need of scholarly attention. The third and fourth texts which make up this codex together constitute a long Middle English prose chronicle. The first section (fols. 9^r–91^r) is the anonymous fifteenth-century Middle English translation of Nicholas Trevet's fourteenth-century *Les Cronicles*, expanded with a version of the Middle English prose Brut chronicle (fols. 91^r–101^v). (The Middle English Trevet chronicle-plus-Brut compilation are referred to in this paper as if a single text.)²²

The Trevet translation begins with the rubric: "Here begynneth the cronicles that ffrere Nicholas Tryuet wrote to Dame Mary the doughter of kyng Edward the sone of Harry," followed by Trevet's prologue which assures his readers that he understands how it "noyeth hem sore the lengthe of storyes," and that he will try to keep his chronicle brief, while not shortening the "trouthe of the story." The above rubric attesting to the authorship and the occasion of the chronicle's making also appears in four of the Anglo-Norman manuscripts of the Trevet chronicle.²³ In this English version, the chronicle is expanded and continued by a version of the Brut, which updates the events of Trevet's chronicle to 1417. The scribe/compiler/translator (it is not known whether a single individual filled one or more of these roles) clearly intended the Brut to be an integral part of the translation of the Anglo-Norman chronicle, since he adds the Brut section without a break in the text. The last line of the Middle English Trevet translation in

²² For a fuller discussion of the chronicle text, Trevet, and the Brut continuation, see the introduction to my dissertation (Tufts University, 1985): "An Edition of Houghton Library fMS Eng 938: The Middle English Translation of Nicholas Trevet's *LES CRONICLES*, with Brut Continuation." The Trevet section of this text was also edited by William V. Whitehead, as his 1961 Harvard dissertation, unpublished.

²³ For a list and discussion of some physical features of the eleven Anglo-Norman manuscripts (two are later copies of extracts from the chronicle), see Ruth J. Dean, "The Manuscripts of Nicholas Trevet's Anglo-Norman Cronicles," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 14 (1962): 95–105. I have myself examined five of the manuscripts housed in British repositories.

mid-column on fol. 91^r reads, “Toke many citees and tounes vnto subieccion of thys Duke Lowes,” followed immediately by: “Now speke we of the dethe of king Edwarde the seconde . . .” from the Brut. The chronicle breaks off acaudel in mid-phrase at the bottom of fol. 101^v (“And thus the kyng by manhode gette the toun of Cane [Caen] and made . . .”); the last quire is missing a folio at the end. The manuscript may have concluded with the seige of Rouen (1419), the terminus of one of the Brut versions.²⁴ Brie’s C version ending to 1419, for example, might reasonably be adapted to be copied onto the one lost folio. The profusion of worm-holes on the current final folio of the chronicle does suggest its placement at or near the end of the codex for many years. If the manuscript were an early fifteenth-century production, made directly after the last events noted, ca. 1420, no further quires may have been included in the original book, and the one missing leaf most likely marked the end of the work; but, if the compiler were, as the decoration might indicate, working later in the period, he may have had further Brut material (e.g. Brie’s versions D, E, F, or G) copied onto one or more quires, now lost, to bring his history up-to-date. We cannot know which is the case.

The chronicle text is beautifully, but sparingly, decorated. Most of the decoration occurs in the four-line initials of the first half of the work, with later pages receiving fewer decorative touches. Perhaps this uneven distribution of decoration reflects the important nature of the contents of the first half of the text—primarily a biblical summary derived from such summaries as are included in Petrus Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* and Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum Historiale*. Elaborately decorated initials cease after fol. 35^v, the last page of the biblical narrative. After this page, the chronicle narrates the history of emperors, kings, and popes, and these later folios are not graced with the same kinds of fancy gilt initials, although they are given their share of smaller gilt and painted initials and minor decoration of line flourishings. The first leaf of the chronicle has a full border of acanthus foliage with stylized feathering in sprays, issuing from a narrow frame of gold, pink, and blue. The first initial *F* is large, extending through five lines of text, and decorated with foliage similar to the border. The subsequent three- to four-line initials are gold, set in squared frames, with pink and blue backgrounds, filled with white line decoration. Sixteen of these decorated initials with pendant sprays mark the beginnings of the books of the Bible in the early part of the text. As mentioned above, these initials and their feathered spray decorations strongly resemble the decorated kalends of the kalendar, and it seems possible that they were decorated in the same workshop. The decoration is typically English, resembling that of several extant English manuscripts of the fifteenth century, most notably those manuscripts attributed by Kathleen L. Scott to an unknown “English border artist.”²⁵ This artist’s work has been identified by Scott on several mid- to late-fifteenth-century manuscripts, many of which are works of English law (*Nova Statuta*). The group of manuscripts that Scott has connected to a single artist, all of

