

The Heretic Scribbler of New College MS 319

Henry Octavius Coxe's description of New College MS 319 is brief and to the point:

Membranaceus, in folio minori, ff. 104, sec. xv.: olim Henrici Salusbury. A.M.S. Boethii de consolatione philosophiae libri quinque, in carmen Anglicanum traducti [per Johannem Walton Capellanum]; mutil.¹

It is one of only twenty extant copies of John Walton's Middle English verse translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.² Conscientiously, Coxe puts the name of the author in square brackets since it is not actually evidenced in the manuscript itself—the *mutilatio* of the codex he observes extends to the first and the last folio of the volume, so that this copy lacks the colophon which accompanies most other extant manuscripts of the work. Seven manuscripts end 'Explicit liber Boecij de Consolacione philosophie de Latino in Anglicum translatus Anno domini millesimo cccc^{mo} x^o per capellanum Johannem'.³ Two further manuscripts, both of them now in other Oxford college libraries (one at Balliol, the other at Christ Church) specify the author even further as a man with a very local connection: John Walton, lately chaplain of Osney Abbey in West Oxford: '[per] Johannem Waltoun nuper canonicum de Oseneye'.⁴

For centuries, the 'capellanus Johannes' of the largest number of colophons was misidentified as John Lydgate rather than John Walton—Eleanor Hammond in her partial edition of the text lists instances of this misidentification in manuscripts catalogues, editions of the Latin text, and handbooks of Latin literature from the early eighteenth century to as late as the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵ This is despite the existence of an early print of the text dating to 1525, which provides an edition with a voluminous commentary.⁶ This print not only contains an additional four acrostic stanzas, the first two of which name an 'Elisabet Berkeley' as the 'Transferri procurantis', while the third and fourth give the 'nomen translatoris' and 'cognomen translatoris' as 'Iohannes' and 'Waltwnem'.⁷ Still, ignorance of this edition and its clear proclamation of authorship on the part of scholars and editors is not necessarily surprising, considering the scarcity of surviving copies—Hammond calls the book 'exceedingly rare', and in 1927 Science knows of only three extant copies.⁸ Even today the online *English Short Title Catalogue* lists only eight, three of them in Oxford (one in Exeter College Library, and two in the Bodleian).⁹

Generally speaking, literary critics have not been kind in their assessment of the Osney chaplain's work. It is inevitable that it should suffer from a comparison to Chaucer's prose translation, and especially to his verse translation of Book II Metrum 5, which exists as an

¹ Henry O. Coxe, *Catalogus Codicum Mss. Qui in Collegiis Aulisque Oxoniensibus Hodie Adservantur* (Oxonii: E typographeo Academico, 1852), pp. 113–4.

² For an extensive bibliography see the chapter on 'John Walton' in *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translation Tradition of The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. Brian Donaghey et al. (Tempe, Arizona: Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, 2019), pp. 75–91.

³ *Boethius: De consolatione philosophiae translated by John Walton, Canon of Oseney*, ed. Mark Science (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1927), p. xiv.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. xiv.

⁵ *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey: Being Examples of Conventional Secular Poetry, exclusive of Romance, Ballad, Lyric, and Drama, in the Period from Henry the Fourth to Henry the Eighth*, ed. Eleanor Prescott Hammond (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1927), p. 39.

⁶ *The boke of comfort called in laten Boetius de Consolacione philosophie. Translated in to englesse tonge* (Enprented in the exempt monastery of Tauestok in Denshyre: by me Dan Thomas Rychard monke of the sayd monastery, to the iu[n]stant desyre of the ryght worshypful esquier Mayster Robert Langdon, Anno d[omi]ni M D xxv. [1525]). On this see Science, pp. xviii–xx, and Hammond, p. 41; and for a more detailed discussion, Brian Donaghey, Irma Taavitsainen, and Erik Miller, 'Walton's Boethius: From Manuscript to Print', *English Studies* 80 (5) (1999), 398–407.

⁷ On this see Ian Johnson, 'New Evidence for the Authorship of Walton's Boethius', in *Notes and Queries* 43 (1) (1996), 19–21.

⁸ Hammond, p. 41; Science, p. xviii.

⁹ ESTC citation no. S113387: <<http://estc.bl.uk/S113387>> (Accessed: 10 November 2022).

independent poem under the title of ‘The Former Age’.¹⁰ Walton himself, in typical medieval effacement, makes this comparison with his great predecessor in translating the *Consolatio*:

To Chaucer þat is floure of rethoryk
In Eenglisshe tong *and* excellent poete,
This wot I wel, no þing may I do like,
Pogh so þat I of makynge entirmete. (st. 5, 1–4)¹¹

The main grievance of the critics is aimed at Walton’s decision to, just like Chaucer, abandon the steady alternation of prose and verse of Boethius’s original. Early on in the critical history of the work, Bernard ten Brink complains of this in his *Geschichte der Englischen Litteratur*:

Im Ganzen ist Kaplan Johns Product nicht gerade anziehend: ungern sieht man Boetius’ Prosa und seine in wechslenden Rhythmen sich bewegende Poesie hier in eine gleichmäßige, etwas monotone Breite dichterischen Ausdrucks umgesetzt.¹²

[All in all Chaplain John’s work is not exactly appealing: one resents seeing Boethius’s prose and his poetry which moves in such variable rhythms, transposed here into a uniform, somewhat monotonous breadth of poetic expression.]

With a reference to the same loss of variety, Hammond calls Walton’s decision to put the entire work into verse ‘a greater tactical error than Chaucer’s reduction of the whole to prose’—it certainly makes nonsense of for example the passage in Book 4 Prosa 6 where Philosophy advises Boethius that he will need to wait somewhat until the next piece of pleasing poetry, since the weighty matters she is about to convey demand the use of prose:

‘... And pogh so be þat musik þe delite,
And metir is full lusty to þy ere,
As for a tyme that lust must þou respite
Be while þat I in ordre knyght in-fere
My resons whiche I schall þe schewen here.’ (st. 730, 1–5)

Still, even Hammond in the end concedes that ‘the handling of English rhythm by Walton is so much better than by either Hoccleve or Lydgate’, and that his translation ‘deserves more attention and credit than it has received’.¹³

I

Judging in general from the relative abundance of extant manuscripts, and from the relative richness in terms of decorated initials not only in New College MS 319, but in a number of other manuscripts, Walton’s near-contemporaries had a rather higher opinion of the work than the scholars of later centuries. Most of the extant manuscripts are dated to the fifteenth century, with MS 319 situated in the second quarter of that century, so potentially within 15–40 years of Walton writing his translation.¹⁴ It is one of a group of five manuscripts recorded as bequeathed to the

¹⁰ Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Former Age’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 650–1.

