

‘Written in the Book of Life’: Building the Libraries of Medieval English Hospitals and Almshouses¹

by

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And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

(Revelation 20. 12)

MINDFUL OF THE FATE awaiting them at the Last Judgement, the patrons of medieval hospitals and almshouses were understandably anxious that their good deeds should provide eloquent testimony on their behalf. The desire for salvation, to be achieved through the grateful prayers of the sick poor and the intercessionary offices of the Church, proved a powerful incentive for charity. The transaction was often blatant. At the north-east end of the church of the Heiligen Geist hospital in Lübeck stands a recently restored wall painting of about 1320, which depicts Christ in majesty with the ‘four beasts’ of Revelation (4. 6–8) about his throne. The book of life lies open in his left hand, and in a semicircle around him are named portraits of twelve leading benefactors and clergy, each requesting prayers for his immortal soul. The priests who served the high altar below probably used the mural as an *aide-mémoire* when calling upon the congregation to remember the Christian departed.²

English hospitals, too, were lavishly decorated with eschatological imagery, although most of it was destroyed at the Dissolution. The same concerns that exercised the worthies of Lübeck are, however, still apparent

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² See Gustav Schaumann, ‘Das Heiligen-Geist-Hospital’, in *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck*, vol. 1 (Lübeck, 1906), pp. 465–66, and Ulrich Pietsch, ‘Die Wandmalereien in Heiligen-Geist-Hospital zu Lübeck — Eine Urkunde auf der Wand’, in *Archäologie in Lübeck* (Lübeck, 1980), pp. 74–75. Similar visual reminders were, for example, to be found at the Sherburn leper hospital, County Durham, where the names (and probably the images or coats of arms) of Bishops Le Puiset and Kellaw were displayed above the altar; see George Allan, *Collections Relating [to] Sherburn Hospital in the County Palatinate of Durham* (privately printed, 1771), unpaginated, sub ‘Bishop Langley’s Statutes’.

in surviving statutes, such as those compiled around 1400 for the almshouse at Saffron Walden, which was run by the town's 'most worshipful parishioners [...] for the remedy of their own souls'.³ The Latin text ends with the pious invocation:

May they long be upon the earth and the dew of heaven be a blessing upon them and may their names be written in the book of life with the just and chosen of God, and in the day of the tremendous judgement they shall come finally together among the sons of God.⁴

For some hopeful benefactors this goal was to be achieved, quite literally and appropriately, with pen and parchment through the medium of the book. John and Eleanor Butler, for example, gave £40 to build a dwelling for the almshouse priest, along with

vij bokes boundyn be chenys, of the wheche vij bokes on ys clepyd Pupilla oculi of the prys of xls. The secounde a peyre decrees prys of xxs. the iij is a peyre decretals of prys xxs. the iiij a texte of the sexte & Clementynys with dyverse constitucyouns of the prys of j Marc [13s. 4d.]. the v a book of dyvynyte clepyd Jon Crysosteme of prys of ij Marc. the vj book ys a postylle of the apocalypse with serteine croniclys of prys of j Marc. the vij book is a book of sarmouns of pris of j Marc.⁵

Worth an impressive total of £7 6s. 8d., this collection included a popular late-fourteenth-century manual for confessors (the *Pupilla oculi*),⁶ extracts from the five books of Decretals compiled in about 1240 on the orders of Pope Gregory IX; a composite volume containing the appendices to this great work of canon law issued, respectively, by Boniface VIII ('the sexte')⁷ and Clement V ('Clementynys');⁸ an unspecified treatise by the prolific theologian, St John Chrysostom (d. 407); and, significantly, a commentary on the Book of Revelation (the 'postylle of the apocalypse'). Its composition reflects the needs and priorities of the more prosperous late-medieval almshouses, whose priests were responsible for the education and moral

³ Francis W. Steer, 'The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, n.s. 25 (1955-60), 161-221 (p. 166).

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 170-71, where a parallel text in both English and Latin is provided.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 188.

⁶ See Jonathan Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', in *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England*, ed. by David M. Smith, Borthwick Studies in History, 1 (York, 1991), pp. 87-163 (pp. 102-03).

⁷ Steer, 'Statutes', p. 189, mistakenly assumes this must have been a copy of the office of sext, part of the *opus Dei*. A handsome early-fourteenth-century illuminated copy of the *Sextus liber Decretalium Bonifacii Pape Octavi*, with extensive marginal glosses, was owned by one of the priests lodging in St Giles's hospital, Norwich, and was claimed by the house ('debetur hospitali Sancti Egidii de Norwico') perhaps as security for an unpaid loan; see British Library, MS Royal 9.E.ii, fols 1^r, 6^r, 156^r, 158^r.

⁸ Steer, 'Statutes', p. 189, suggests that 'Clementynys' refers either to the epistles of St Clement (c. 96) or the text of the 'Missa Clementis pape pro mortalitate evitanda'. It is, in fact, the *Liber Septimus*, or Constitutions, promulgated by Pope Clement just before his death in 1314. This volume would have contained the rulings of the Council of Vienne of 1311-12, which included measures for the reform of hospitals; see *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Norman Tanner, 2 vols (Georgetown, 1990), 1, pp. 336-401 (pp. 374-76). A fine collection of works on canon law, including all these titles and more, was owned by Elysingspital, London; see n. 52 below.

guidance of their charges. As we shall see, these books might be borrowed by any local clergyman wishing 'to stodye, labour & travayle for mannes soule' and 'to preche and teche his pareschenurs',⁹ but they were primarily intended for use within the almshouse itself.

Carefully selected on the dual criteria of merit as well as need, a significant proportion of the residents of English almshouses were assumed to be literate. The 1424 statutes of Richard Whittington's London foundation provided each of the thirteen inmates with 'a Celle or a litell house [. . .] that he may a loon and by hym selfe with owte lette of eny other persoon intende to the contemplacion of god'.¹⁰ When not engaged in a prescribed round of church services, the almsmen were, furthermore, ordered to live quietly, so that they might 'occupie hem self in prayer or reading or in labour of hir hondes'.¹¹ We do not know what Whittington's bedesmen actually read, but the gift of 'a good bok ffor holy men or wemen' to William Brown's almshouse, Stamford, by one of its first chaplains suggests that vernacular devotional literature was generally available in such institutions. This particular volume contains advice on the emulation of the saints through 'dyuyn contemplacion' and other disciplines, and opens with an exhortation to the reader to pray for the donor's salvation.¹² It is unclear if the consignment of twenty-eight books, despatched in 1466 along with other valuables by Alice, duchess of Suffolk, to her manor at Ewelme, Oxfordshire, was intended for eventual use in the nearby school and almshouse that she and her late husband had established some thirty years earlier.¹³ The fourteen leather-bound service books probably found their way to its imposing chapel, where she was soon to be buried in a tomb of almost regal proportions. Given the high educational standards demanded of them by the founders, the staff would have welcomed the addition of works by Christine de Pisan and other French authors to their library, while readings from Lydgate's version of *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* would have proved eminently suitable for elderly bedesmen, nearing the end of their own spiritual odyssey. We can, however, only speculate on this point. Nor is there any means of determining how or when the almshouse founded at Leicester between 1513 and 1522 by William Wyggeston acquired its

⁹ Steer, 'Statutes', p. 190.

¹⁰ Jean Imray, *The Charity of Richard Whittington* (London, 1968), p. 112.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² British Library, MS Harley 2372, fol. 1^r. This English text of the *Speculum Inclusorum*, a guide for recluses, is described in P. Livario Oliger, 'Speculum Inclusorum auctore anonymo anglico saeculi XIV', *Lateranum*, n.s. 4:1 (1938), 23–30, and is ed. Marta Powell Harley as *The Myroure of Recluses: A Middle English Translation of Speculum Inclusorum* (Madison, 1995). Brown, a wealthy merchant of the Calais Staple, founded his almshouse in 1475, and ran it personally until his death, fourteen years later. The first book of accounts (which are heavily abridged) contains disappointingly few references to the house's library, although in 1501–02 the 'byndyng off j dyryge book of the chapell [for the office of the dead] cost 6d. and repairs to the 'old porthouse [portiforium or breviary]', 2s. (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.352, fols 1^{r-v}, 38A^r).

¹³ J. A. A. Goodall, *God's House at Ewelme* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 287.

collection of thirteen medieval books, although two, at least, may have been rescued during the 1540s from the nearby hospital and college of St Mary in the Newarke, where the family had recently endowed a chantry.¹⁴ The emphasis on sermons and devotional literature aimed at the individual conscience none the less conforms to the pattern discerned above, and suggests that on the very eve of the Dissolution patrons were anxious to instil the discipline of the confessional.

The acquisition and widespread use of books were not confined to a handful of prestigious institutions endowed by the crown, baronage, or mercantile elite. But only these larger and richer houses undertook the range of pastoral, devotional, and liturgical activities that necessitated the creation of a working library. This article will first of all examine the substantial personal expenditure on books of many kinds sustained by the masters and patrons of medieval hospitals, now dwarfed by the scale of losses at the Dissolution. It will then investigate the motives of donors, whose desire for personal commemoration through the medium of the book went hand in hand with the development of an increasingly elaborate liturgical round. In addition to their need for service books, hospitals made use of a range of confessional literature for the consolation and enlightenment of staff and patients; but, as collections grew, so too did the problems of safekeeping and security. Ostensibly practical measures for the storage of books served the more uplifting purpose of providing spiritual solace for the sick, and, above all, of securing the donor's place in paradise.

The Scale of Investment and the Impact of the Dissolution

The surge of almshouse foundations in the later medieval period was in part a reaction against what had gone before. Dissatisfaction with the older-style, open-ward hospitals of twelfth- and thirteenth-century England because of their apparent failure either to commemorate the souls of patrons or succour the deserving poor was one reason for change.¹⁵ Yet many of these hospitals, driven by the need to compensate for a slump in their rental income in the years after the Black Death, had invested heavily in liturgical resources,

¹⁴ These books are listed in N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1969–92), III (1983), pp. 101–12, and include five volumes of sermons. One of these, containing Wycliffite sermons in English, is described more fully in Valerie Edden, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist XV: Manuscripts in Midland Libraries* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. xv, xxii–iii, 32–35. Among the other texts are an abbreviated version of the *Speculum beatorum* (on vices and virtues), the *Oculus sacerdotis* (a general *vademecum* for priests), the pseudo-St Bernard's *Speculum consciencie*, two books containing works by the mystic, Richard Rolle, extracts from the *Gesta Romanorum*, Littleton's *Tenures* in French, and assorted theological texts. For the almshouse and chantry, see *A Calendar of Charters and Other Documents Relating to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester*, ed. by A. Hamilton Thompson (Leicester, 1933), pp. xvii–xxiv, 1–16, 18–29.