Figure 2 (opposite page). Folio 101^r of the Trevel Chronicle. Courtesy of the Houghton Library.

²⁴ *The Brut*, ed. Brie. The Middle English manuscript incorporates the B and C endings of the Brut chronicle, but abridges both. This Brut text and its relationships to other Brut manuscripts needs further studies.

²⁵ See Scott’s work on the decoration of later English manuscripts, esp. *The Mirroure of the World: MS Bodley 283* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1980) and her essay in *Book Production and Publishing*, Griffiths and Pearsall, eds.

Bodleian MS Douce 159, fol. 1 (*Nova Statuta*, English, mid-fifteenth century) bears a decided resemblance in decoration to the chronicle and kalendar of fMS Eng 938. Also, Bodleian MS Douce 18 (*Psalter*, English ca. 1433), fols. 10^v–11^r. Parker MS (CCCC) 93, of the fourteenth century, seems to resemble the kalendar in hand and decoration (vol. 2 of *Ordinale Exoniensis*).

Phaſan and Salomon. Of Salomon he deſcend of
Beniamon come Jacob the ſtudent to Joſeph as he
ye above ſayd. And of Phaſan he other ſon of
David by deſcent of Beniamon come David. And
they buy beate wyldesſſe and panyem. And they
wyldesſſe after the deſce of wyldesſſe they
they and deſce of her a ſon by the wyldesſſe
beate by to Jacob on by moder ſyde. And
panyem the beate of wyldesſſe aboveſayd beate
panyem. And panyem deſce Jacob
and Jacob deſce every the wyldesſſe of
No the here ſol the wyldesſſe of wyldesſſe
on by moder ſyde.

which resemble the Trevet codex so strikingly, date from the mid- to late-fifteenth century, which makes questionable a date as early as ca. 1420 for the chronicle. The book may, in fact, be a later production, thus leading to the possibility that an additional quire (or quires) indeed might have been lost from the end, with the original text perhaps including historical Brut material beyond 1419.

In addition to the gilt three- to four-line initials, two-line initials alternate throughout the chronicle text—either gilt flourished in blue penwork, or blue flourished in red. These initials, beginning in the earliest parts of the text, are the sole decorative feature of the later folios (after fol. 35^r). The Brut continuation has little decoration, save four two-line blue or gold initials marking the coronation of an English king (91^r/Edward II—blue; 95^r/Richard II—gilt; 97^v/Henry IV—blue; 99^v/Henry V—gilt). Some of the lettering early in the chronicle text is in red, as rubrics for major divisions in the text. Running headlines divide the manuscript into books, such as the titles of the Biblical books “Esdre” (24^v and following) or the long last section headed “Imperatorem et Regum” (39^v and following).

The overall dimensions of the chronicle (390 mm x 275 mm) make it the largest of the extant manuscripts of this work of Trevet’s. All of the Anglo-Norman manuscripts (which are of English provenance) are appreciably smaller (e.g. 237 x 170; 350 x 210; 295 x 170), and the luxuriousness of the size and decoration of fms Eng 938 argue that this volume was not made by an individual for his personal use, but by professionals for a library or for an affluent reader. The manuscript is too large to be easily portable, and a reader really needs to use a stand in order to see the pages properly.

