

Some Early Books at Beaumont College

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DURING 1953 the manuscript section of the Windsor Guildhall Exhibition was devoted to a loan collection from Beaumont College, Old Windsor.¹ The items shown had been selected from the Community Library in the College, and were all books acquired by the Reverend Henry Campbell, chaplain to the 18th Earl of Shrewsbury at Grafton Manor, Bromsgrove, in the early years of Victoria's reign. They were bequeathed in 1874 to Beaumont College by Fr. Campbell² and the bulk of them are still preserved there, although certain volumes have recently been transferred to Stonyhurst College and other Jesuit houses in England. In 1940 Sir Sydney Cockerell inspected and wrote MS notes on several, and in 1941 Mr. Bernard Webb published an article on the Kirkstead Psalter;³ otherwise they are little known, and the earlier MSS are not mentioned in Ker's list of Mediaeval Books.⁴ It may therefore be of use to record some additional facts of interest that came to light in the course of preparing the Windsor Exhibition.

The outstanding point of interest concerns the map in the Kirkstead Psalter and supplements Mr. Webb's important article. This psalter, of 162 folios has as its principal contents a Kalendar (ff.8a-14a), collects (ff.14b-19b), the psalms (ff.20a-126b), the canticles (ff.127a-135a) the litany (ff.135b-138b) the office of the dead (ff.139a-141b) and, in the remainder of the volume, a hymnary.

On f.20a a later hand records that it had belonged to Brother William de Wharrun,⁵ and both the Kalendar, the Use and the material included at the opening leaves (ff.4b-6a) show that he must have been a monk of Kirkstead Abbey, Lincolnshire. The Kalendar on f.11b includes for August 25th the feast of St. Louis, who was canonised in 1297; on f.9a, as an addition, there is the obit of John de Luca (Louth) Abbot of Kirkstead, 1315-1331/6.⁶ The Psalter can therefore be dated between 1297 and 1336.

On ff.5-6 there is a long account of a lawsuit between Kirkstead and Revesby Abbeys about Wildmoor, a fen pasture in the district; on f.4b there is a full page map illustrating the division of the pastures between the two abbeys,⁷ and both the account and the map are in a contemporary hand, similar to that which added de Luca's obit—the map can therefore be dated as being of about the first third of the

¹ I am greatly indebted to the Revd. Fr. Rector of Beaumont for permission both to arrange the display and to publish these notes on it.

² *The History of St. Stanislaus' College Beaumont*, 1911, p. 139.

³ *Lincs. Archit. & Arch. Soc. Reports and Papers*, Vol. 2, pp. 141-156.

⁴ *Medieval libraries of Great Britain, an index of surviving books*. Ed. N. R. Ker, 1941.

⁵ *Liber fratris Willelmi de Wharrun' cuius anima maneat in celio amen*.

⁶ *V.C.H., Lincs.*, Vol. II, p.137.

⁷ The account of the lawsuit is printed and the map reproduced and described by Mr. Webb, *op. cit.* Photographic copies of the map have now been placed in the Map Collection of the British Museum.

XIVth century.¹ Its technical interest to the historian of maps is thus considerable. The British Museum Inventory of Early Maps² after listing the famous world map of Richard de Haldingham (c.1300) in Hereford Cathedral, then notes only nine regional maps of Britain as surviving from the middle ages, and 7 of these are of the XVth century. The other two are the Haddon Hall Map of Sherwood Forest of about 1376³—certainly a more developed map than the quite primitive Kirkstead map—and the Gough map of Britain in the Bodleian Library,⁴ which can only be somewhat vaguely dated as “XIVth century”. Thus it seems probable that the Kirkstead map is the earliest known regional map of England.