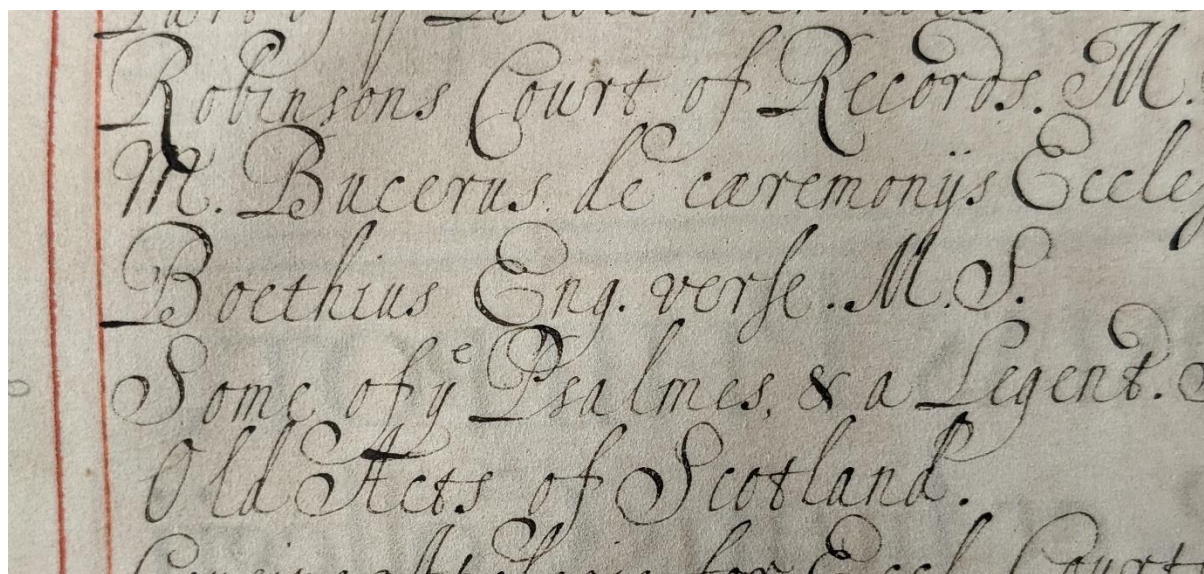
¹¹ Quoted according to Science, with his stanza numbering. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Walton’s translation are given according to this edition.

¹² Bernard ten Brink, *Geschichte der Englischen Litteratur*, Bd 2 (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1877–93), p. 229.

¹³ Hammond, pp. 40 and 39.

¹⁴ Noted as ‘England, s. xv 2/4’ in the description of the manuscript by James Willoughby, for the forthcoming catalogue of New College Library manuscripts: ‘319. John Walton, translation of Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*’.

college by one Thomas Philpott, who is recorded as educated at Wykeham's school in Winchester and completing his BA at New College in 1611, followed by his MA in 1615 and his Doctor of Divinity in 1646.¹⁵ The *Alumni Oxoniensis* adds the intriguing note that Philpott 'suffered for his loyalty and good conscience during the civil war by loss of goods and imprisonment'¹⁶—though not, apparently, a complete loss of goods, since he was able to bequeath, at his death in 1671, a long list of early printed books and several manuscripts to the college. Apparently erroneously dated to 1677, the college library benefactors' book records the gifts under the heading of 'Thomas Philpot, S.T.P et hujus Collegii quondam Sociens moriens Legavit', and among them we find not only MS 319 recorded as 'Boethius Eng. verse. M.S.', but also records of New College MSS 315, 317, 320, and 325.¹⁷



New College Library, Oxford, Benefactors' Book, p. 122

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As in MS 319, where we find Latin headings and marginal annotations accompanying the Middle English text, four of these five manuscripts bequeathed by Thomas Philpott contain both Latin and English. Two of them are non-literary—MS 317 is a seventeenth-century manuscript containing (in Latin) Martin Bucer's treatise on the ceremonies of the Anglican church and a 'libellus' on the marriage of priests (*De caeremoniis ecclesiae Anglicanae; Conjugium Episcoporum*), as well as (in English) John Pryse's 'Treatise upon the restitution of the Coin of England', and 'The forme of the acte of Parlyament' on the same subject.¹⁸ MS 325 (dated to the end of the sixteenth/beginning of the seventeenth centuries) is 'A briefe collection of the Queenes Maiesties most High and most Hounourable Courts of Records' compiled by Richard Robinson.¹⁹ MS 315, dated to the turn of the sixteenth century, contains a *Tabula septem custodiarum super Bibliam*, a concordance to passages in the Bible from Genesis to Job that received comment in the writings of the Church Fathers, compiled by the Franciscan friars of Oxford sometime in the thirteenth century.²⁰ Finally, MS 320 has probably the greatest affinity with the Walton manuscript in both contents and date: the first part of the codex is a manuscript collection of Wycliffite Psalms, dateable to the mid-

¹⁵ Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500–1714: Their Parentage, Birthplace and Year of Birth, with a Record of their Degrees*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Parker, 1891–2), III, 1160.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Library Benefactors' Book, New College Library, Oxford, pp. 121–2.

¹⁸ Coxe, p. 114. On the latter see W. A. J. Archbold, 'A Manuscript Treatise on the Coinage by John Pryse, 1553', *The English Historical Review* 13 (52) (1898), 709–10.

¹⁹ Coxe, p. 116.

²⁰ Willoughby, '315. *Tabula septem custodiarum super Bibliam*'.

fifteenth century; at the end of this, bound together with the manuscript, is a fragment of early printed text, William Caxton's *Golden Legend*, his translation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, printed at Westminster by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 or 1499.

The text of Walton's *Boethius* contained in MS 319 itself is incomplete, as Coxe's note 'mutil.' clearly indicates,²¹ though only by a matter of a few folios. Most of Walton's original prologue is missing, and our manuscript begins on f. 1r with the last two lines of the *Prefacio translatoris*:

I schall begynne after my sympelnesse
In wil to do 3our seruice & pleasance.' (st.10, 7–8)

Another missing folio at the very end of the manuscript also unfortunately means that any colophon that may have existed is also lost, and has been for at least 170 years—Coxe already counts only 104 paginated folios, which is what the manuscript consists of today.²²

Science does not have many good things to say about New College MS 319:

The text itself is full of errors. A later scribe seems to have examined the manuscript and put a X against each of the corrupt lines, but he has not succeeded in marking all the mistakes . . . Unfortunately [the New College MS] has quite a number of variant readings peculiar to itself which are entirely due either to the carelessness of the scribe or his desire to 'correct' . . . The MS throughout does not seem to have had the same care as was taken with many of the other MSS—there are numerous insertions, illuminated letters occur only occasionally, and there are no marginal headings to each prose and metre.²³

Science is quite harsh in his judgment here, and also maybe not entirely accurate in his assessment of the care taken in writing and illuminating the text. The manuscript is written in a neat, regular Anglicana with 35 lines to the page (four 8-line stanzas and 3 lines, where stanzas begin on a page), with 2.5 cm inner and top margins, and very generous margins of the same width as the text block on the outer edges, with at least the same at the bottom (see further down for a full-page photograph of f. 2r). While there are indeed only a few large, page-spanning foliate illuminated initials which Willoughby describes as 'a partial demi-vinet: a three-line champ with rather heavy floral sprays',²⁴ these are interspersed with a large number of smaller, but no less carefully executed ones. The beginnings of the prose and metric sections are more often than not demarcated by 2-line initials decorated generously with (now often sadly flaking) gold leaf. These also occur in other places to mark important passages in the text itself, for example on f. 79r, where a decorated 2-line initial 'L' marks the beginning of Lady Philosophy's great speech on Providence and Fate in Book IV Prosa 6:

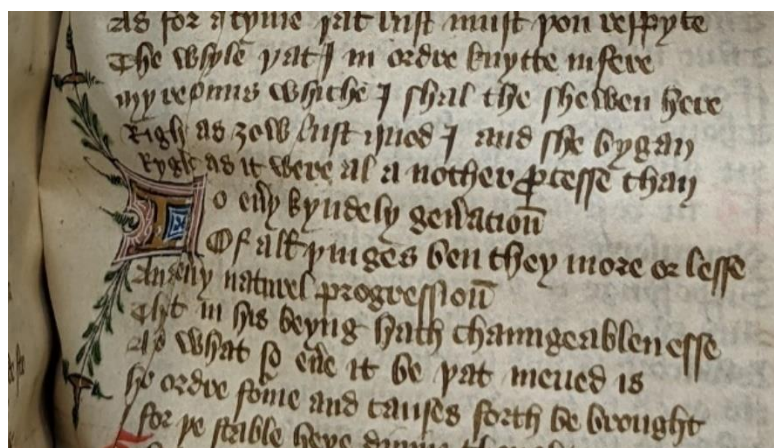
Lo every kindly generacioun
Of alle things, be thei more or lesse . . .' (st. 731, 1–2)

²¹ Coxe, p. 114.

²² *ibid.*. See Science, p. xiv for a full list of omitted lines and missing folios.

²³ Science, pp. xiv and xxxi.

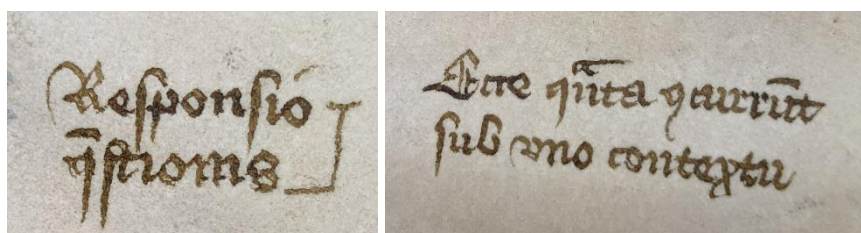
²⁴ Willoughby, '319'.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 79r [detail]

In addition, every single stanza is carefully marked with a larger, coloured initial, alternating in still beautifully vibrant blue and red, with the small guiding letters noted by the scribe still distinguishable underneath. Marginal headings do exist if not for all, but certainly for a good number of both prose and metre sections, such as ‘prosa p[ri]ma’ on f. 4r (Book I, Prosa 1, st. 38) and again on f. 17v (Book II, Prosa 1, st. 156), while f. 17r has ‘metru[m] vii^m’ (Book I, Metrum 7, st. 153).

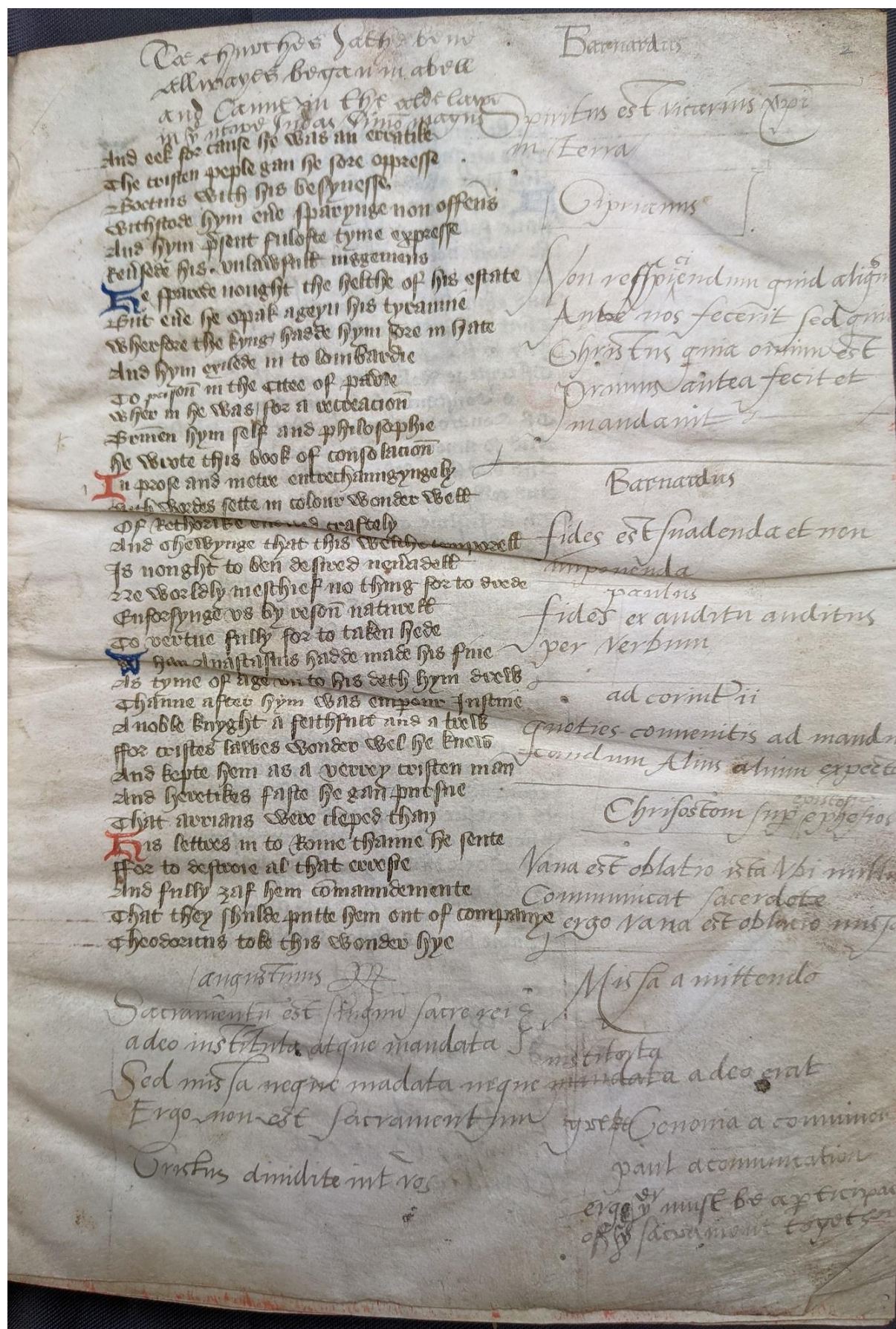
The scribe also added some helpful additional marginal notations in Latin as guidance for the reader, none of which are recorded in Science’s edition. On several occasions, the letters ‘B’ and ‘P’ alongside individual lines denote the speakers as ‘Boethius’ and ‘Philosophia’, for example on f. 75v to highlight a single-line interjection by Boethius, or on ff. 16v and 85r (st. 145–6 and 798–802), where the quick dialogue and rapid alteration of speakers might be confusing to the reader. In a similar manner the words ‘Responsio q[ue]stionis’ (‘The answer to the questions’) and a helpful ‘Ecce q[ua]nta concurre[n]t sub uno contextu’ (‘Here they sum up much in one passage’) are added in the margin of f. 79r, at the beginning of st. 728—they mark Philosophy’s words as, prompted by Boethius’ ‘Right as þou lust’ (st. 730, 7), she begins her long summative exposition on Providence in Book IV.