The chronicle is written in double columns, with fifty to fifty-two lines per column, and the writing space is 305 mm x 215 mm, with 95 mm per column and 5–6 mm between lines. A single scribe carefully penned the text in a hybrid bookhand resembling fifteenth-century bastard secretary, with elements of anglicana formata; perhaps the scribe was used to copying documents.²⁶ The aspect of the hand is regular, clear, cursive, and compact. It is calligraphically elegant, with rounded letters, a few flourishes, and a slight tilt to the right. The scribe employs the forward *e* (not the circular or reversed secretary form), and both the 2-shaped and *r*-shaped version of *r*. The double-lobed *a* is used throughout, as well as the single-stemmed, unlooped *d* (see Figure 2). The *g* is similar to Petti’s early fifteenth-century hybrid secretary.²⁷ The sigma *s* is used in final position, with long *s* initial and medial. The *w* form is that of two looped *l*’s and a 3. The strokes of the hand are characteristically thick; the descenders are short, and some end in a short, thick angled arch. Ascenders arch to the right. The minims are very slightly connected, with serifs at the foot, and individual letters are at times difficult to distinguish, although the scribe regularly indicates *i* by a thin slash over the minim. Thorn occurs infrequently in the manuscript. Upper-case *T* and *C* are difficult to differentiate, as are their lower-case forms. Upper-case *G* and *E* also resemble one another closely.

The scribe has used two kinds of punctuation: the full stop (dot or period), and two parallel slanted lines (//), which mark word division at the end of a line. The full stop generally occurs at the ends of sentences or units of thought, and it is always

²⁶ See Petti’s hybrid anglicana (bastarda), *English Literary Hands*, 15, and also his plate 8 “fere-textura rotunda formata” for somewhat similar hands. ²⁷ Petti, *English Literary Hands*, 15.

employed to set off numerals in the text. Word division is arbitrary and orthography erratic. The abbreviations used in the chronicle manuscript are standard breviographs, and like most vernacular texts, not heavily or systematically utilized. The most frequent and troublesome abbreviation is the suprascript horizontal stroke (*titula*, *tittle*, or *tilde*) over a word or letter, which indicates letters missing medially or finally, and may represent few or many missing letters. Virtually any letter is abbreviated this way, but most often *m* or *n* or final *e*. In some instances this stroke seems otiose.

The hand is well-spaced and the pages are pleasing to the eye. This was obviously a book produced by an experienced and talented scribe, but the scribe is decidedly not the translator of the Anglo-Norman source. The text is a copy of an earlier version, since the scribe makes errors in his copying (noted in the apparatus to my edition) which show his unfamiliarity with both the subject matter and the text he copies. Dittographs occur frequently, as well as what must be misreadings of the exemplar. The chronicle text is largely uncorrected, except for a few suprascript insertions of missed words in the scribe's own hand, and at least one line-through by the scribe or rubricator (they may have been the same person), in red on fol. 90^r. One suspects that the scribe was working alone because there is no evidence of another hand proofreading or correcting. The only apparent erasures are those of later readers, and the scribe's mistakes stand unmarked. The paraphs must have been added later than the writing, since they often overlap adjacent letters. A few have been missed by the rubricator, which makes for spaces in the text, though, on the whole, the text is meticulously presented.

A collation of the chronicle text gives twelve gatherings of eight, three of which lack a leaf: 1–10⁸ (–10⁸), 11⁸ (–11⁸), 12⁸ (–12⁸). Catchwords are inside well-drawn scrolls. To account for the missing folios in quires 10 and 11, one might consider the corresponding sections of the Anglo-Norman manuscripts of the Trevet chronicle which at this point recount the story of Edward I and his family. The lineage of Edward I is an important concern of this chronicle, and is perhaps the point of Trevet's composition—to assert the legitimacy of that royal family by connecting it to all of history, and especially Christian history and the history of England. The two missing folios after 87^v (in quires 10 and 11) in the Middle English chronicle likely continue the story of Edward I. If we include the missing folios and their assumed contents, this is the most substantial section on any king and his lineage in the entire chronicle. Ruth Dean, in “Nicholas Trevet, Historian” (p. 345), notes that two manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman versions of the chronicle contain illustrated diagrams of the genealogy of Edward I, carrying his lineage from Adam to Edward III. Perhaps this illustration and genealogical material is part of what is set forth on the two folios that have been lost.

Pricking and lining are visible throughout the chronicle manuscript, but no quire signatures can be seen. Several folios are damaged, probably by damp, and there are a few stains. Both kinds of damage obscure the text in places, but in general, the codex is remarkably well-preserved.

Because Houghton Library fMS Eng 938 is a unique manuscript, and contains the only extant Middle English translation of the Trevet chronicle, it is especially important to consider its ownership over the last five centuries. Few facts about the manuscript are known, and regrettably, they must be pieced together with speculation.