¹⁵ As is rightly emphasized in Nicholas Orme and Margaret Webster, *The English Hospital 1070–1570* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 1–12, lack of surviving evidence makes it impossible to determine the overall number, let alone the type or duration, of medieval hospital and almshouse foundations with any degree of accuracy. Their figures suggest that by 1539 England possessed at least 585 functioning institutions, most of which were very modest indeed.

hoping to attract new benefactors through the provision of sung masses and other intercessionary rituals. In a fiercely competitive market, they had little choice but to emulate the high standards of musicianship and baroque display to be found in the more affluent parish churches, of which St Andrew Hubbard, London, and St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, furnish particularly striking examples.¹⁶ Although the importance attached to the spiritual welfare of patients in England's larger hospitals has long been recognized, the scale and comparative splendour of the facilities offered to patrons have received far less attention. Indeed, the widespread loss of archives and architectural fabric has led historians consistently to underestimate the dominant position of such institutions in the urban landscape. Evidence of the part played by St Mary's, Bishopsgate (London), and St Giles's, Norwich, in the religious life of the civic and mercantile elite, as well as of the educational and pastoral work undertaken by the staff of comparatively modest hospitals and almshouses, suggests, however, that our vision has hitherto been rather blinkered.¹⁷ The ownership and use of books by hospitals is, for example, a neglected area of research, even on the part of specialists.¹⁸ Yet it confirms how seriously the richer foundations took their obligations towards the Christian departed, while also belying the still common assumption that most houses had entered a period of terminal decline long before the Dissolution.

Some parts of the broader canvas will always remain impressionistic. With a few notable exceptions, the task of reconstructing the libraries of individual hospitals and almshouses is now impossible. This is largely because the inventories of books, vestments, plate, and other valuables, which, after 1311, new masters were required to compile on assuming office,

¹⁶ See *The Church Records of St Andrew Hubbard, East Cheap, c. 1450–c. 1570*, ed. by Clive Burgess, London Record Society, 34 (London, 1999), and W. H. St John Hope, 'Inventories of the Parish Church of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 14 (1901), 153–240.

¹⁷ The diverse functions of the medieval hospital are outlined in Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, pp. 49–68; a gazetteer of surviving remains may be found in Elizabeth Prescott, *The English Medieval Hospital, 1050–1640* (Melksham, 1992). For relevant case studies, see Christopher Thomas, Barney Sloane, and Christopher Phillpotts, *Excavations at the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital, London* (London, 1997), pp. 45–48, 65, 68, 80, 94–95, 119–22; Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: The Life, Death and Resurrection of an English Hospital* (Stroud, 1999), ch. 4, passim; eadem, 'The Eighth Comfortable Work: Education and the Medieval English Hospital', in *The Church and Learning in Late Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Barrie Dobson*, ed. by Caroline M. Barron and Jenny Stratford (Stamford, 2002, forthcoming), pp. 374–401; and Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1987), chs 5 and 6.

¹⁸ The topic is not, for example, mentioned in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. III: 1400–1557, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge, 1999).

rarely survived beyond the Dissolution, and were often lost long before.¹⁹ Being of no practical value to the new owners of confiscated property, such evidence was usually destroyed, perhaps wilfully by those of an evangelical persuasion. What must have been an extensive list of books and plate owned by St Bartholomew's hospital, Buckland by Dover, in about 1372 was, for example, excised from the house's sole surviving cartulary.²⁰ Nor can we rely upon the surveys undertaken by royal agents at the Dissolution. The commissioners who recorded the possessions of England's larger hospitals during the 1530s and 1540s were solely concerned with the market value of each item, and showed scant regard for service books, which might have cost a small fortune to produce but were now regarded as worthless relics of a benighted past.

It is, nevertheless, apparent that for decades, if not centuries, such institutions had been accumulating impressive libraries. John de Hermesthorpe, master of the hospital of St Katherine, London, and keeper of the privy wardrobe in the nearby Tower, is said personally to have spent over £66 on books, chalices, and ornaments for the house during his forty years in office. A visitation report of 1377, produced about a decade after he assumed the post, commented favourably on levels of provision, and further gifts from royal and baronial patrons were reputedly made throughout his mastership.²¹ The long inventory of vestments, plate, and ecclesiastical furnishings compiled by Henry VIII's commissioners in March 1546 further suggests that such a prominent choral institution must have assembled a sizeable collection of liturgical volumes, but only a few were then listed. Not surprisingly, two 'bokes with pictours on theym of siluer parcell gylte' attracted attention because of the resale value of the bindings, but the fourteen 'grete bokes' in the choir were appraised at only one shilling each, and a 'flat chiste with v bokes in it' at even less.²² On their acquisition of St Giles's hospital in the following year, the Protestant rulers of Norwich gutted the chancel, removed the stained glass, and destroyed the service

¹⁹ A problem discussed in Carole Rawcliffe, 'Passports to Paradise: How English Medieval Hospitals and Almshouses Kept their Archives' (*Archives*, 2002, forthcoming). N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edn (London, 1964), pp. 81, 90, 125, notes three hospital inventories listing books (Ewelme, Gateshead, and Elsingspital, London); and Andrew G. Watson, in his *Supplement to the Second Edition of Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, ed. Ker (London, 1987), pp. 63, 69, records three more (Southampton and the hospitals of St Mary and St Cross, Winchester). Significant lists of books also survive for St Bartholomew's, London (n. 27, below), St Giles's, Kieper (n. 39), St Anthony's, London (n. 68), St John's, Winchester (n. 80), and the two York hospitals in Fossgate and Micklegate (nn. 81 and 82).

²⁰ The contents page of the cartulary, meticulously compiled by two monks of Dover priory in 1373, reveals that, *inter alios*, lists of church ornaments, an inventory, and a copy of a visitation report (fols 107^r–12^v) were cut out by a subsequent owner (Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.335, fol. 1^r).

²¹ Catherine Jamison, *The History of the Royal Hospital of St Katherine* (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 34–38.

²² Public Record Office, E315/408, fols 69^r–75^v. A similar inventory of the goods of St Mary's, Bishopsgate, a larger and richer house than St Katherine's, records only one volume, a 'gospell boke parcell gylte', which together with 'the garnysshinge of a crosse' produced thirty-nine ounces of silver (PRO, E117/12/29, fol. 3^v).

books, pages from at least one antiphoner being used to bind the annual accounts. One leaf from the fourteenth-century book of ordinances kept by St John's hospital, Cambridge, was likewise used to protect a post-Dissolution land-survey. Together with scraps of music and fragments torn from the house's copy of St Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, this represents virtually all that is left of a once substantial collection.²³

John Aubrey's elegiac account of a world where 'manuscripts flew about like butterflies' is often cited as evidence of this protracted and comprehensive process of attrition. His childhood fascination with the coloured scraps of parchment left over from once great monastic libraries, and of the havoc wrought by gunners, brewers, and glovers on 'many good pieces of antiquity' is justly famous.²⁴ Hospital and almshouse libraries, being generally smaller and more functional, fared particularly badly. Only thirty-four surviving volumes, at best, can now be confidently attributed to sixteen specific institutions.²⁵ It is, however, apparent from tantalizing scraps of evidence that the richer hospitals, such as St Bartholomew's, Smithfield (worth £305 a year net in 1535), accumulated impressive collections, notably — but by no means exclusively — for liturgical purposes. The late twelfth-century Foundation Book of the hospital recounts the miraculous discovery of a stolen antiphoner, 'the whiche was necessarie to them that schulde synge ynne the chirche, [i]n that, specially, that ther was nat *at that tyme* grete plente of bokys yn the place' (my italics).²⁶ As this quotation from an English translation of about 1400 suggests, the deficit was later made good, partly through the generosity of successive masters. It is unclear if all the books recovered at some point after 1424 by the entrepreneurial John Wakering from the estate of his late predecessor had been removed from, or left to, the hospital, although the latter seems more likely, as one of them bears an inscription to this effect. They comprised a large, fully annotated, antiphoner for the choir (valued at £8); a breviary of similar dimensions reserved for the master's own use (£10); an annotated breviary complete with a legendary,

²³ See Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, plates 42 and 43, and p. 226; Rubin, *Charity and Community*, p. 180. Being less offensive to Protestant reformers, St John's copy of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* survived intact; see n. 104 below.

²⁴ John Aubrey, *The Natural History of Wiltshire*, ed. by John Britton (London, 1847), pp. 78–79.

²⁵ These figures are derived from Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, pp. 13, 23, 86, 113, 123, 125–26, 127, 140, 153, 179, 182, 218; and Watson, *Supplement*, pp. 43, 47, 51. They include two of the thirteen manuscripts eventually acquired by Wyggeston's almshouse, Leicester (see above, n. 14), as these are known to have belonged to the college and hospital of St Mary in the Newarke, Leicester, before the Dissolution. The psalter that Watson (*Supplement*, p. 51) attributes to the library of St Giles's hospital, Norwich, on the ground that it mentions the obit of a presumed hospital brother, almost certainly belonged successively to the Dereham and Crimleshams families (British Library, MS Harley 1688, fol. 3^v) and has therefore not been included here. Nor have the six volumes described by Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, p. 65, as belonging to the Trinitarian friars at Mottenden, Kent, since this house did not actually function as a hospital (*Victoria County History: Kent*, vol. 11, ed. by William Page (London, 1926), pp. 205–08).