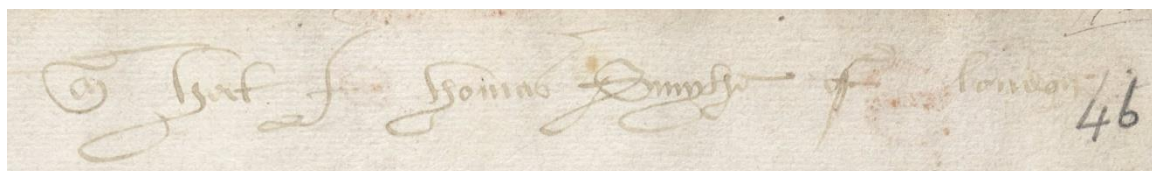
New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 79r

Rather more interesting than the existence or lack of such marginal scribal annotations, however, is the plethora of marginalia in a completely different hand, script, and ink, which is found on individual folios throughout—the generous outer and lower margins of ff. 1v, 2r, 3r, 26r, and 104v were all used by one of the previous owners to record snippets and quotations, mostly in Latin, but some also English, in what looks like a late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century secretary hand—though unlike the scribe’s marginalia, none of these later scribbles bear any relation to the passages of Walton’s text next to which they can be found. The recto sides of the first few folios and the verso of the final one are particularly heavily annotated by this later hand.²⁵

²⁵ Willoughby, ‘319’, refers to them as ‘Scribbles and folderols’.

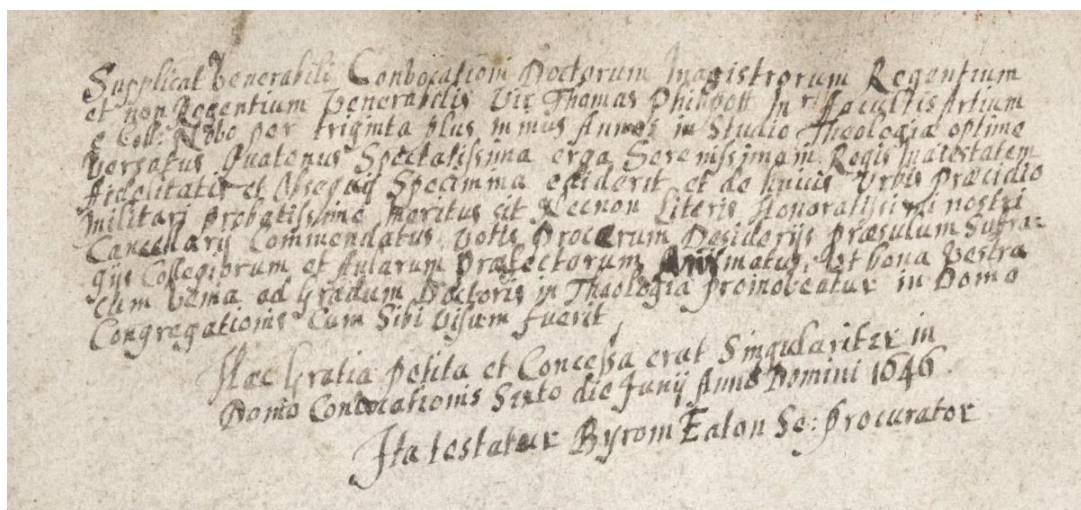


The question of the identity of the Scribbler, as I shall dub him, is an intriguing one. The other four manuscript codices from Thomas Philpott's bequest all have clean margins with only scribal notations throughout, and though their margins are not quite as generous as the almost 12 cm in MS 319, there would have been ample space to make notations—for example, one Thomas Smythe of London records himself as the owner of MS 320 in a faint hand at the top of the otherwise blank f. 46r.²⁶



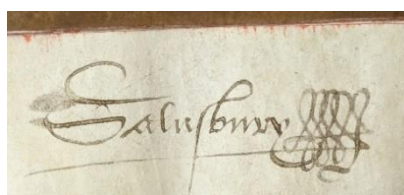
New College Library, Oxford, MS 320, f. 46r

The eventual donor Thomas Philpott also left an unmistakable mark of his ownership on this particular codex, on the *verso* of the same blank folio 46 between the medieval manuscript and Caxton's print, where he records the supplication for his doctorate with a date of 6 June 1646.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 320, f. 46v

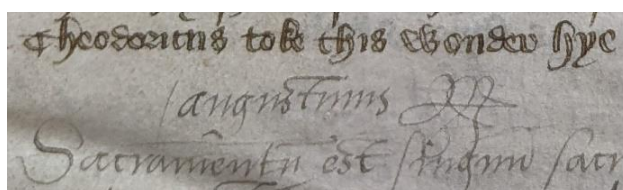
However, neither hand, script, nor ink here really matches the many marginal scribbles in MS 319, so that suspicion of being the prolific Scribbler falls squarely on the only other recorded previous owner of Walton's *Boethius*, who signed his name on two different leaves within the manuscript: one Henry Salisbury or Salusbury. The latter spelling is found with an extravagant flourish in the right-hand margin of f. 7r, with the name running vertically from top to bottom along the outer edge of the leaf.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 7r (image rotated 90 degrees anticlockwise).

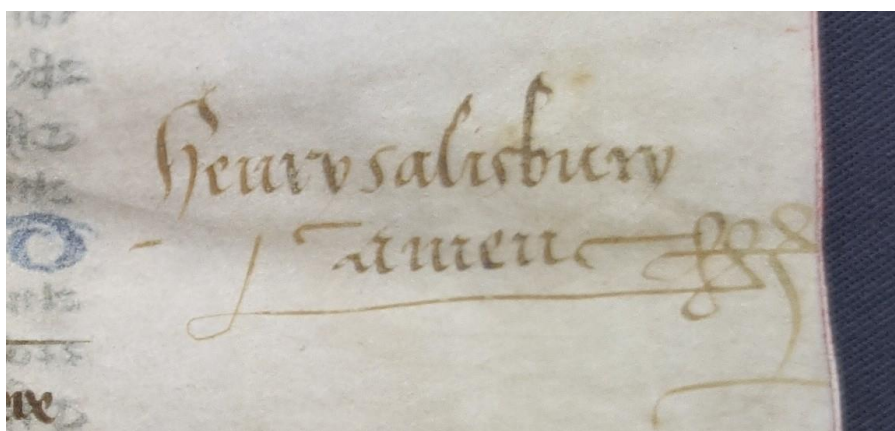
²⁶ To examine the margins of all the early printed books that make up the bulk of Philpott's request was unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper, but certainly remains a task to pursue at a future date.

A very similar flourish can be found accompanying the name of ‘Augustinus’ in one of the many quotations on f. 2r, further strengthening the suspicion that the former owner who recorded his name on f. 7r is likely to be the Scribbler.