As we have seen above, codicological evidence points to the possibility that the three pieces constituting the codex may have been bound together only as recently as the last century. The tight nineteenth-century binding hampers a thorough examination of the gatherings, but one can see upon examining the volume that the three texts seem to be discrete compilations. The damage to the Bullard fragment, with its extreme discoloration, in contrast to the preservation of the kalendar, reinforce this notion, despite the resemblance in the sizes of the pages, the lineation, and the similar dates of the two works. Even though the Trevet text and the kalendar, while seemingly not part of continuous gatherings, display closely related decoration, these two texts may also have been brought together later than the original compilation of either. Because the Bullard text is incomplete, so badly damaged, and of little literary or historical interest, I have been concerned with it only by reason of its inclusion in the whole codex. Nevertheless, it may reward further scrutiny on its own. Certainly, its reinstatement as a text when it had once been discarded and used in binding is an interesting codicological datum.

Although the Sixth Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission (1877) reports that the codex contains the Bullard treatise, we cannot conclude that the owner signatures of “John Gaydon 20 October 1553” and “Walter Wren” on fol. 2^v of that treatise pertain to the entire volume, given the uncertainty over whether the three texts have indeed been together for longer than that period in which they have shared their present binding. Several features of the codex point to the Bullard bifolium being a *membrum disiectum*: discoloration of the two leaves which make up that section; the fact that it is a fragment of a longer text; and the unlikely instance of an elaborate kalendar being executed on the third through sixth pages of a quaternion, with the relatively unattractive acephalous Bullard treatise, plus one blank folio, preceding it.²⁸ Two paper flyleaves with the same eighteenth-century watermark separate the Bullard section from the kalendar.²⁹ Did Musgrave or Palmer, whose names appear on the second of these two paper sheets, insert these leaves into the three-text codex, or did the sheets in fact once protect the first folio of the kalendar-plus-chronicle text?

Efforts to identify Gaydon and Wren have not helped in establishing the provenance of any part of the codex. Gaydon is a popular English placename, and some form of this word names a town in a dozen or so locations.³⁰ Neither Gaydon nor Wren is on the usual lists of prominent citizens or clerics.³¹ The ordinary (and a few extraordinary) sources have been exhausted, and only serendipity can yield

²⁸ Because of the tightness of the modern binding, the manuscript's collation is hard to ascertain, but the text appears to be a separate bifolium. Voigts, “A Handlist,” 39, suggests that the Bullard fragment might originally have been at the end of the codex. My examination of the codex does not support this hypothesis, unless the fragment was part of the binding material, as the three holes in fol. 2 do indicate it was a binding fragment at one time. Among the factors that argue against its having been the final text are the Bullard fragment's status as a separate bifolium, and the nature of its text (the conclusion of a longer piece). The parchment leaves do not match, either in color, wear, stains, or wormholes, the folios now at the end of the Middle English chronicle. The Bullard bifolium might have been salvaged and used as a wrapper for the unbound quires of the chronicle, thus accounting for its damage as well as its preservation

and continued association with the other two works in the codex.

²⁹ See W. A. Churchill, *Watermarks in Paper in the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (Amsterdam, 1935), p. ccxliii, no. 306, for a similar watermark.

³⁰ Eilart Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place-Names*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1960).

³¹ *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1917); J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford 1500–1714* (Oxford, 1891–92); J. and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses from the earliest times to 1751* (Cambridge, 1922); F. Boase, *Modern English Biography* (Truro, 1892–1921); *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage*, eds. Pine and Scot (London, 1953); *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry*, ed. P. Townsend (London, 1965); *Debrett's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage and Companionage* (Kingston-upon-Thames, 1965); A. G.

more information. Even then, it would be relevant only to the Bullard text, or the book in which it was used as a binding fragment, since there is no proven sixteenth-century connection between the three texts in the codex. My own guess is that the Bullard fragment did indeed form part of the chronicle's original binding. It is even conceivable, though, that the nineteenth-century owner, Sir Alexander Acland-Hood, Lord St. Audries, or his predecessors, had this fragment bound in with the other two texts in its present binding at a date only slightly earlier than the 1877 Historical Manuscripts Commission Report. Thus, the inclusion of the Bullard treatise could be a whim of the Victorian baronet; and what at first looks in its entirety like a kind of sixteenth-century commonplace book, could actually be a marriage of convenience for these texts, made close to our own time.