²⁶ *The Book of the Foundation of St Bartholomew's Church in London*, ed. by Sir Norman Moore, Early English Text Society, o.s. 163 (London, 1923), pp. 19–20. An outline history of the hospital may be found in *Victoria County History: London*, vol. 1, ed. by William Page (London, 1909), pp. 520–25.

and another the size of a big book, or 'cowcher' (together worth £13 6s. 8d.); a large new legendary both for saints' days and the temporal cycle (£12); a complete fourteenth-century Italian Bible with psalter (£16); and a more modestly priced manual (13s. 4d.).²⁷ To this fast-expanding 'common library' Wakering himself added another Bible, which the Tudor antiquary, John Stow, was later to describe as 'the fayrest I haue seene, written in large velame, by a brother of that house named Iohn Cok[e] at the age of 68 years'.²⁸ Having initially trained as a goldsmith and illuminator, Cok devoted over four decades to augmenting and embellishing the hospital's store of books. He compiled at least one miscellany of theological texts for the house, the usefulness of such confessional literature as the *Speculum consciencie* and the *Speculum peccatoris* of the pseudo-St Bernard being enhanced by his inclusion of five introductory pages neatly tabulating basic tenets of Christian belief, as well as lists of vices, virtues, and other information deemed necessary for the pursuit of salvation. The book concludes with eight diagrams of the human hand, mapped out as a mnemonic aid to meditation and the scrutiny of the individual conscience.²⁹ Cok also added an index, list of contents, and other apparatus to the Bible retrieved by John Wakering,³⁰ wrote part of the house's magnificent cartulary, and began making notes for what might have developed into the only chronicle produced in an English medieval hospital.³¹

John Colman, the last of the pre-Dissolution masters of St Mark's hospital, Bristol, was himself involved in the production of books, at least to the extent of copying out part of one volume of Latin devotional works by Richard Rolle, and some ten pages of another containing miscellaneous

²⁷ *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, ed. by Nellie J. M. Kerling (London, 1973), p. 175. A note in the Bible, now Wolfenbüttel, Herzog Augustus Bibliothek, MS Extravagantes 25.1, records that John White, late master of the hospital, 'dedit hanc bibliam mediante magistro Johanne Wakering successorum [sic] suum ad opus ipsius hospitalis ibidem in perpetuum permansuram [sic]' (Watson, *Supplement*, p. 104).

²⁸ John Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. by C. L. Kingsford, 2 vols (Oxford, 1908), II, p. 23. Stow further reported (p. 360) that 'since the spoyle of that Library I haue seene this booke in the custody of my worshipfull frend, M[aster] Walter Cope'. Cope, who shared a common interest in the medieval past, served as an exchequer official, and was thus well placed to stock his library with the spoils of the Dissolution.

²⁹ British Library, Add. MS 10392, fols 2^v-5^r (tables), 178^r-82^r (hands). The *Liber specialis gratie* of Mechthild of Hackeborn, well known in England, advocated the use of the human hand as an aid to meditation; see Jonathan Hughes, *The Religious Life of Richard III* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 149, 155. Such devices were also deployed in teaching Latin grammar; see, for example, early printed copies of John Holt's *Lac puerorum* (*Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, III, plate 22.2). A folio-size volume of tables and mnemonic diagrams of this date, owned by St John's hospital, Exeter, now contains two incomplete drawings of hands, ready for the addition of a text, although they may have been made later; see Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 156, fol. 4r, and below, n. 48. It is, of course, possible that the scientific interests of some of the staff in this hospital extended to palmistry, which at that time was regarded as an important adjunct to medicine; see *The Works of John Metham*, ed. by Hardin Craig, Early English Text Society, o.s. 152 (London, 1916), pp. xix-xxix, 84-117.

³⁰ Watson, *Supplement*, p. 104.

³¹ *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, pp. 3, 6, 8, 13-14, appendices I and II.

theological texts.³² After each of these sections he drew his own distinctive monogram, which also appears on the first folio of an anonymous early-fifteenth-century admonitory treatise offering moral and spiritual guidance to the beleaguered Christian. This was bound together with a companion piece by Albertus Magnus on the virtues of the soul and eventually presented (with a request for prayers) by Colman to a member of his circle.³³ Significantly, given the fact that it was probably intended for a hospital, the treatise includes sections on the value of reading ('de studio legendi') both as a means of fostering charity and of overcoming physical suffering through the use of *exempla*.³⁴ Yet, although neither Colman nor his predecessors were conspicuous absentees, it would be unsafe to assume that they devoted much time to consoling the sick. Like St Bartholomew's, their hospital had diverted a substantial proportion of its resources to liturgical spectacle and the upkeep of a choir school, which may have helped poor scholars and affluent patrons, but left fewer resources for the truly destitute.³⁵ To expect otherwise would be to misunderstand the changing priorities of such institutions. As David Wallour, canon of York Minster and master of St John's hospital, Ripon, observed when restocking the chapel out of his own pocket in the 1340s, the proper eleemosynary function of the house was the provision of spiritual medicine through the celebration of Mass and the support of poor boys training locally for the priesthood.³⁶

A tendency on the part of historians to stress the abuses and corruption all too evident in several late medieval hospitals obscures the fact that many senior clergy gave generously to the establishments in their care, underwriting costly building schemes and leaving testamentary bequests of vestments, plate, furnishings, and books to embellish the liturgy. Hoping to inspire the intercessionary prayers of priests and brethren, as well as to ensure conformity to the use of Sarum, Martin of St Cross (d. 1259), sometime master of the Sherburn leper house, County Durham, left a book decorated with silver ('textus meus argenteus'), three antiphoners (complete with psalters and hymnals), two graduals, a customal, and a legendary as a

³² Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 38, fols 28^r–34^r; St John's College, Oxford, MS 173, fols 35^r–44^r. See Albinia De la Mare, *Catalogue of the Collection of Medieval Manuscripts Bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, by James P. R. Lyell (Oxford, 1971), pp. 105–07, and plate 7a, for a discussion of Colman's hand and monogram.

³³ Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 618. A record of the gift to John Bradley, clerk, and of Colman's previous ownership appears at the very end, on fol. 139^r.

³⁴ *ibid.*, fols 30^r–36^r.

³⁵ See *The Cartulary of St Mark's Hospital, Bristol*, ed. by C. D. Ross, Bristol Record Society, 21 (Bristol, 1959), pp. xiii–xx.

³⁶ He presented a missal and annotated breviary; see *Memorials of the Church of SS Peter and Wilfrid, Ripon*, vol. II, ed. by J. T. Fowler, Surtees Society, 78 (Durham, 1884), pp. 29–30. The troubled history of this house is recounted in *Victoria County History: Yorkshire*, vol. III, ed. by William Page (London, 1913), pp. 327–28.

permanent memorial.³⁷ Gifts from the late warden, John de Denton (d. 1325), likewise provided St Edmund's hospital, Gateshead, with six of its best books (two missals, a gradual, two psalters, and a breviary), bringing the stock up to a respectable seventeen.³⁸ Robert Wycliffe (d. 1423), chancellor and receiver general of Bishop Langley of Durham, took his duties as master of St Giles's hospital, Kepier, near Durham, no less seriously, leaving the house a *Catholicon* (Latin dictionary), book of gospels, breviary, and missal in his will. By 1507 the hospital's library contained at least twenty-six other liturgical volumes and works of theology, including a Bible inlaid with gold, seven antiphoners, five missals, four graduals, three processional, two legendaries, two manuals, a work by the ubiquitous St John Chrysostom, the *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine (d. 1298), and a book of homilies (*Fasciculus temporum*). The ownership of two lecterns with 'steined' or painted covers and a pair of organs suggests that, like so many hospitals of the period, St Giles's boasted a choir trained in polyphony.³⁹

It is now impossible to tell how much of their collective wealth — or the wealth of their patrons — such men spent on the improvement of English hospitals, but we have some idea of the expenditure sustained by one remarkable individual, who became master of the hospital of St Cross, Winchester, in 1383. On assuming office, John Campeden, a canon lawyer and intimate of the great reformer, Bishop William of Wykeham, took possession of forty-four liturgical volumes stored in the house's *antiqua libraria*.⁴⁰ Over the next twenty-four years he and his friends allegedly spent almost £2,000 on rebuilding and refurbishment. Sixteen new additions to the library alone cost £66 8s. od., four purchases in particular (two great annotated missals and two annotated breviaries, together worth over £46) representing a conspicuous, indeed ostentatious, investment in liturgical

³⁷ *Wills and Inventories Illustrative of the History, Manners, Language, Statistics, etc. of the Northern Counties of England*, vol. 1, ed. by J. Raine, Surtees Society, 2 (London, 1835), pp. 6–11. John Newton (d. 1427), another master of the Sherburn leper hospital, was a notable bibliophile and indexer, whose collection included both the *Incendium amoris* (corrected by him through reference to a text written in the author's own hand) and the *Emendatio vitae* of Richard Rolle; see *ibid.*, pp. 77–78; Hope Emily Allen, *Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 215–16, 243, 144; and *Victoria County History: Durham*, vol. II, ed. by William Page (London, 1907), p. 116.

³⁸ *Wills and Inventories*, I, pp. 22–23. Denton also left vestments and plate to the hospital.

³⁹ *Wills and Inventories*, I, pp. 66–68; *Testamenta Eboracensia*, vol. 1, ed. by James Raine, Surtees Society, 4 (London, 1836), pp. 403–04; PRO, CP40/1009, rots 581A–B'. For a history of this hospital, see Dorothy M. Meade, *Kepier Hospital* (Durham, 1995).