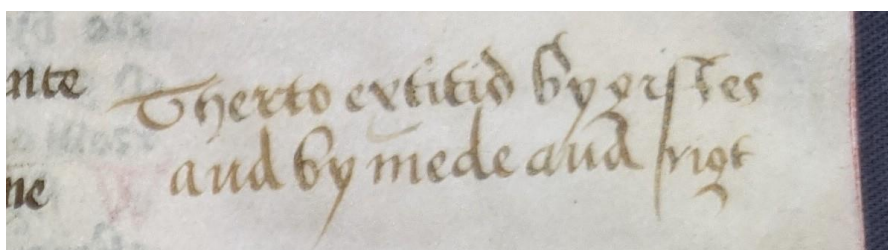
New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 2r

The second instance of the name Salisbury, recorded in a pseudo-gothic script in the outer margin of f. 13r, is again accompanied by exactly the same kind of flourish.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 13r [detail]

This instance provides us not only with the first name of the writer, who now signs himself ‘Henry Salisbury amen’, but also allows a close comparison with one of the marginal scribbles placed directly above, where he copies a line and a half from the text: ‘Therto excited be 3iftes and be mede / And righ[twisnesse] . . .’ (st. 115, ll. 1–2).



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 13r [detail]

A good number of the shorter marginal annotations in this hand throughout the text are of a similar nature, copies of a line or two of the text.²⁷ It is difficult to tell whether these were made for the sake of clarity, when he found the scribe’s hand or in general the late medieval Anglicana difficult to read, or as a pen trial to try copy the hand—the above example on f. 13r copies the medieval yogh in ‘3iftes’ as well as the uncial capital ‘T’ at the beginning of the stanza,

²⁷ See my discussion of these further on in this article.

but misreads the ‘c’ with its tiny ascender in ‘excited’ as a ‘t’, and substitutes a second ‘i’ for the ‘e’ here and a lower case ‘a’ for the small capital ‘A’ at the beginning of the second line.

However, despite the efforts here to imitate the scribe’s letter forms, the hands of the marginal annotation and that of the owner’s signature do seem to be rather alike. The remarkably similar flourishes at the end of ‘Augustinus’ on f. 1r, ‘Salisbury’ on f. 7r, and ‘Salisbury’ on f. 15r in addition provide a reasonably strong link between the name and the many marginal scribbles in this manuscript.

Assuming that ‘Salisbury’ points to a title and the name of the diocese rather than a family name, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* offers up one very likely candidate for the previous owner of MS 319 and our Scribbler: Henry Cotton (c. 1545–1615), bishop of Salisbury from 1598 to his death in 1615.²⁸ It is difficult to say how a manuscript potentially owned by him might have ended up in the hands of New College man Thomas Philpott a generation later, but Cotton certainly had proven connections to both Oxford and Winchester. Having attended Magdalen College from 1566, he graduated BA in 1569, MA in 1572, and finally DTh in 1599. He had been ordained in 1574 and was made canon of the sixth prebend at Winchester in 1577, though unsuccessful in his application to the deanery there in 1589. His only connection to New College itself is somewhat negative—despite a recommendation to the post of warden of Winchester College by his godmother Elizabeth I, both Winchester College and New College are recorded as opposing the appointment on the grounds that Cotton had never belonged to a Wykehamist foundation. Thanks to an Oxford delegation, which argued that a bishop in the church is a greater thing than a doctor (‘Episcopatus in Ecclesia maior est Doctoratu(m)’), he was consecrated bishop of Salisbury on 12 November 1598 while still pursuing his degree of Doctor of Theology.²⁹

Firmly identifying the Scribbler of MS 319 with Henry Cotton would mean to go out on a limb uncomfortably far, but circumstantial evidence makes it a distinct possibility. In the biographic sketch in the *ODNB*, Cotton is described as a ‘reasonably conscientious bishop’ who was ‘especially concerned with the conversion of Roman Catholics’. The differences between Catholicism, or rather the arguments against some of its doctrines, certainly weigh heavily on the mind of the Scribbler in New College MS 319, who fills the large outer and lower margins of several folios with Latin quotations from a variety of sources, many of them associated with the debate around the Eucharist as a sacrament.

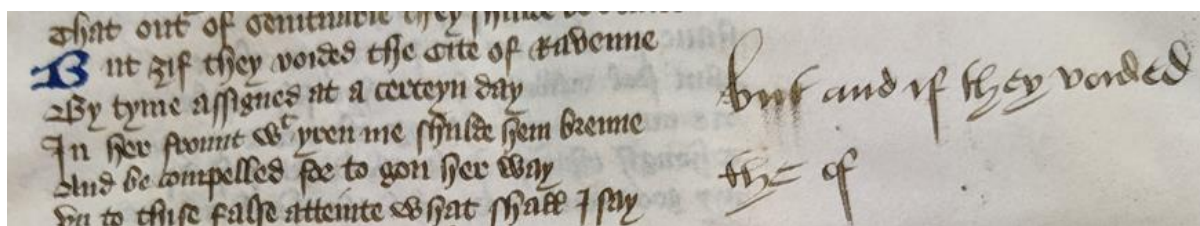
The scribbles in the margins of MS 319 can be roughly divided into three different categories: A, the copying of a line or so of the Middle English text, sometimes while imitating the Anglicana used by the scribe; B, notations in English which include some prayer formulae and several instances of proverbs and adages; and C, the majority of the scribbles, which are religious, Latin quotations (with occasional English glosses or comments); many anti-catholic or anti-papist, taken from authorities from the Epistles to Augustine, John Chrysostom, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Ambrosiaster; many of them inaccurate, and most with (occasionally also inaccurate) attributions by name.

II

Scribbles of Type A can be found in both outer and lower margins, and on various folios throughout the manuscript. In addition to the instance on f. 13r discussed earlier there is an example on f. 10r which both adds and leaves out words: ‘but and if they voided the of’, copying st. 88, l. 1, ‘But 3if they voided the cite of Ravenne . . .’ (manuscript reading).

²⁸ Julian Lock, ‘Cotton, Henry (c. 1545–1615)’, in *ODNB*: <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/61738>>. I am summarising the salient points of Locke’s article in the following paragraph.

²⁹ The full text of this petition is preserved in an early print by Thomas Holland: *Oratio Sarisburiae habita VIII. Id. Iun Cum reuerendus in Christo Pater Henricus permissione divina Episcopus Sarisburiensis gradum Doctoratus Theologiae susceperet, ex decreto Convocationis Oxoniensis* (Oxford: Excudebat Iosephus Barnesius, 1599), sig. A4r.

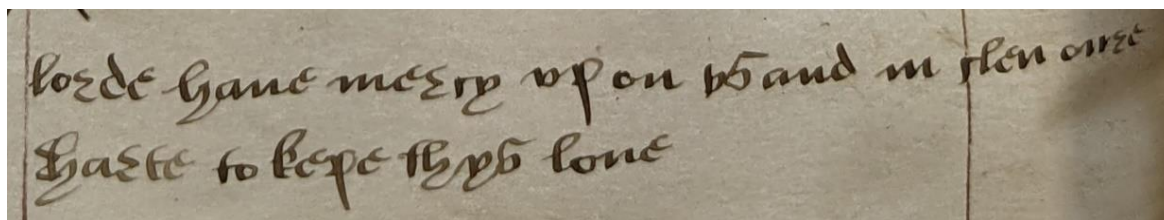


New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 10r [detail]

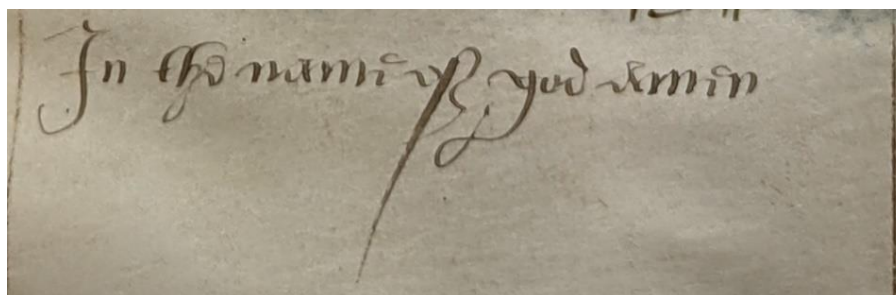
Unlike the instance on f.13r, there is no attempt to copy the scribe's hand here, and apart from that particular example which served well to compare the hand to that of Henry Salisbury's signed name, the scribbles of this type afford little interest.