The anti-Catholic erasures of "pope" and St. Thomas of Canterbury's name, which were carried out over both kalendar and chronicle, could argue for at least a sixteenth-century pairing of the two texts. The chronicle has arabic numbering of the pages in lead in the top corners, but the pages of the kalendar are not visibly numbered in a similar manner.³² Whether this signifies that they were once separate is unclear. One would like to think that they were combined early on, since a liturgical kalendar constitutes, really, a protochronicle, and the first chronicles were annals, penned in the margin of liturgical kalendars by monks. The compiler of the codex may have made a conscious pairing of the two kinds of time represented by the kalendar and chronicle: divine time and human time. But, we cannot assume that anyone had any such notions about these texts. Perhaps their similarity in size and decoration was the deciding factor in their coming together in the present codex.

Notwithstanding its predominantly religious content, there is no evidence that any portion of this codex was ever deposited in a monastery or abbey, or produced in a religious scriptorium. No pressmarks or cataloging of any kind are visible; and because of the manuscript's modern binding, we have no clues as to how any of the individual units were originally bound or displayed. The kalendar-plus-chronicle volume is elaborate enough to have been a presentation copy, despite the absence of illumination and miniatures, but it contains no coat of arms or dedication, other than the Middle English translation of Trevel's century-old dedication to his royal patroness, Mary of Woodstock, who was long dead in 1420. The translator remains anonymous, and one cannot say whether he, or the scribe,³³ was

Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford A. D. 1501–1540* (Oxford, 1974); and Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford, 1957–59). I have also consulted numerous other works, including visitation lists and J. Le Neve's *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (London, 1862–65), but failed to turn up any connection to Gaydon or Wren, who may have been merchants or members of the bourgeoisie not listed in such works. Perhaps a thorough search of English wills may yield their identities.

³² The kalendar has every other page numbered, beginning with p. 7 (fol. 3^r) through p. 12 (fol. 8^r) in modern arabic numerals at the bottom of recto leaves. The chronicle has several sets of arabic numerals marking the pages in pencil, attesting to different page-numbering systems of different owners. One set of numbers does not account for the missing leaves; one does. And, there is a curious misreading of his own writing by one person, who numbers

from 1–59, then skips to 90, apparently mistaking his 59 for 89 (they are similar). The numbering systems do not, unfortunately, provide a clue as to when the missing leaves were lost.

³³ Jeremy J. Smith of the University of Glasgow and the Middle English Dialect Atlas has analyzed the scribe's language and concludes that the dialectal forms in a sample of the text suggest a Northwest Surrey locale, confirming my own linguistic suspicions about the manuscript, which has ownership ties to the area around London, and in the South and West. Prof. Smith does say, "I hesitate to be definite about this; all these forms are found fairly widely in the South of England and there is nothing diagnostic in the sample I've seen." If the scribe of fMS Eng 938 could be found to have written any other manuscript, of course, a more positive localization might be made.

a member of a religious order, a chancery employee, a professional commissioned by a stationer, or even a well-trained amateur.³⁴

At least part of the codex can be traced back to the eighteenth century, when the inscription on the flyleaf preceding the kalendar, dated 20 January 1710, identifies William Musgrave, M.D. of Exeter, who gave the manuscript to T. (or J.) Palmer. On the last leaf of the kalendar (8^v) in the lower right corner, appears the same *ex dono* in the same hand, dated 4 March 1710. While seemingly identifying the same text, the recording of two dates, only months apart, is puzzling, but perhaps the two dates indicate the gift of both the Bullard fragment and the kalendar, possibly including the chronicle, on two separate occasions.