⁴⁰ Eleven antiphoners, ten graduals (four for the Mass of the Virgin Mary), four psalters, three legendaries, two processional, two books of sequences, two manuals, a book of collects, an epistle-book, a gospel-book, a portable breviary, an ordinal, a martyrology, a set of institutes (probably the Institutes of Justinian), a quire 'de parabolis Salomonis', and a Bible in two parts are recorded in the inventory of 1383 that Campeden had copied into the *Liber primus*, or first of the hospital's three cartularies; see British Library, MS Harley 1616, fol. 58^v. A transcript by the antiquary, Joseph Baigent (d. 1918), of a fuller version of the inventory, now lost, differs in some points but presents the same total; see British Library, Add. MS 39976, fols 81^v–83^r.

spectacle.⁴¹ Even allowing for the fact that Bishop Wykeham almost certainly helped to finance these ambitious plans, the outlay on books, which far exceeded the annual gross income of most English almshouses and *leprosaria*, is especially striking.⁴² Large-format service books were among the most expensive to produce in later medieval England. Reflecting both a competitive desire to keep abreast of fashion and a more enduring reverence for the word of God, they were written with considerable artistry in a special hand on vellum of the best quality. The addition of musical notation and illumination pushed up the price, as did the lavish clasps and bindings, often inlaid with precious metals, which catered to the luxury end of the market. Cheap paper copies produced at speed might cost just a few shillings, but even they represented a significant expenditure in a period of declining rents and rising prices.⁴³ Like many English nunneries, which stood on an equally precarious financial footing, hospitals relied upon the largesse of friends and patrons to provide them with books of this quality.⁴⁴

The response was often gratifying. A desire to improve the intellectual calibre of diocesan clergy, along with the steady proliferation of graduates in senior and middle-ranking administrative positions, meant that the management of England's more affluent hospitals was increasingly entrusted to men of academic repute. Ten or twelve of the masters of St Giles's, Norwich, appointed between 1430 and 1546 had, for example, attended university,⁴⁵ and St John's hospital, Exeter, could also boast a distinguished cadre of scholars. John Westcote, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Theology, and another of Bishop Wykeham's protégés, moved back and forth between Oxford University, where he lectured in geometry, and his patron's college at Winchester, of which he became master in 1389. Almost thirty years later, while warden of St John's, he donated his copy of the sermons of Jacobus de

⁴¹ British Library, Add. MS 39976, fols 83^v–84^r. The other books were three graduals (together worth £6 10s.), two legends, five processions, 'Bartholomeus de Cascibus [sic]' (probably the popular *Summa de casibus conscientiae* of the fourteenth-century Dominican, Bartholomew of Pisa), and an exposition of biblical vocabulary bound together with the *Philobiblon* of Richard of Bury, bishop of Durham (d. 1345). A copy of the last was also owned by the hospital of St Thomas Acon, London; see British Library, MS Royal 15.C.xvi, fols 59^v–71^r. St Mark's, Bristol, and St John's, Exeter, were among the other houses to acquire a biblical dictionary; see Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 13, and Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 156, fols 16^v–60^r.

⁴² Although it hardly compares with the amounts spent on equipping the magnificent library of Winchester College. Here, too, gifts from Wykeham, the founder, and members of his circle, including John Campden, provided some of the finest books, thirteen missals alone being valued at almost £70; see W. H. Gunner, 'Catalogue of Books Belonging to the College of St Mary, Winchester, in the Reign of Henry VI', *Archaeological Journal*, 15 (1858), 59–74.

⁴³ See M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1999), pp. 109–10, and H. E. Bell, 'The Price of Books in Medieval England', *The Library*, IV, 17 (1937), 312–32.

⁴⁴ David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, Cistercian Studies, 158 (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 11–17. One of the annotated breviaries owned by the hospital of Christ and the Blessed Virgin in Fossgate, York, had 'le claspes argenti'; see *The York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers 1356–1917*, ed. by Maud Sellers, Surtees Society, 129 (Durham, 1918), pp. 96–97.

⁴⁵ Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, pp. 140–41, and appendix II.

Voragine to the hospital as a gift in pure and perpetual alms so long as he might retain the use of it for life.⁴⁶ Probably because it supported and helped to educate choral scholars from Devon and Cornwall, the hospital attracted other clergy whose interests extended to science and history. Its library included copies of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*, William of Malmesbury's *De gestis regum Anglorum* and *Historia novella* (in one volume), and a remarkable set of fifteenth-century figures and tables. Each of these books bears a distinctive press-mark (F.2, FA, and A.27 respectively), which suggests that the medieval collection must have comprised several shelves or chests of books.⁴⁷ The drawings and tables, now bound in two sections on either side of a biblical dictionary that was probably used both as a work of reference and for teaching in the hospital school, are especially noteworthy. The second set comprises several handsome folio-size diagrams illustrating and enumerating prescripts (virtues, beatitudes, comfortable works, sacraments, commandments, and so forth), which all Christians were expected to know, and which would have been learned by the young choristers.⁴⁸ Even more striking are the opening nineteen pages of vividly coloured drawings based upon Old Testament descriptions of Solomon's temple and Ezekiel's millenary vision of its replacement.⁴⁹ The ownership of such figures, with their emphasis on numbers, proportions, architectural detail, and the occult, as well as their underlying Christocentric themes of blood-sacrifice and redemption, raises intriguing questions about intellectual life at St John's. Like many of their contemporaries, some of the clergy appear to have dabbled in alchemy, of which Solomon was the reputed father. This supposition is confirmed by the gift of a book of medical and alchemical tracts (including works on distillation, the quintessence, and prolongation of human life) made by one of the priests to the deputy master, 'ad orandum pro anima mea' in 1523.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ See A. B. Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1957–59), III, pp. 2021–22, and Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, pp. 818–19. For an outline history of St John's, see Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, pp. 233–39, although they misidentify this volume. Works by Voragine enjoyed great popularity throughout western Europe. Copies of his *Legenda aurea* were owned by St Giles's, Kepier, and Elsingspital, London, and of his sermons by God's House, Southampton.

⁴⁷ British Library, MS Harley 3671, and Add. MS 38129; Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 156.

⁴⁸ MS Laud Misc. 156, fols 61^r–65^r. The first of these plates depicts Christ crucified on the tree of life, its twelve branches bearing sentences from the prophets, and his symbol, the bleeding pelican, above. It is derived from Bonaventure's *Vita Christi*, a copy of which was owned by Elsingspital, London, in 1448. Quite possibly the two sets of figures were initially intended to be viewed as a continuous whole, leading from Old Testament to New.

⁴⁹ MS Laud Misc. 156, fols 5^r–14^r (fols 14^r–15^r contain genealogical tables of Old Testament patriarchs). These drawings derive from the *Postilla litteralis super totam Bibliam* of the Franciscan, Nicolas de Lyre (d. 1349), who possessed an impressive knowledge of Hebrew and rabbinic exegesis. He was himself heavily influenced by the scriptural commentaries of the French rabbi, Rashi (d. 1105), not least in his use of diagrams; see Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh, 1963), p. 138 and p. 283 nn. 13 and 14.

⁵⁰ British Library, Add. MS 27582. Only the first of the ten separate tracts bound in this single volume is inscribed, but, as Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, p. 236, suggest, the set may already have constituted a single volume in 1523. They do not, however, note its alchemical significance.

That hospital libraries may often have ventured beyond the predictable confines of liturgy and devotional literature to embrace topics ranging from history to natural science is evident from an inventory of 1448 listing over sixty books owned by the London hospital of St Mary, Cripplegate, more commonly known as Elsingspital. Established in 1331 by the wealthy mercer, William Elsing, the hospital gave priority to sick (especially blind and paralysed) clergy, and after a few years of management by secular priests was entrusted by its founder to the more experienced and efficient Augustinians. These two factors, together with the house's popularity as a final resting place for some of the City's richest merchants, meant that a generous supply of books was effectively guaranteed.⁵¹ Most were, indeed, on the familiar topics of biblical exegesis, canon law (an especially fine collection), and spiritual development, but it is worth noting that here, as at St John's, some of the residents pursued an interest in medical theory. Copies of the *Secreta secretorum*, the *Floriarum Bartholomei* of John Mirfield (d. 1407), and an unspecified *Liber Galieni et Ypocrat'* (works attributed to the Classical medical authorities, Galen and Hippocrates) testify to a concern about the health of bodies as well as souls.⁵²

Public Ritual and Personal Piety

It was, however, the quest for salvation that predominated. Although episcopal and royal visitors were frequently moved to complain about poor standards of religious observance in English hospitals, houses of quite modest size were sometimes well equipped with service books, far exceeding the basic requirement of eight laid down by Archbishop Winchelsey in 1305 as necessary for parochial worship.⁵³ Perhaps because of its close connections with Norwich cathedral priory, the leper hospital of St Mary Magdalen, which stood about a mile outside the city at Sprowston, had by 1368 accumulated an ordinal of the Mass, two antiphoners, a legendary (in the customary two volumes), a psalter, a processional, a missal, and four books of introits and sequences. The master's gift of a cloth decorated with the image of the patron saint for the gospel lectern implies an interest in ritual further supported by the compilation of a martyrology (a calendar of saints' days, probably incorporating a list of the obits of local worthies) and the

⁵¹ *Victoria County History: London*, 1, pp. 535–56.

⁵² British Library, Cotton Charter XIII.10, printed in *Londinium redivivum*, ed. by James Peller Malcolm, 4 vols (London, 1803–07), 1, pp. 29–30. The books were stored in a separate *libraria* from liturgical volumes, which are not mentioned. At St Mark's, Bristol, hospital brothers with specialist medical knowledge were encouraged to deploy their talents in the wider community as a means of raising money; see *Cartulary of St Mark's Hospital*, ed. Ross, pp. 9–10.

⁵³ Itemized in *Archdeaconry of Norwich: Inventory of Church Goods temp. Edward III*, ed. by Dom Aelred Watkin, Norfolk Record Society, 19, 2 vols (Norwich, 1947–48), II, pp. xvii–xviii.

acquisition of the text of the comparatively new service of Corpus Christi.⁵⁴ The ownership of at least fifteen service books by another *leprosarium* dedicated to St Mary Magdalen, at Winchester, probably owed a good deal to the active patronage of Bishop Wykeham, who appointed none other than the bibliophile John Campeden to conduct a visitation there in about 1400. Although several of these volumes were then described as 'vetus', i.e. old, a new missal worth 100s. had recently been presented by the master, and a psalter by one of the priests.⁵⁵ The decline of leprosy in fourteenth-century England led many of the country's three hundred or so erstwhile *leprosaria* to convert into chantry chapels, although it is important to remember that their original *raison d'être* had been the provision of spiritual solace, in a quasi-monastic environment, for the sick. The *opus Dei* had, for example, been regularly observed at Sprowston from at least the mid-twelfth century, when a significant number of inmates were almost certainly Benedictine monks.⁵⁶ Rules devised in 1259 for the leper hospital at Brives (in the Haute Loire) required the production of a common breviary for sick priests, clerics, and other literate persons, so that they could follow services without having to use (and, it was believed, infect) the same books as the healthy.⁵⁷ We do not know if any English leper houses followed this practice, although many twelfth- and thirteenth-century foundations were run by, and to a certain extent for, monastic houses, and would thus have accommodated a number of patients well versed in the Christian liturgy.⁵⁸

Following the reforms of Innocent III, which aimed to bolster the authority of the Church and the status of the priesthood, a growing number of English hospitals and almshouses were either founded for, or gave priority to, blind, elderly, and debilitated members of the secular clergy. Such a move found general favour with patrons, mindful of the value of the intercessory prayers and masses that would be offered on their behalf. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, for example, Abbot Northwold of Bury St Edmunds changed the regulations of St Saviour's hospital to replace the elderly women who had previously found refuge there by retired priests. Some of these men, not surprisingly, bequeathed books to the house, one

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, I, p. 33. The hospital was worth no more than £10 a year in 1535; see Carole Rawcliffe, *The Hospitals of Medieval Norwich* (Norwich, 1995), p. 46. Even less affluent, the *leprosarium* of St Mary Magdalen, Thetford, could still muster six service books in 1368 (*Archidiaconry of Norwich*, ed. Watkin, I, p. 145). For hospital martyrologies, see nn. 106 and 107 below.