III

Somewhat more interesting are scribbles of what I have called Type B. There are two prayer formulae in the lower margins of two folios: f. 83v has 'lorde haue mercy upon us and in clen oure harte to kepe thys loue', and on 85r we find 'In the name of god amen'.

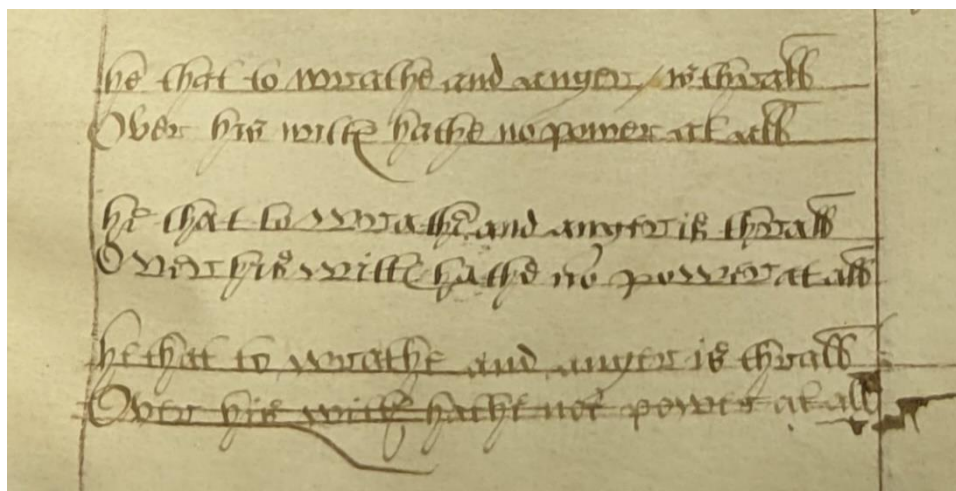


New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 83v [detail]



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 85r [detail]

At first glance the hands of these two look rather different, but it should be remembered that the Scribbler does show a marked fondness for imitating or trying out different scripts in his annotations in this manuscript. One particularly noteworthy example is one of only three places where the Scribbler noted down text on entirely non-religious subjects in the form of popular proverbs: the instance of this on f. 82 is simultaneously a pen trial, where the Scribbler seems to have played around with various hands, and even added ruled lines on the bottom margin to write three different versions of a rhymed couplet: 'He that to wrathe and anger is thrall | Over his wille hathe no power at all'.

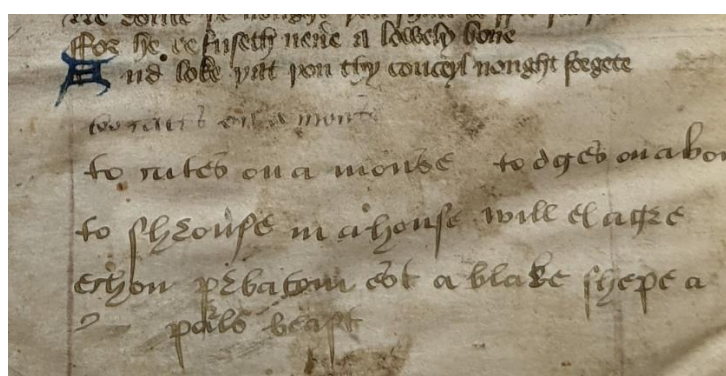


New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 82r [detail]

At the top of the outer margin on f. 26r he then records another two lines of what sounds like a proverbial saying: 'He tha wyll and wyll not | yf he niever eyse[t]h and thryve'; I cannot find any record of this, but there certainly is a familiar ring to the sentiment that someone who is able to do something but just does not want to do it will not go far in life.

Finally, the two proverbs recorded in the bottom margin on f. 104r (marked as such by a 'probatum est', 'is it proved') pose something of a challenge to decipher due to the wear and dirtying of this last leaf of the codex, as well as because of hasty and untidy handwriting. As far as I can tell they read as:

to cates on a mouse to d(o)ges on a bon
to shrouse in a house will eragre
echon pr(o)batum est a blake shepe a
pa(re)ls beast



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 104v [detail]

Unlike the above instances, these two proverbs can be found in Tilley's *Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries*—the first couple of lines are clearly a variant of Tilley's C186, 'Two cats and a mouse, two wives in one house, two dogs and a bone never agree in one', recorded from as early as 1486; the second is Tilley's S296, 'A black sheep is a biting (perilous) beast', which according to the entry first appeared in a Christmas carol around 1550.³⁰

³⁰ Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), cv. C186 and S296.

IV

Finally, the outer and lower margins of f. 2r and f. 3r are almost entirely filled with scribbles of Type C. The simplest of these are quotations from the Gospels or Epistles on no easily definable theme, which seem to have caught the Scribbler's attention. A number of these are among the more recognizable and better-known of scriptural quotations: 'Pater maior me est | Pater et ego unus sum[us]', f. 3r;³¹ 'Ad Corinth | A(n)i(m)alis homo no(n) p(er)cipit ea q(ue) | Sunt spiritus dei spiritua[li]s | iudicat o(mn)ia' (f. 3r).³²

Apart from these, the religious themes that occupy the Scribbler's mind as he collects quotations from a great variety of sources are wide-ranging, though almost always anti-catholic or even anti-papist. One interesting notation is a thought on the etymology of the word 'catholic': 'According or aft(er) | hebreue greke | Cata ~~first~~ holon sounde | Or hoole so catholike fayth | ys as muche as the first | Sound faythe' (f. 3r). Other scribbles concern the status of the Pope as a representative of God on earth ('Barnardus | Spiritus est vicarius [Christi] | in Terra', f. 2r), the nature of Faith ('paulus | fides ex audite audites | per verbum', f. 2r),³³ the nature of apostasy ('Apostacia ys properly aduer | ting from the faith', 3r), and the issue of coerced conversion of pagans, heretics and apostates by the Church (Barnardus | fides est suadenda et non | imponenda', f. 2r).