William Musgrave, M.D. (1655?–1721 [see DNB]) was a physician and antiquary. One of the marginal hands of the chronicle may be his, but his letters in the Ballard collection at the Bodleian library (MS Ballard M xxxiv 75^r–85) shed no further light on the provenance. Musgrave, who was educated at Oxford, settled in Exeter, where he practiced medicine until his death. Of primary interest for our purposes, however, are his antiquarian investigations into Roman Britain, and his ownership of this chronicle may have reflected such an avocation. No record has been found of Musgrave's source for whatever pieces of the manuscript he owned, but we can see that he gave or sold some of the manuscript in 1710 to Thomas Palmer. Even though no *ex dono* appears on the chronicle text itself, it is reasonable to assume that the chronicle and kalendar were combined by this date, I think, because of the erasures and general preservation of the texts, but one cannot be certain until solid evidence of Musgrave's owning both the kalendar and the chronicle text is established.

Thomas Palmer, M.P. for Fairfield ca. 1720, was himself a manuscript collector. Among his papers recorded by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1877, which were then in the possession of Alexander Acland-Hood, Bart. at St. Audries, Somerset, were medieval legal texts, pedigrees, extracts from the Pipe Rolls about Somersetshire, and various historical documents.³⁵ These papers also include an introduction by Palmer to an intended history of Somersetshire. This collection of documents makes clear Palmer's own antiquarian interests. Like Musgrave, he was probably curious concerning what the chronicle said about Somerset, as well as appreciative of its antiquity and decoration.

The subsequent career of the codex is better recorded. From the Palmer family, the manuscripts (the kalendar and chronicle, perhaps) passed to the Baronet Lord St. Audries, mentioned above, in whose library the entire codex of three units in its present binding was found at the time of the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Sixth Report in 1877. Once the contents of the codex were revealed by the Commission, the Chaucer Society petitioned the baronet for permission to print the six folios of the chronicle that contain the Englished tale of Constance,

³⁴ See Curt F. Buhler, *The Fifteenth-Century Book: the Scribes, the Printers, the Decorators* (Philadelphia, 1960) and A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, "The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the early Fifteenth Century," in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, and Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker*, M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson, eds. (London: Scholar Press, 1978), 163ff., for a discussion of scribal practices during the late Middle Ages.

³⁵ Historical Manuscripts Commission Report by Alfred J. Harwood. This Thomas Palmer does not appear in the

DNB or Debrett, but the Palmer family is an important one, and this M.P. is likely related to the sixteenth-century Sir Thomas Palmer, Kt. and Geoffrey Palmer (both DNB). Thomas Palmer was married to Elizabeth, nearest heir to Lady Mary, Countess of Derby, whose ca. 1400 Wyclif Bible passed to Elizabeth and Thomas, and is recorded as in Lord St. Audries's library by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. I have been unable to connect the Palmer and Acland-Hood families, but I assume there is a family tie.

inasmuch as Chaucer had used some version of Trevet's chronicle as a source of the "Man of Law's Tale." This extract is the only portion of the codex ever to have been published.³⁶

In 1930 the codex was privately purchased from the baronet's family by Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., booksellers of London, and it appeared in 1936 in their catalog 520, as item 783. Quaritch housed the manuscript codex during the second World War, and subsequently sold it in 1946 to Dudley Coleman, an English collector, now deceased.³⁷ Charles Stonehill, bookseller of Surrey and New Haven, Conn., also now deceased, bought this and other manuscripts from Coleman and handled the transaction of its sale to Harvard for \$3,000, where it became Houghton fMS Eng 938 in 1954. Stonehill's letter to Harvard about the manuscript, which is now enclosed in the slipcase, repeats much of the Quaritch catalog description, but also adds some misinformation about Trevet's Anglo-Norman original.³⁸

What must be emphasized here is that the manuscript was virtually unknown to scholars until the 1877 Historical Manuscripts Commission report. Its antiquity is, of course, genuine, but no record of its pre-nineteenth-century existence has yet been unearthed in any catalog or will—the usual ways of tracing medieval manuscript ownership. Such an identification, however, is difficult, perhaps impossible, since often a medieval codex was designated in a will or catalog only by the first or the most important text it contained. If the Trevet text were combined in a codex with another more famous text, it may not have been mentioned at all.

A word or two needs to be said about the marginalia in the chronicle text, since such evidence of former owners or users of a manuscript is often helpful in establishing the provenance. Regrettably, the marginalia in fMS Eng 938 provides clues to the owners' interests, but not to their identities. The marginal comments are, however, interesting to consider.