⁵⁵ The collection comprised one old and one new missal, a large, fully annotated breviary, two old annotated antiphoners, two legends (one of saints and one temporal), three psalters, a book of collects with hymns, a manual, and three old graduals; see British Library, MS Harley 328, fols 26–28. The hospital was worth £42 a year in 1535: see *Victoria County History: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, vol. II, ed. by H. Arthur Doubleday and William Page (London, 1903), pp. 197–200.

⁵⁶ Rawcliffe, *Hospitals of Medieval Norwich*, pp. 41–42.

⁵⁷ *Statuts d'hôtels Dieu et léproseries*, ed. by L. Le Grand (Paris, 1901), p. 212. At this hospital a priest was entrusted, under oath, with the care of vestments, ornaments, chalices, and books, which were to be recorded.

⁵⁸ See Carole Rawcliffe, 'Learning to Love the Leper: Aspects of Institutional Charity in Anglo-Norman England', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 23 (2001), 233–52 (pp. 235–37, 244–47).

being a copy of the *Speculum humane salvationis*, a work suffused with imagery of the suffering Christ, and thus (like many of the books at Elsingspital) of especial value to sick priests contemplating their imminent mortality.⁵⁹

Tharefore to thole disease luke that thov murmure noght,
 Bot Cristes hard passioun kepe alleway in thi thoght.
 Of Cristes blude with thi woo if thow a syrope make,
 Whateuer thow thole shalle seme to the swete for his sake.
 A littel soeffre in this lif of flagellacioun
 Til eschewe elleswhare eterne dampnacioun.
 To chaystise the in this werlde rede I Godde that thow praye,
 That dying thow entre heven withouten any payne for ay.
 O gude Jhesu strike vs here with swilk bitternesse
 That dying without purgatorie we come til hevenly swettenesse.⁶⁰

On its acquisition by Queen's College, Oxford, in the 1340s, God's House, Southampton, likewise became something of a retreat and retirement home for sick and elderly fellows. By 1362 it had accumulated a useful set of thirteen service books (including a martyrology), but of greater interest is the collection of ten other volumes kept, according to an inventory of 1414–15, in a separate room, 'pro studio', situated next to the chapel. It was clearly the fellows who consulted works by Thomas Aquinas, Richard Rolle, Jacobus de Voragine, and St John Chrysostom, as, indeed, it was the priests (both canons and inmates) who read similar volumes at Elsingspital.⁶¹

The cult of saints, often celebrated for their healing miracles, loomed large in the liturgical round of England's more affluent hospitals. Images, relics, and indulgences helped to generate a welcome income from visitors, who were anxious to obtain relief from the pains of purgatory through recourse to such powerful intercessionary forces.⁶² That specific institutions developed rituals focusing upon their patron saints is evident, for example, at St Giles's hospital, Norwich, which was extensively rebuilt in the 1380s to incorporate a massive chancel for the use of priests and choristers. At least one of its processional, uniquely illustrated with coloured plans for the conduct of services, contains a special office for the feast of St Giles, which

⁵⁹ Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, pp. 114–15; Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, pp. 27–28; *Charters of the Medieval Hospitals of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill, Suffolk Records Society, Suffolk Charters, 14 (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 14–15, 144; Joy Rowe, 'The Medieval Hospitals of Bury St Edmunds', *Medical History*, 2 (1958), 253–63 (pp. 260–61).

⁶⁰ *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun: A Middle English Translation of Speculum Humane Salvationis*, ed. by Avril Henry (London, 1986), p. 121, ll. 2295–304.

⁶¹ *The Cartulary of God's House, Southampton*, ed. by J. M. Kaye, Southampton Records Series, 19–20, 2 vols (Southampton, 1976), 1, pp. xci–ii. In 1414–15 the collection of service books in the chapel comprised two missals, two graduals, two psalters, an ordinal, and a breviary; see Archives of the Queen's College, Oxford, God's House account roll, R.457. I am grateful to Mr Kaye for his advice regarding this collection.

⁶² Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, pp. 60–61, 97–98. See also n. 98 below.

was rarely accorded such prominence.⁶³ The spiritual significance, to both patrons and patients, of the accompanying invocation of the confessor saint can hardly be doubted:

O far-shining soldier of Christ, how many signs have you shown of your goodness and grace! Bear the weight of our sins; moisten our hearts with the water of penitence, so that by your prayers those covered with the wretchedness of the world will be lifted up and returned to the glory of heaven.⁶⁴

A similar programme of rebuilding at St Saviour's hospital, Bury St Edmunds, in the late 1380s centred upon the new, or considerably refurbished, chapel of St Thomas Becket, which boasted a substantial image of the archbishop with a silver box (perhaps a reliquary) at its feet. Three books containing the liturgy of the feasts of his martyrdom and translation were purchased at a cost of 13s. 4d., and a doctor of theology came from the Augustinian friary at Clare to preach the saint's day sermon. All this activity seems to have jogged a few memories, as expenses of 8d. were sustained in the hunt for a lost breviary worth 40s., which had been missing for more than thirty years.⁶⁵ As we shall see, the proper care of books and other liturgical objects was a constant preoccupation on the part of the visitors and royal commissioners who investigated the state of medieval English hospitals.

Inevitably, those houses with friends in high places were the best appointed. An inventory of goods owned by the London hospital of St Anthony in 1499 itemizes, among a lavish provision of vestments, furnishings, and plate (liberally marked with the distinctive *Crux Taumata* of the patron saint), one relic of St Anthony 'closed in byrall with a foote of syluer and gylt' and another set in the 'brest' of his silver 'ymage'. Scenes from his life, were, moreover, depicted on one of the 'steined clothys' which hung 'abowte the churche', while a painting of his encounter with St Paul the Hermit decorated the frontal of the high altar.⁶⁶ That the choristers and

⁶³ This remarkable volume is discussed in Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, pp. 120–22 and plates 11–13.

⁶⁴ British Library, Add. MS 57734, fol. 123^v. The translation from the original Latin was made by Mr David Chadd for a service in October 1999 marking the hospital's 750th anniversary.

⁶⁵ Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Fourteenth Report, Appendix VIII* (London, 1895), p. 129. The London hospital of St Thomas Acon, built on the supposed site of the martyr's birth, was richly decorated with stained glass, paintings, and statues depicting his life, death, and posthumous humiliation of a repentant Henry II. Not surprisingly, such dangerous images were among the first to be destroyed at the Dissolution; see *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, vol. VIII, ed. by James Gairdner (London, 1885), no. 626; *A Chronicle of England*, ed. by Charles Wriothesley, Camden Society, n.s. 11 (London, 1875), p. 87.

⁶⁶ Archives of St George's Chapel, Windsor, XV.37.15. For an edition of this document, see the appendix to Rose Graham, 'The Order of St Antoine de Viennois and its English Commandery, St Anthony's, Threadneedle Street', *Archaeological Journal*, 84 (1927), 341–406 (pp. 396–400). Scenes from the life of St Anthony, including his meeting with the hermit, were depicted on the celebrated altarpiece executed by Grünewald for the saint's shrine at the Antonine hospital, Isenheim; see Andrée Hayum, *The Isenheim Altarpiece: God's Medicine and the Painter's Vision* (Princeton, 1989), ch. 1 and plates 2 and 3.

clergy did full justice to their sumptuous surroundings is evident from the catalogue of thirty-five service books 'daily occupied' there:

In primis, iiij cowchers [large breviaries] in the quer; item, ij lytyll portows [portable breviaries], on for the chyldren, a nother for the organnys; item, v gralys [graduals]; item, a lytyll grayle for the organnys; item, xj processionarys; item, a colet [collect] booke with wenettes [anthems for the *Venite*] at the begynnyng and gralys at the last ende; item, a lytyll booke with ympnys [hymns] and the cervyce of Seynt Antonye at the begynnyng; item, a booke of all the lyffe of Seynt Antonye; item, a manuell; item, ij pryksong [polyphony] bookys, on of pauper, a nother of parchment; item, ij masse bookys and a legent [book of lessons]; item, a sawter [psalter] of mayster Bracebryge gyft;⁶⁷ item, a lytyll ympner tyed with a chene; item, a booke of breuys and longys [annotated hymnal].⁶⁸

In addition to the further light that it sheds upon the hospital's attachment to its patron saint, this list also illustrates the important part played by music and the education of young choristers in the life of England's larger charitable institutions.⁶⁹

The hospital's annexation to St George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1475 had an immediate impact upon the liturgy, since, as an alien house, it had hitherto followed the observances of the order of St Anthony of Vienne. A reference in the 1499 inventory to 'v olde bookys after the vyse of vyence [use of Vienne], ij of them ben portowse, and ij sawters, and a masse booke', evidently put aside as being no longer of value, suggests that replacements had been considered essential; and, indeed, the sacristan is known to have bought two new processional books for the choir in 1478–79 alone.⁷⁰ Changing tastes in religious observance, especially with regard to the celebration of new feasts, meant that all the larger hospitals had regularly to revise and augment their service books in response to popular demand.⁷¹ In 1500, for example, one Master Ryder was paid 8*d.* for writing out the lessons to be read on the feasts of the Transfiguration and the Holy Name of Jesus at St Giles's hospital, Norwich, presumably in one of the house's lectionaries. It may also have been he who added the respond and versicle for the ninth

⁶⁷ Master Bracebryge was probably the draper, William Bracebridge (d. 1499), MP and auditor of London; see *History of Parliament: Biographies of Members of the Commons House 1439–1509*, ed. by Josiah C. Wedgwood (London, 1936), p. 99.