What is very interesting to see is that this last quotation, although traceable rather further back to St Basil and Ambrose, is also attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux by another famous Wykehamist and alumnus of New College by the same name of Philpott as the donor of the manuscript: John Philpott (1515/16–1555), clergyman and Protestant martyr, scholar of Winchester College from 1526, scholar of New College, Oxford, from 1533, fellow of the college 1535–41, and burned at the stake in Smithfield on 12 December 1555.³⁴ His trial records were printed by John Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments*, and contain an account of Philpott quoting St Bernard:

Phil. Saint Barnard (and it please your Lordship) doth take that sense of S. Paule as I do, saying that fides est suadenda & non imponenda, fayth must bee perswaded to a ma(n) and not enioyned.³⁵

The bulk of the Scribbler's collection of quotations pertains to the question of the central act of the Catholic mass, the Eucharist; or more specifically, to questions of the legitimacy of the Catholic mass, and of the Eucharist as a sacrament. A quotation from John Chrysostom's homilies on the epistles ('Chrisostom sup(er) /epistolus/ ephesios') for example reads 'Vana est oblatio ista ubi multa | communicat sacerdote | ergo Vana est oblacio missa' ('Vain is that offering where a multitude communicates with the priest; therefore the Mass is a vain offering', f. 2v). This he follows with another deliberation of religious etymology: 'Missa a mittendo', '(The word) Missa

³¹ Cf. John 14:28: '... quia Pater maior me est', '... for my Father is greater than I'; and John 10:30: 'Ego et Pater unum sumus.', 'I and my Father are one.' All Latin quotations from the Bible are according to the Vulgate, with translations from the King James Version.

³² Cf. Corinthians I 2:14–15: 'Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei: ... Spiritualis autem iudicat omnia ...', 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: ... But he that is spiritual judgeth all things ...'

³³ Cf. Romans 10:17: 'Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi'—'So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'

³⁴ Ronald H. Fritze, 'Philpott [Philpot], John (1515/16–1555)', in ODNB: <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22182>>.

³⁵ 'The 11. examination of Ioh. Philpot had on S. Andrewes day', in *John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online* (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011): <www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/> (Accessed: 23 November 2022), 1570 edition, Book 11, ch. 78, p. 2026.

(‘Mass’) (comes) from ‘mittendo’ (‘to be dismissed’)’ (f. 2v), one of the medieval etymologies of the noun *missa*, which incidentally is also quoted by the martyr Philpott in his trial:

Phil. I haue not gone so long to schoole, to deriue the significatiō of Missa, which is a latten word, out of Hebrue: but I haue learned to interprete Greeke words by Greeke, and Latin by Latin, & Hebrue by Hebrue. *I take the Cōmunion to be called Missa a mittendo*, of such thynges as, at the celebration of the Communion, were sent by such as were of habilitie, to the reliefe of the poore...But vnlesse you can shew that your Masse is vsed as then was, ye shall neuer by the name of Masse (which S. Austine attributed to the true vse of the Cōmunion) proue your priuate Masse to bee a sacrament, vnlesse ye can proue the same vse to bee nowe in your Masse as was then, which is cleane contrary.³⁶

Just as in his notes on more general themes, the quotations on the subject of the Eucharist that fill the margins of MS 319 range from relevant quotations from the Gospels to the citing of authorities to what look potentially like the Scribbler’s own comments, added in English to the Latin text. It is almost inevitable that he would include the word spoken by Christ at the Last Supper, and on f. 1v we find both ‘Christus dividite int(er) vos’ as well as St Paul’s slightly misquoted ‘ad corinthii | quoties conuenitis ad mandu-candum | Alius alium exspecto’.³⁷ One of the main arguments comes from Augustine, whose ‘Sacrificium ergo uisibile inuisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est, sacrum signum est’³⁸ the Scribler he slightly misquotes and then expands on:

Augustinus|Sacramentu(m) est singnum [sic] sacre rei|a deo instituta atque mandata|Sed missa neque mandata neque ~~mandata~~ /instituta/ a deo erat|Ergo non est sacramentum (f. 2v).³⁹

One of the most expansive arguments on the matter is held entirely in English without any reference to more Latin authorities, and occupies the whole of the bottom margin of f. 1v, reading approximately as:

The sacrement duely mynystred according to criste|instrucyon ys to (the) woorthye receyv(er) a spirituall|nourishment (and) is partaker by the spirit of god of all|the fruite of chryste passion (that) ys of al the eo(r)the|meryyd for him and ys thereby Joynyd to crist|and chryst to him

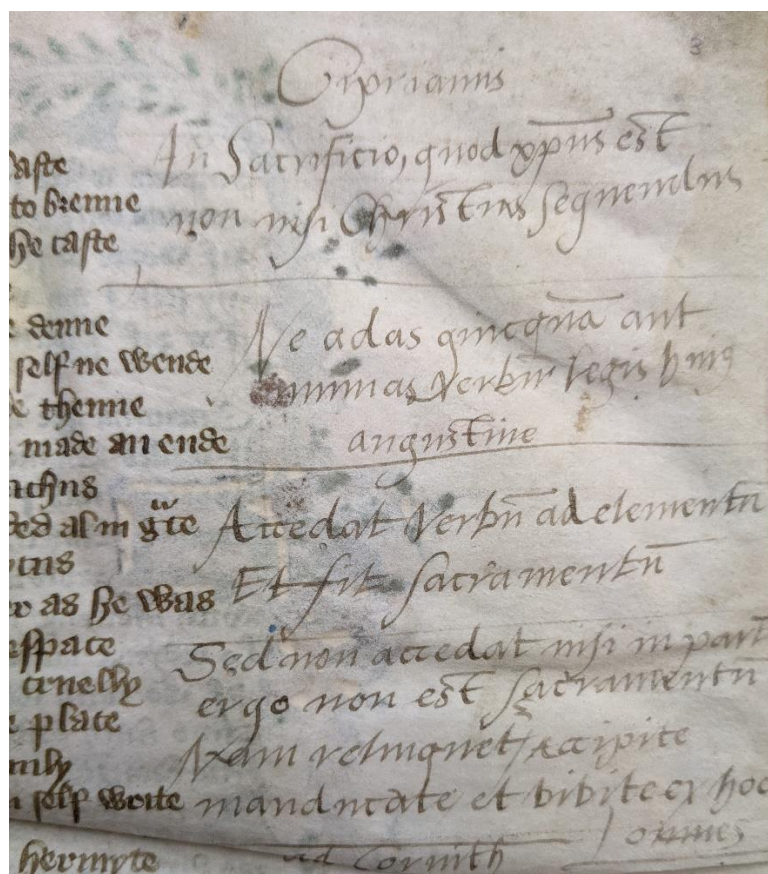
Potentially the most interesting scribbles in terms of their provenance, however, are to be found on f. 3r, because just as with the earlier example from Bernard of Clairvaux on f. 2v, they are quoted in the trial records of John Philpott as recorded by Foxe.

³⁶ Foxe, 1570 ed., 2023. My emphasis.

³⁷ Cf Luke 22:17: ‘Accipite, et dividite inter vos’, ‘Take this, and divide it among yourselves’, and 1 Corinthians 11:33: ‘Itaque fratres mei, cum conuenitis ad manducandum, invicem exspectate’, ‘Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.’

³⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 10, ch. 5, ‘A visible sacrifice, therefore, is a sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice.’ St Augustine, *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI*, transl. Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1952), p. 123.

³⁹ ‘Augustinus: The sacrament is the sign of sacred thing By God instituted and mandated But the mass was neither mandated nor instituted by god. Therefore it is not a sacrament.’



New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, f. 3r

The Scribbler notes down a quote from Cyprianus: ‘In sacrificio, quod xpus est | Non nisi Christus sequendus’,⁴⁰ closely followed by a quotation with echoes of Proverbs as well as Deuteronomy, ‘Ne adas quicquam aut | mi(ni)mas verbis regis hinc’.⁴¹ A third quotation in the sequence, right below these two, is Augustine’s famous comment on the nature of the sacraments: ‘Augustine Accedat verbum(m) ad element(um) | Et sit sacramentu(m)’;⁴² which is here followed by ‘Sed non accedat nisi in parte | Ergo non est sacramentu(m) | Nam relinquet accipite | Manducate Et bibite ex hoc | omnes’ (‘But it is not joined except in part, therefore it is not a sacrament. Since he leaves out accept eat and drink you all of this.’).