Some sort of marginal notation appears on almost every page of the chronicle text. The three most noteworthy subjects are 1) church entries—"Al Halowen," "A myrakyll of oure lady," "How Rome was made the chefe church of

³⁶ F. J. Furnivall, Edmund Brock, and W. A. Clouston, eds., *Originals and Analogues of Some of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (2nd series) London, 1888, 221–50. This extract has several minor transcription errors.

³⁷ This information is courtesy of Mr. E. M. Dring of Quaritch, whose letter to me of 12 July 1983 disclosed some of the recent history of fMS Eng 938. Ruth Dean, in her "The Manuscripts of Nicholas Trevet's Anglo-Norman Cronicles," 99, mentions that she saw what is now fMS Eng 938 in London at Quaritch's. Mr. Dring kindly sent me a photocopy of Quaritch's 1936 catalog entry, and the information about the sale of the manuscript to Coleman.

³⁸ I reprint this paragraph from Stonehill's letter here to correct the record: "Spelman also printed some extracts from this manuscript in his *Concilia*. . . ." [My note: The *Concilia* refers to the Anglo-Norman Text, not this Middle English Text.] "No English version of Trevet's 'French' Chronicles appears to be known apart from the present manuscript. The work is known as his 'French' chronicle as the other manuscripts of the text are in French (save for one Latin manuscript.) and commence 'Les Chroniques qu frere N. Trevet escript a dame Marie la fille mon siegneur le roi d'Engleterre le filtz Henri.' To my mind this is no proof whatsoever that the work was originally written in French. The fact is that the four

French manuscripts known (also unpublished) were all accessible in the great English libraries, whereas the English manuscript was unknown to scholars until the 1877 Report of the Hist. Manuscripts Comm. Why should an English historian write in French for an English Princess, simply because he had studied at Paris among other places? There is no evidence to this effect that I can find."

Stonehill is certainly confused here, and his lack of knowledge of Trevet and the trilingual nature of fourteenth-century England and the English court is the source of this confusion. Stonehill attempts to argue that the Middle English version may be an original (and the French "translations"?) because of Trevet's and his patroness's supposed "English" nationality. Even Quaritch's catalog description mixes up Trevet's Anglo-Norman Cronicle with his more accurate Latin *Annales*. It was necessary for Ruth J. Dean in her fine articles on Trevet (*Medievalia et Humanistica* 14 (1962): 95–105; *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948): 541–64; and *Medieval Learning and Literature*, Alexander and Gibson, eds., 328–50, finally to remedy this misunderstanding about the names and nature of Trevet's various historical works. Trevet's work was certainly originally composed in Anglo-Norman, and fMS Eng 938 is certainly a later translation of that French work.

Cristendome" (fol. 6^v), "Oure lady churche of Salysbury bylded" (fol. 89^v); 2) political/historical entries—"Rex Angl," "How the danys come in to fraunce" (fol. 68^r); and 3) miscellaneous items of interest, often marvels or names—"Steuyne beytt emperoyrs wyfe with a cheyn of yron" (fol. 63^r), "ye ston of yse" (fol. 66^r). Three main marginal hands are distinguishable, with perhaps three or four others adding random comments on the text. None of the hands can be easily identified as belonging to one of the *ex dono* writers (e.g. Gaydon, Wren, Musgrave, Palmer), who wrote on 2^v, 8^v, and the flyleaves before fol. 3. Of the three major marginal writers, one appears to be the scribe himself, who carefully notes, in Latin, items he deems important. He writes in the neat, regular anglicana hand of the main text, and his use of Latin in this Middle English text assumes the knowledge of at least a little Latin on the part of his audience, the assumption he (or the translator) makes throughout the chronicle text, which includes short Latin liturgical sequences, and even a Latin pun. Here the Middle English scribe or translator follows Trevet's use of Latin in the Anglo-Norman manuscripts. It is, however, not unusual for Middle English texts to be glossed in Latin. Some of the manuscripts of Chaucer's works, for example, have Latin glosses.³⁹ Some exceptions to this marginal use of Latin in the Trevet text occur when words enclosed in scrolls such as those marking the Deluge and the giant Gogmagog are penned in English. Most of the scribe's marginal notations consist of "Nota," where he marks an entry of special importance, and his injunctions on us to "note" this or that follow no particular pattern. He often expands his note to comment on the text briefly or write a key word. Where this type of expanded notation occurs, he is likely to show the reader "Rex Anglie," "herba Iohnis" (to mark the name of an English plant the text describes), "porte Ierusalem," "Nota mortem Iude Machabe," "Conquestus Anglie per Iulius cesare," "Nota mortem pilate," "Rex anglie primus xpianus." Much of his interest seems to be in the English land and people, with the Church as the subject of further items worth remarking.