The second book of interest shown at Windsor was a MS volume entitled “The Booke of Good Condicions Otherwyse called the Sophiloge of Wysdom” a book of 119 folios in a XVth century hand with initials and marginal decoration in gold, blue, red and green. It is anonymous, but investigation proves that it is an unknown translation of Jacques Le Grand’s “Book of Good Manners”, first written about 1400. Its author was an Augustinian friar (1350–c.1423) who had acquired fame not only as an ambassador from Burgundy but also as the only man who had dared denounce Isabella of Bavaria to her face. In the book he tells all orders of society how to deal with the particular deadly sins most likely to afflict them. This moral treatise became popular and was later printed in a different translation by Caxton,⁵ Pynson,⁶ and Wynkyn de Worde.⁷ Several other MS versions are known, and it may be worth recording that the translation by John Shirley of 1440 in the British Museum (Add.MSS.5467) entitled “Bonnes Mures” is erroneously said in its text to have been initially translated from the Latin into French by Master John of Wiegney (J. de Vignay), of the University of Orleans. Mr. A. I. Doyle of the University Library, Durham, suggests that this mistake may have arisen from the fact that MS.Ff.I.33 in Cambridge University Library, which belonged to Shirley, has the “Livre de bonnes Meures” followed by “Le livre des eschez translate par frere Jehan de Vignay”.⁸

The third book of importance was a beautifully illuminated MS of 38ff. entitled on the spine (f.1 with the heading is wanting) “The Abbey of St. Denis and the Kings of France”. It is in French and is dated in the text as written in 1495. There are many decorated initials, some including birds or animals, many in a rather unusual pale violet shade. The text opens with an account of Dagobert, son

¹ I am most grateful to Mr. A. J. Collins and Mr. R. A. Skelton of the British Museum for their help in dating the Psalter and its map.

² A MS. list recently compiled and kept by the Map Department.

³ In the possession of the Duke of Rutland at Haddon Hall.

⁴ MS. Gough. Gen. Top. 16.

⁵ In 1486–7; there is a copy in the British Museum, IB.55125.

⁶ Dated 30 September 1494; the translation is Caxton’s. B.M., IB.55494.

⁷ Dated 10 December 1507. B.M., C.40.d. 6.

⁸ My thanks are due to Mr. Doyle for this suggestion. Mr. Doyle is at present working on the MSS. of John Shirley.

of King Clotaire, and of Saint Denis. The foundation of the abbey of St. Denis is described, followed by an account of pilgrimages to the shrine by Kings of France and of subsequent victories in battle. On the first paste-down is an inverted signature DIANE BABOU with a monogram of interlaced D's and S's; on the last paste-down is the signature CHARLES, with the motto MANQUES AU RETOUR. M. Bernard Mahieu, Archivist at the Archives Nationales, Paris, tells me that these signatures are respectively those of Diane, daughter of John Babou, the Master General of the French Artillery, and her husband Charles, Seigneur de Montoiron, who were married about 1560.

The remaining eight books displayed at Windsor were less remarkable, though each had certain features of interest. Chief amongst the MSS was a Vulgate Bible of the XIIIth century, a beautifully written example of the well known Paris work of the time. It had once been the property of the Carthusian monastery of S. Marie des Prés, Villeneuve, and during Robespierre's reign of terror it was saved from burning by a resourceful English Benedictine.¹ Besides a French Book of Hours, of the late XVth century, there was also a small English Antiphonar (Sarum Use) of the early XVth century. Four well known early presses contributed a book apiece to the display. The earliest was a splendid *Mamotrectus* by Nicholas Jensen, of Venice, 1479; then came an imperfect copy of Wynkyn de Worde's *Ordinarye of Crysten Men* (1502), and a Book of Hours of the Use of Rome. The last was a typical specimen of the very skilled work being produced by a few Paris printers to outrival MS illuminated books of devotion; the Beaumont book has profuse and delicate decoration and marginal ornament and is in every way a superb piece of work. It is by T. Kerver (1503). Finally, there was shown a product of the most famous press of all—the Aldine of Venice, a small edition of *Pariseti Theopoeiae* (1550).

The display has now been returned to Beaumont College, and it is understood that the books will continue to be preserved there. Moreover, by kind permission of the Rector of the College, they may be made available for that further research that their striking and diverse interest certainly demands.

¹ I have printed Fr. Campbell's account of these adventures in *The Beaumont Review*, Vol. XXIV, p. 122.