The excerpt of John Philpott’s trials which contains these quotations is lengthy, but worth quoting in full to properly highlight the similarities between his words and the scribbles on f. 3r:

Chadsey staggering what he myghte saye, at last said, that these wordes alone (pronounced by the priest) be sufficient to make the bread & the wyne, the very body and bloud of Christ really.

Phil. That is blasphemy to say, and against al the scriptures and Doctors, who affirme that þ^e forme and substance in consecratiō must be obserued, which Christ vsed and

⁴⁰ Cf. *Epistle LXIII*, 14: ‘... in the Sacrifice which Christ offered, no one is to be followed but Christ Himself. Saint Cyprian, *Letters (1–81)*, transl. Rose Bernard Donna (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), pp. 211–2.

⁴¹ Cf. Proverbs 30:6 ‘ne addas quicquam verbis illius’, ‘add thou not unto his words’, or also Deuteronomy 4:2, ‘non addetis ad verbum non addetis ad verbum quod vobis loquor’, ‘ye shall not add unto the word which I command you’.

⁴² Cf. *Tractates on the Gospel of John 80*: ‘The word is added to the elemental substance, and it becomes a sacrament’. St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John 55–111*, transl. John W. Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), p. 117.

dyd institute, as *S. Ciprian sayth. In sacrificio quod Christus est, non nisi Christus sequendus. In the sacrifice which is Christ, only is Christ to bee followed. And by the lawe it is forbidden, to adde or take away from Gods worde.* And *S. Peter sayeth*, if any man speake, let hym speake as the word of God. Wherefore whosoever sayeth that these wordes only, thys is my bodye, do make a reall presence of Christ, without blesse, take & eate, whyche be three as substancially poyntes of the sacrament, as thys is my body, is, he is hyghly disceaue. Therefore *S. Austen sayth, Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum, Let the woorde be ioyned to the element, and it becommeth a sacrament: so that if the entier word of Christes institution bee not obserued in the ministration of a sacrament, it is no sacrament . . .* Wherefore except blessing be made after the worde, which is a due thanksgeuing for our redemption in Christ, and shewing forth of the Lordes death, in such wyse as the congregation may be edified, and also a takyng and eatyng after Christes commaundement, which is not done in the Masse. Therefore these words thys is my body, which are last placed in the institution of the Lordes supper, cannot be verified before the other woordes be performed. for Christ commaunded aswell, take ye, eate ye, as thys is my body.

Chadsey. Christ said, take, eate, this is my body, and not take ye, eate ye.

Phil. No did he Master Doctor? Be not these the words of Christ *accipite, manducate:* and do not these woordes in the plurall number, signifye, take ye, eate ye: and not take thou, eate thou, as you would suppose?⁴³

Particularly in light of the two earlier scribbles containing quotations which can also be found in Foxe in the same record of *The proces and history of maister Ihon Philpot, examined, condemned and martired for the maintenaunce and defense of the Gospels cause againste the Antichristian Sea of Rome*, the similarities here may just be too great to be a coincidence.

It is of course difficult to say how widespread these particular quotations were, or how common their use as arguments to challenge Catholic doctrine and disprove Catholic religious practice and beliefs, so that they might have come to our Scribbler independently of Foxe. Even if they were widespread, however, the sequence of arguments and quotations in MS 319 matches Philpott's extremely closely—the quotation by Cyprianus followed directly by a mention of the unlawfulness of adding to God's words, this in turn followed closely by the quotation from *The City of God*, and finally by what looks like the Scribbler's own paraphrase in Latin of Philpott's argument that in leaving out part of Christ's speech, the wording in the Mass represents only a partial fulfilment of His commandment, and is therefore invalid as a sacrament.

In short, the similarities are sufficient to suggest a different explanation, namely that our Scribbler, potentially Henry Cotton, Bishop of Salisbury, was in fact reading the *Acts and Monuments*, and using the margins of MS 319 to note down a sequence of quotations and arguments from the trial of John Philpott which he considered important enough to record in writing. It is not inconceivable that a man who, according to *ODNB*, was 'especially concerned with the conversion of Roman Catholics', would be interested in a book in which authoritative arguments against Catholicism and Catholic doctrine are used by one of the martyrs of the Protestant faith, and one who was a renowned scholar and a very eloquent orator at that.

Philpott was burned at the stake in 1555, when Cotton was a boy of ten, and the first edition of Foxe's book, which made Philpott's trial records public, was issued in 1563, followed by editions in 1570, 1576, and 1583. John Philpott himself certainly seems to have been a well-known figure in certain circles, and is mentioned by several other participants in the trials outside the record of his own (including the intriguing question 'And whye then dyd Boner blame philpot for singing in the stockes?')⁴⁴

⁴³ Foxe, 1563 ed., 1480. My emphasis.

⁴⁴ Foxe, 1563 ed., 211; 1570 ed., 661; 1576 ed., 544.

Foxe actually gives a quite detailed description of Philpott's background, including a prominent mention of his education and career at New College:

He was of a worshipful house, a knightes sōne borne in Hampshere, brought vp in the Newe college in Oxford, where he studied the ciuil lawe the space of. vi. or vii. yeares, besides the study of other liberall artes, especiall of the tonges, wherein very forwardly he profited, namely in the knowledge of the Hebrue tong. &c. In wytte pregnant and happy, of a genorous courage, in spirit feruent, in religion zelous, and also well practised, (which is no small matter in a true Diuine) of nature and condition plaine and aperte, farre from all flattery, farther from al hipocrisy and deceitful dissimulation: what his manour was, his owne examinations penned if his owne hand without al register, can declare.⁴⁵

In the matter of the scribbles in the margins of New College Library, Oxford, MS 319, there are far too many unknowns and variables to make statements with any kind of surety, but considering the above a rather appealing narrative emerges: of a Bishop of Salisbury who in search of valid arguments against Catholicism, to use in the conversion of learned Catholics, consults the by now widely available trial records of Protestant martyrs, and specifically that of one undoubtedly learned alumnus of a venerable institution with which he certainly has had dealings during his professional career. One could also then start wondering whether maybe the other New College alumnus of the name of Philpott, Thomas, the later owner and eventual donor of the manuscript, would have recognised the arguments and quotations used by his famous namesake, and whether this might have played a part in his acquisition and eventual donation of the codex to the College — or even whether there was an even closer relationship here. Both Philpotts are recorded as hailing from Hampshire, one born at Compton and the other at Micheldever; both of these are close to Winchester, where one served a short stint as archdeacon before his downfall, and the other was educated there at Wykeham's school 50 years later. This kind of speculation, however, would be going a bit too far, and we will have to content ourselves with the quite pleasing way in which the words of one rather unfortunate New College alumnus, through the agency of one fervent admirer of these words, and another apparently also not entirely fortunate New College alumnus, have, in the shape of MS 319 which is kept securely in the college's Bell Tower, finally returned home for good.

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⁴⁵ Foxe, 1563 ed., 1457.