⁶⁸ Archives of St George's Chapel, Windsor, XV.37.15.

⁶⁹ Rawcliffe, 'Eighth Comfortable Work', pp. 397–400.

⁷⁰ Archives of St George's Chapel, Windsor, XV.37.15.

⁷¹ Benefactors were often remarkably specific. A generous bequest of 1500 from the wealthy Londoner, Richard Hill, to the hospital of St Thomas Acon for the construction of a high altar and the support of five 'queresters' in perpetuity was conditional upon the house's readiness to offer a mass of the Holy Name each week, as well as certain nightly collects and antiphons for the health of his immortal soul; see Sir John Watney, *Some Account of the Hospital of St Thomas Acon* (London, 1892), pp. 55–56.

lesson of the latter feast, along with a section of the *Magnificat*, to the hospital's surviving processional at this time.⁷²

As well as providing the space, setting, and acoustic for elaborate rituals, the costly rebuilding programmes undertaken by many hospitals during the years between the Black Death and the Dissolution were driven by the need to accommodate a growing number of tombs, altars, and private chapels. The proliferation of guild and chantry chapels in the larger urban foundations in turn proved a further stimulus to book ownership, as patrons vied with each other to place wealth at the service of piety. Sir Robert Poyntz (d. 1520), who did not live to see the completion of his sumptuous chantry at St Mark's, Bristol, instructed his executors to furnish it with all the necessary plate, vestments, books, and images.⁷³ Both Joan, countess of Ormond (d. 1430), and her younger son, Thomas, the seventh earl (d. 1515), were buried in the church of the hospital of St Thomas Acon, London, where plans had long been afoot to establish a family chantry.⁷⁴ For 'the singuler comforth and gostly releff' of his soul,⁷⁵ the earl requested burial north of the high altar, beneath the Easter Sepulchre where Mass was celebrated each year on Good Friday. Mindful of the devotional needs of the living, he asked that

my sawter boke [psalter] couered with whyte lether and my name written with myn owne hand in th'end of the same [...] shalbe layed and fyxed with a cheyne of iron at my tombe wch is ordeyned for me in the said church of Saint Thomas Acon, ther to remayne for the seruyce of god in the said church the better to be hadde and done by suche personnes as shalbe disposed to occupye and loke uppon the same boke.⁷⁶

Just as funerary bequests of clothes, food, and drink to the poor discharged the Comfortable Works enjoined by Christ upon the faithful, the gift of books helped the Church to administer the corresponding Spiritual Works so necessary for salvation. Hospitals such as St Thomas's, which also ran prestigious schools, were further able to offer patrons the satisfaction of assisting in the education of the young. Three handsome volumes presented to the house by James, ninth earl of Ormond (d. 1546), were clearly intended

⁷² Fashions in worship are discussed at greater length in Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, p. 128. In many hospitals the notating of music probably remained the *ad hoc* affair envisaged by Bishop Ely of Worcester in his 1259 ordinances for St Mark's, Bristol: 'If any of the chaplains and clerks knows how to write and set down music, he ought, at command of the master, to write down and set down those things which may prove to be useful to the house' (*Cartulary of St Mark's Hospital*, ed. Ross, pp. 9–10).

⁷³ George Henry Cook, *Medieval Chantries and Chantry Chapels* (London, 1963), p. 74.

⁷⁴ Watney, *Some Account of the Hospital of St Thomas Acon*, pp. 42–46.

⁷⁵ PRO, PCC Holder 8 (PROB 11/18).

⁷⁶ *ibid.* The monetary value to the hospital of such patronage (and thus the importance of maintaining high standards of liturgical performance) may be gauged from the fact that Ormond left over £106 to it for his funeral, anniversaries, and obits. The master, as his executor, received a personal legacy of £20, and was, moreover, well placed to ensure that other prize possessions not specifically bequeathed were diverted to the hospital.

for teaching purposes, one having previously been owned by a London schoolmaster.⁷⁷

It was, even so, to the powerful city company of the Mercers, rather than to individual baronial patrons, however generous, that the masters of St Thomas's looked for long-term support. Well before their formal incorporation, in 1393, the Mercers had maintained close links with the hospital, which housed a lavishly appointed guild chapel and was the scene of increasingly spectacular exequies held to mark the passing of some of London's richest merchants. At regular points in the civic year St Thomas's church was, moreover, used by the corporation for ceremonies and processions, which presupposes a substantial outlay on service books and vestments.⁷⁸ Standards of musicianship may have been even higher at St Anthony's hospital, which from 1469 was home to the king's minstrels, while St Katherine's, conveniently near the Tower, offered an ideal meeting place for the gunners' fraternity of St Barbara. The skinners, meanwhile, assembled at the church of St Mary Spital, Bishopsgate; and not far away at St Mary Bethlehem, London's only hospital for the insane, the pouchmakers sought 'the health of their souls by almsdeeds'. A guild in honour of Christ and the Blessed Virgin also met at St Mary's, where funerary Masses were celebrated for deceased brethren, who might also be buried there.⁷⁹ We do not know what, if any, books were given or loaned to these hospitals by their influential patrons, but evidence from Winchester suggests that their libraries must have benefited considerably. An inventory of goods deposited in the hospital of St John by the city's ruling guild for use in its chapel listed, among other valuable items, four alabaster statues, three missals, two antiphoners, two portable breviaries, six psalters, two legendaries, two books of introits, one of epistles, a martyrology, and seven unspecified volumes.⁸⁰ At York, too, the Mystery of Mercers, which made the hospital of Christ and the Blessed Virgin, Fossgate, its spiritual headquarters, worshipped in some state. By the mid-sixteenth century an impressive provision of plate, vestments, and hangings was complemented by at least fourteen service books, including the martyrology and offices of the dead so

⁷⁷ British Library, Royal MSS 13.C.xi, 14.C.xii, 15.C.xvi, discussed, along with the hospital's celebrated school, in Rawcliffe, 'Eighth Comfortable Work', pp. 397–400. The ninth earl, too, requested burial at the hospital; see *Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172–1603 A.D.*, ed. by Edmund Curtis, 6 vols (Dublin, 1932–1943), iv: 1509–1547 (1937), p. 294.

⁷⁸ Watney, *Some Account of the Hospital of St Thomas Acon*, pp. 16–18, 36.

⁷⁹ See *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, A.D. 1467–1477* (London, 1900), p. 153; William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. by J. Caley, H. Ellis, and the Rev. B. Bandinel, 6 vols (London, 1817–30), vi: 2, p. 695; Thomas, Sloane, and Phillpotts, *Excavations at . . . St Mary Spital* (n. 17 above), p. 79; H. F. Westlake, *The Parish Gilds of Medieval England* (London, 1919), pp. 184, 236. St Anthony's and St Katherine's were frequented by other religious fraternities, whose chief purpose was the provision of elaborate ceremonies for the dead; see Westlake, *ibid.*, pp. 183, 188.

⁸⁰ See *The Black Book of Winchester*, ed. by W. H. B. Bird (Winchester, 1925), pp. 97–98, and Derek Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1985), ii, p. 818.

important for the commemoration of deceased guild members.⁸¹ From 1478 to the Dissolution the equally rich and influential Corpus Christi guild of York ran the hospital of St Thomas, Micklegate. Here it kept the ornate reliquary and other magnificent properties (worth over £230) that its members carried reverently through the streets during the annual Corpus Christi procession. The books housed in what must have been an unusually imposing chapel for such a modest almshouse included texts of the plays performed during this highlight of the civic year, which terminated with great ceremonial at the hospital of St Leonard. Among the other valuables were a missal worth 66s. 8d., a portiforium valued at 40s., and a 'liber vocatus *Originale*, continens articulos Fidei Catholicae in lingua Anglicana', which last, at £10, represented a significant investment even for such a powerful fraternity.⁸²

The popular appetite for 'knackynge of newe songs, as orgen or deschant', derided by Lollards and others of a reforming tendency, grew throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁸³ There can be little doubt that the demand for literate chaplains and choristers in hospitals such as the erstwhile *leprosarium* at Sherburn, County Durham, reflects this desire for music, and especially for polyphony. Bishop Langley's reforming statutes of 1434 insisted that the four clerks should be 'in lectura, cantu et scientia literarum sufficienter instructos' and their two choirboys equally skilled both in reading and singing.⁸⁴ These accomplishments were not, however, confined to the hospital church, as Langley also expected the clerks to take turns in reading from the Bible, sermons, homilies, the lives of saints, and other improving literature during the midday meal, if not on other occasions. Primarily designed to prevent idle or malicious chatter, similar measures had already been instituted at St Mark's, Bristol (1259), St James's, Westminster (1267), St Leonard's, York (1294), St Thomas's, Southwark (1387), and (with the more uplifting purpose of providing spiritual as well as corporeal refreshment) at the Hôtel Dieu in Angers during the early thirteenth

⁸¹ See David J. F. Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (York, 2000), pp. 139–40, and *York Mercers*, ed. Sellers, pp. 96–99. The hospital also owned one 'old law book'.

⁸² See Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, pp. 162, 164, 193–94; *The Register of the Guild of Corpus Christi in the City of York*, ed. by Robert H. Skaife, Surtees Society, 57 (Durham, 1872), pp. 292–93; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 261. In 1558 the priest and former master, William Pinder, bequeathed 'a messe bowke of Yorke's use in parchment' to the hospital, along with a vestment and plate, clearly intending to make good the depredations of the Protestant reformers. He was, indeed, unsure if the house still supported its own chaplain; see *Register of the Guild of Corpus Christi*, pp. 305–06.

⁸³ *The English Works of Wyclif hitherto Unpublished*, ed. by F. D. Matthew, Early English Text Society, o.s. 74 (London, 1880), p. 91.