My point here in detailing the scribe's Latin and Middle English marginalia is to emphasize the bookmaker's knowledge of his audience, and from such evidence to deduce what we can about this audience. Since the major part of the early fifteenth-century manuscript booktrade was of a bespoke nature,⁴⁰ whoever ordered this book had some little literacy in Latin, but on the whole, the commissioner of this Middle English text must have been more interested in, and more comfortable with, English.

The other writers who pen marginal comments do so in less neat, and certainly later, possibly sixteenth-century, hands. Two hands predominate, but occasional comments do not belong to either the scribe or to these two later writers. The first and most prolific marginal commentator wrote a hand difficult to decipher because of fading ink. The script is a careless rapid Elizabethan secretary. This writer (Hand A) tends to note Church items most frequently. It is characteristic of his entries to point out "the furst" time something occurs ("the furst preestes," etc.). Interested in politics and marvels, this commentator's remarks sprinkled throughout the text point to sparrows fighting as omens, the pestilence, miracles of our lady, and the

³⁹ Scribes in various manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, for example, make marginal notations similar to the ones in fMS Eng 938. See John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales* (Chicago: University of

Chicago Press, 1940), 483–527.

⁴⁰ Doyle and Parkes, "The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales*."

invasion of the French galleys into England (fol. 95). This hand resembles the hand of the obituary of Alice Hungerford in the kalendar section.

Hand B, the other prominent marginal commentor, writes in an amateurish hand that attempts to imitate the scribe's elegant bookhand. The graphs of B have elements of early Tudor secretary.⁴¹ This writer tends to comment on the Church and Church history: "How Rome was made the chefe church of Cristendome," "the order of the monkys of Sestewe," "Byshop Adelstan," "Edgar found many abbeys," and "a wikkid spirite." He also makes several notes about Scotland, and English kings, and twice notes, for some reason, "a toune of Saxone."

Further marginal entries, in several different hands, make up the rest of the marginalia. Not one of the entries has yielded evidence with which to localize the manuscript, other than to attest to its English origins and the largely English interest of its owner/audience. On three successive pages of the Brut section, for example, the marginal writer calls attention to "John a gaynt" (John of Gaunt). The orthography of the marginal writers does not always, or even generally, follow that of the text commented upon, even when the comment is written directly beside the word or phrase it indicates. But no regional dialect is discernable. A few of the marginal comments were written in lead, now too faded to read. There are occasional scribbles, an amateurish interlace drawing, and the graffiti on fol. 2^v, which I referred to above in the physical description of the manuscript. The manuscript is generally neat, however. Marginal comments never impinge upon the bold scribal writing, and no marginalia or penstrokes truly deface the pages.

Of course, one would, in this text of a Chaucerian source, turn quickly to the section of the manuscript that contains the tale of Constance (fols. 53–59) to assay whether any later readers made marginal note of Chaucer and his story. Sadly, there is no mention of Chaucer, and the few readable comments on this section of the manuscript are by Hand A, who merely notes the progress of the tale. Some of the comments (perhaps also by A) are too damaged or faint to decipher in full, but they do point to no interest in, or knowledge of, Chaucer on the part of any reader of this manuscript.

The question of who produced this codex, or any of the separate texts, the location of the scribe or scriptorium, and the identity of the early owners of any part of the codex all remain unresolved. The most that can be said is that the Middle English Trevel chronicle is likely to have been produced for a member of the wealthy gentry of the fifteenth century, someone who knew a little Latin and was literate in English. Because of the growing antipathy towards the French, and the rise of English nationalism, this person wanted the history translated into English.⁴²

⁴¹ Petti, *English Literary Hands*, 16–17.

⁴² For a recent overview of this demand for English history in English, see Lister M. Matheson, "Historical Prose,"

in *Middle English Prose*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 209–48.