⁸⁴ Allan, *Collections Relating to Sherburn Hospital*, unpaginated, sub 'Bishop Langley's Statutes'. Youngsters admitted to the erstwhile leper hospital of St James, Canterbury, presumably as boarders, were all to be literate, or at least 'dociles et capaces in literatura imbudenda'; see John Duncombe and Nicholas Battely, *The History and Antiquities of the Three Archiepiscopal Hospitals at and near Canterbury* (London, 1785), p. 433.

century.⁸⁵ This French hospital already possessed a sufficiently large and valuable collection of books to warrant the introduction of rules for borrowers, whose names were to be carefully recorded.⁸⁶ By the close of the Middle Ages, if not far earlier, several English hospitals and almshouses appear to have followed suit. At St Leonard's the brethren were permitted to collect books for private study each day before vespers and read them in the cloisters until supper time.⁸⁷ A similar arrangement may have obtained at St Giles's, Norwich, whose priests had been urged by their founder, the learned Bishop Suffield (a graduate of both Oxford and Paris), to occupy their spare time in reading or visiting the sick.⁸⁸ During the fourteenth century, when lepers were still being admitted to the Sherburn hospital in significant numbers, the two activities were deemed synonymous, a chaplain being deputed to read the gospels to those who could not leave their beds to attend church on Sundays or festivals.⁸⁹ But not all houses maintained such high standards. Clearly shocked by the ignorance of the brothers at St Thomas's, Southwark, whose imperfect knowledge of their rule and of sacred scripture he ascribed to poor education, Bishop Wykeham insisted in 1387 upon the appointment of a master who could instill the rudimentary principles of song and grammar into his charges.⁹⁰

Pastoral Care

Wykeham's concern that the Augustinian rule should be fully explained and understood had practical as well as spiritual urgency. Because of its suitability for a life that combined the active and the contemplative aspects of the Christian faith, the rule was widely followed in England's larger hospitals. Some (such as St Leonard's, York, St James's, Westminster, St Mary's, Bishopsgate, and Elsingspital in Cripplegate) were run by canons of the order, while others (including St Giles's, Norwich) drew upon the observances where appropriate. Those concerning the care and use of books must have been well known, and clearly influenced the way hospital libraries

⁸⁵ *Cartulary of St Mark's Hospital*, ed. Ross, pp. 9–10; British Library, MS Cotton Faustina A.III, fol. 320^v; Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi: 2, p. 610; Archives of New College, Oxford, MS 3691, fol. 91^v; *Statuts*, ed. Le Grand, p. 27. At the Hôtel Dieu, Paris, books were reserved for the 'sacra lectio' at meals (*Statuts*, p. 49).

⁸⁶ *Statuts*, ed. Le Grand, p. 23.

⁸⁷ Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi: 2, p. 610. Further rules of 1365 provided thirteen private *studia*, where the brethren could spend their leisure time reading sacred scripture (PRO, C270/20). At St Bartholomew's, Smithfield, another Augustinian hospital, at least one of the brothers was permitted, in 1404, to absent himself for seven years to study theology; see *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*, vol. v: A.D. 1396–1404, ed. by W. H. Bliss and J. A. Twemlow (London, 1904), p. 604.

⁸⁸ Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, p. 243.

⁸⁹ Allan, *Collections Relating to Sherburn Hospital*, unpaginated, *sub* 'Constitutions'.

⁹⁰ Archives of New College, Oxford, MS 3691, fol. 90^v.

were built up and managed.⁹¹ All charitable institutions entrusted with the cure of souls were, as we have seen, required to possess a basic complement of service books for Christian worship, and in theory, if not always in practice, to discharge additional pastoral responsibilities towards their sick and elderly patients. That men and women in pain and near to death would require the regular attendance of a priest is implicit in the statutes devised by founders and visitors; the homiletic and penitential literature owned by hospitals must often have been put to practical use on the wards. The hospital of Holy Trinity, Salisbury, which admitted homeless wayfarers, kept a special book 'pro extremitate facienda in vnctione', along with an 'eleuat', or chrismatory, for use on such occasions.⁹² Since patrons were as much concerned with the *quality* as the quantity of prayers offered on their behalf, they avidly sought to promote the spiritual benefits of confession, which, after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, was one of the principal tools used by the Church both to discipline and educate the laity. Bishop Robert Bingham's ordinances of 1245 for the hospital of St Nicholas, also in Salisbury, established a gruelling timetable of Masses, prayers, and daily offices to be followed by the four resident priests for the welfare of his soul and the salvation of all other benefactors. But he was no less anxious that the patients should be guided towards their heavenly reward, and gave one of the four the specific task of visiting, instructing, and urging them towards confession.⁹³

With upwards of two hundred patients during the early fourteenth century, England's largest hospital, St Leonard's, York, had even greater need of works such as the *Pupilla oculi*. Two chaplains were assigned to tour the infirmary every night, 'speaking salutary and consolatory words to the sick, and by pious exhortation persuading them to confession and penitence for their sins'.⁹⁴ The copy of Richard Rolle's commentary on the Book of Job, bequeathed in 1427 to one of the hospital priests, must have proved especially valuable in this regard, as it offered so many uplifting examples of patience in extreme adversity.⁹⁵ Placing an unambiguous emphasis upon the priority of the soul over the body and the responsibility of the hospital to

⁹¹ See *The Observances in Use at the Augustinian Priory of S. Giles and S. Andrew at Barnwell, Cambridgeshire*, ed. by John Willis Clark (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 62–67. John Colman's compilation of theological works (see above, n. 32) contains sentences from St Augustine's 'De legenda divina lectione', and, in his own hand, St Bernard's 'De quatuor gradibus scalae spiritualis', the first of which is reading (St John's College, Oxford, MS 173, fols 29^r–39^r).

⁹² T. H. Baker, 'The Trinity Hospital, Salisbury', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, 36 (1909–10), 376–412 (p. 381).

⁹³ *The Fifteenth Century Cartulary of St Nicholas's Hospital, Salisbury*, ed. by Chris[topher] Wordsworth (Salisbury, 1902), p. 27.

⁹⁴ PRO, C270/20 (recommendations following a visitation by Simon Langham, Bishop of Ely, 1365).

⁹⁵ The same testator, himself a York chaplain, also left 'a paper book containing the office of Richard Rolle (the divine office celebrated by the nuns at Hampole)' to the hospital library; see Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988), p. 94.

administer medicine to both, the statutes of the Savoy, London, compiled in 1523 on the very eve of the Dissolution, likewise made careful provision for the spiritual health of staff and patients alike. The latter were to be visited twice daily by the confessor's two assistants 'so that none of them will lack ghostly consolation or die without the sacraments'.⁹⁶ At the Florentine hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, upon which the Savoy was closely modelled, the nurses were urged 'patiently [to] read devotional texts, providing extra comfort to the dying', a ritual which must have been replicated in many English houses, by priests if not always sisters, and which accounts for the ubiquity of condolent literature in such institutions.⁹⁷

Preaching aids, too, were of more than academic interest to the staff of hospitals. Many had livings of their own to serve, and although absenteeism was rife not all neglected their congregations. Of more immediate importance, however, was the need to exhort and instruct the numerous visitors who flocked to the larger houses, either in the simple expectation of hearing a good sermon (as at St Mary's, Bishopsgate, which possessed its own 'preaching yard'), or else with the intention of purchasing the spiritual benefits offered to those who gave alms on certain festivals or anniversaries. Saints' days at hospitals such as the Savoy, St Thomas Acon, and St Thomas's, Southwark, must have been occasions of great liturgical spectacle, as well as of unusually vigorous fundraising. Indeed, it was sometimes necessary to hire extra chaplains in order to meet the demand for confession on the part of penitent pilgrims.⁹⁸

As was the case at the Saffron Walden almshouse, collections of sermons and homiletic literature might be loaned 'charitelyche' to assist local clergy with their ministry, albeit in this case under strict securities guaranteeing their return within three months.⁹⁹ At the hospital and college of St Mary in the Newarke, Leicester, a rich Lancastrian house liberally endowed by its patrons, the refoundation charter of 1356 ruled that the books should be safely stored in a special chest with three locks. By 1491 there were enough to constitute a separate *libraria*, although the dangers of unregulated borrowing outside the precinct were clearly still recognized. 'A sufficient caution [security] for double the value of every book so lent' was henceforth

⁹⁶ British Library, MS Cotton Cleopatra C.V, fols 10^v–11^r. All of the hospital priests, who numbered six in 1512, were licensed to hear confession and administer the sacraments; see *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*, vol. XVIII: [1503–1513], ed. by Michael J. Haren (Dublin, 1989), no. 102 (pp. 137–40).

⁹⁷ See John Henderson, 'Healing the Body and Saving the Soul: Hospitals in Renaissance Florence', *Renaissance Studies*, 15 (2001), 188–216 (p. 216); idem and Katherine Park, '"The First Hospital among Christians": The Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence', *Medical History*, 35 (1991), 164–87 (p. 183).

⁹⁸ Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, pp. 105–06; *Calendar of . . . Papal Letters*, v: 1396–1404, p. 376; Martha Carlin, *Medieval Southwark* (London, 1996), p. 80.

⁹⁹ Steer, 'Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses' (n. 3 above), p. 190.

required of any outsider using this facility.¹⁰⁰ The loss of books was a serious matter for hospitals, not simply because they cost so much to produce, but also because they were frequently presented by benefactors, and thus carried a heavy freight of spiritual obligation to be discharged by the sick poor and their guardians. Indeed, the Augustinian rule provided a service of remembrance and absolution in Lent for those who had either given books or copied them out, and decreed that their names and the titles of their offerings should be commemorated in a special roll.¹⁰¹ Early-fifteenth-century inventories from God's House, Southampton, invoke divine blessings upon the souls of Master Matthew Wiltthorpe and Thomas Chamberlain, a former sub-prior, through whose bounty the house had secured some of its best books.¹⁰²

The Importance of Commemoration

We have already seen that the flyleaves, covers, and margins of many surviving volumes bear the names, arms, or monograms of donors, often along with a request for prayers on their behalf.¹⁰³ A gift of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* to St John's hospital, Cambridge, by the MP and exchequer official, Henry Somer (d. 1450), was inscribed with an appeal for divine mercy, which the post-Dissolution owners, the fellows of Corpus Christi College, were anxious to vitiate: not simply on doctrinal grounds but (as a subsequent note records) because he had crossed swords with the College over the payment of tithes.¹⁰⁴ Archdeacon William Pykenham (d. 1497), founder of an almshouse at Hadleigh, Suffolk, where it was assumed that at least some of the twenty-four residents would be 'lettered', presented the hospital of St Thomas Acon with a collection of sermons by Jean de Abbeville, a two-volume set of biblical commentaries by the Dominican, Nicolas de Gorran (d. 1295), and the latter's commentary on the

¹⁰⁰ A. Hamilton Thompson, *The History of the Hospital and of the New College of the Annunciation of St Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), pp. 72–73, 131–32. Rules of 1439 for the management of Oxford University Library required that books on loan should be 'priced appreciably beyond the face value', so that losses could be made good; see Bell, 'Price of Books', pp. 324–25.

¹⁰¹ *Observances in Use*, ed. Willis Clark, pp. 62–63.

¹⁰² Archives of the Queen's College, Oxford, God's House account rolls, R.457–58. Chamberlain also presented carpets and coverlets (R.459).

¹⁰³ This practice was not, of course, confined to hospitals: two books given to the Carthusian house of Hinton, Somerset, contain such requests, as, eloquently, does a breviary commissioned by the parents of Elizabeth Edwardes, a nun at Syon in 1538; see Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, pp. 269–70, 308.

¹⁰⁴ Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1912), I, pp. 41–42. A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 539–40, assumes that the donor was Henry Somer, fellow of King's Hall, Cambridge, but his identity is clear from *History of Parliament: The Commons 1386–1421*, ed. by J. S. Roskell, Linda Clark, and Carole Rawcliffe, 4 vols (Stroud, 1993), IV, pp. 400–04.

psalter. Each volume conspicuously records his generosity, thereby securing for him a lasting — and in this instance unqualified — memorial.¹⁰⁵

It is no coincidence that, after the basic complement of service books, the single manuscript most often owned by a medieval almshouse or hospital was a martyrology. Often also recording the names and dates of death of past benefactors, along perhaps with a note of acts of particular generosity, these 'books of the dead' testify to the importance of intercessory prayer in the life of all but the smallest institutions. One such volume, compiled by the *leprosarium* of St Mary Magdalen at Gaywood, near King's Lynn, escaped the vigilance of Protestant reformers, who were especially keen to destroy any material relating to the doctrine of purgatory. Begun before 1296, it opens with a rubricated calendar noting major festivals and anniversaries in the hospital year, then lists the names of hundreds of men and women throughout East Anglia, from the founder onwards, who gave money, goods, or land in return for a share in the spiritual merits so conspicuously acquired through the prayers of priests and suffering lepers.¹⁰⁶ The reading of the martyrology, with its accompanying list of obits, was a regular feature of worship in medieval hospitals. At St Leonard's, York, it was supposed to take place daily in chapter meetings and was certainly welcomed by the brothers and sisters, who had a vested interest in ensuring that the practice was observed. As residents of the *leprosarium* of the Grand-Beaulieu, Chartres, complained in 1260, laxity in this regard not only undermined the house's *raison d'être*, but also deprived them of the extra pittances and other treats bequeathed by former patrons in return for perpetual intercession.¹⁰⁷

Some donors expected more tangible and immediate benefits. William Otley (d. 1432), master of the hospital of Christ and St Mary, in Fossgate, York, seems to have anticipated trouble over the performance of his will, and made a legacy of four service books and some high-quality vestments conditional upon the house's readiness to allow his executors to discharge their responsibilities unhindered. His successor, another careful Yorkshireman, promised the house a breviary on the understanding that his sister would be admitted as a patient with 4*d.* a week and free lodging for life,

¹⁰⁵ British Library, Royal MSS 3.A.ix, 3.E.x and 3.E.xi, and 4.C.vii. According to Sir George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1921), 1, p. 186, Pykenham may also have been the donor of MS Royal 7.D.v, a volume of tracts on the virtues, the power of indulgences, and apostolic poverty by the Franciscan theologian, Franciscus de Mayronis (d. 1327). His name is not, however, now recorded in it. For Pykenham's own foundation, see Dean Spooner, 'The Almshouse Chapel, Hadleigh', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 7 (1891), 379–80.

¹⁰⁶ Norfolk Record Office, Bradfer-Lawrence MS IX B. An edition of the pre-1296 section appears, along with statutes confirmed in 1304 that refer to the ownership of books, in *The Making of King's Lynn: A Documentary Survey*, ed. by Dorothy M. Owen, Records of Social and Economic History, n.s. 9 (London, 1984), pp. 106–16.

¹⁰⁷ Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi: 2, p. 610; *Cartulaire de la léproserie du Grand-Beaulieu, Chartres*, ed. by René Merlet and Maurice Jusselin (Chartres, 1909), no. 354 (p. 150).

which suggests that the legacy was quite valuable.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps being used to the more tolerant practices of Oxford and Cambridge colleges, where borrowed books were regularly pledged as security for personal loans, the masters of hospitals capitalized upon the lucrative — and eminently portable — assets in their custody. Following his visitation of St Leonard's, York, in 1365, Bishop Langham of Ely specifically warned the staff not to remove any books from the hospital on pain of expulsion, while reminding the master of his obligation to keep the church properly equipped.¹⁰⁹ His orders clearly fell upon deaf ears, for the next few decades witnessed embezzlement on a massive scale as assets were squandered in the interest of quick profits. Not surprisingly, the episcopal visitors and royal commissioners whose task was to rectify such abuses showed considerable interest in the provision, care, and availability of books. Commissions set up in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries to investigate mismanagement at the London hospitals of St Mary Bethlehem and St Giles, Holborn, for example, placed this problem high on the agenda. So too did the eagle-eyed Bishop Wykeham, whose 1387 visitation report on St Thomas's hospital, Southwark, demanded that the brethren should immediately recover the books and ornaments they had pawned to raise credit.¹¹⁰

The temptation to steal, sell, or pledge such treasures must, indeed, have been hard to resist. Books were often stored in chests or coffers together with plate, which reflects their value and also explains why robbers commonly made off with vellum as well as ornaments.¹¹¹ The liminal situation of hospitals in the more insalubrious suburbs of English towns and other dangerous places made them especially vulnerable to crime. St Thomas Becket may, perhaps, have watched over the book that he miraculously secured for a new hospital, built a few miles from London on a road frequented by cutpurses, but other houses had to survive without such formidable protection.¹¹² A burglary at the Gaywood leper house in 1454–55, for example, resulted in the loss of a silver chalice and patten (reputedly worth 30s.), a manual (26s. 8d.), and eight primers or psalters, together

¹⁰⁸ *York Mercers*, ed. Sellers, pp. 41–42, 50–51. Otley offered a large annotated breviary, a psalter complete with manual, a small psalter containing the offices of the dead, and a book of collects with the canon of the mass. John Smith (d. 1489), master of St Giles's, Norwich, likewise bequeathed a mass book, a legendary, and a quantity of plate to the hospital on the understanding that his executors would proceed unchallenged; see Norfolk Record Office, NCC, Reg. Typpes, fols 18^v–19^r.

¹⁰⁹ PRO, C270/20.

¹¹⁰ *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, A.D. 1370–1374* (London, 1914), p. 15; *A.D. 1381–1385* (London, 1897), p. 396; *A.D. 1401–1405* (London, 1905), p. 273; *A.D. 1436–1441* (London, 1907), p. 87; and Archives of New College, Oxford, MS 3691, fol. 92^r.

¹¹¹ In 1328, for example, the London hospital of St Thomas Acon was robbed of books and other valuables, and just over a century later thieves made off with a similar haul from the chapel of St Edmund's hospital, Gateshead, perhaps stealing some of John de Denton's bequests; see *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, A.D. 1327–1330* (London, 1891), p. 280; *Victoria County History: Durham*, II, p. 119. See also n. 38 above.

¹¹² Edwin Abbott Abbott, *St Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles*, 2 vols (London, 1898), II, no. 694 (p. 68).

valued at 27s.¹¹³ Nor did thieves pose the only threat. On seizing forcible control of the hospital of St Giles, Holborn, in 1391, the abbot of St Mary Graces confiscated a positive haul of valuables, including two breviaries, a manual, a life of the [Desert] Fathers, and the martyrology, which were itemized in the ensuing court proceedings along with the plate.¹¹⁴ Attempts by the lepers of West Somerton, Norfolk, to wrest control of their hospital from the prior of Butley, in 1297, likewise resulted in the removal of service books, plate, and ornaments, as well as food, utensils, and livestock.¹¹⁵ A prudent patron, such as Margaret, Lady Hungerford, sought to avoid such contingencies. Her statutes of 1472 for the family almshouse at Heytesbury ruled that 'bokes, chalices, vesymentis and other daily necessities' should be kept in the parish church in a secure chest 'under ij keys and lokkis dyvers' in order to minimize the risk of theft.¹¹⁶

The exchange of books donated by pious benefactors was easier to justify and may have been relatively common. It constituted a useful, but now largely undocumented, way of borrowing, since one work could be pledged as security for another of equivalent value. Yet prized possessions still went astray or proved hard to recover. John Neal (d. 1463), master of the hospital of St Thomas Acon, offered a composite volume incorporating a history of Troy, morality tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ('Ouidius de transformatis'), part of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and other miscellanea to the Bonshommes of the Blessed Virgin at Ashridge, Buckinghamshire, in return for a less entertaining but worthier collection of homilies by Origen. His book (which had originally been presented to the hospital by a canon of Windsor) was not recovered until the 1540s, thanks to the generosity of the above-mentioned ninth earl of Ormond.¹¹⁷ It was partly to prevent losses of this kind that the masters of hospitals with the cure of souls were expected to compile inventories itemizing all the books and other valuables in their possession.¹¹⁸ Thanks, for example, to the production of a list of goods belonging to the hospital of St Cross,

¹¹³ *Making of King's Lynn*, ed. Owen, p. 430. The hospital's store of psalters can hardly have been unusual, since literate patients, as well as staff, were commonly expected to recite the psalter (including the office of the dead) on a regular basis. See, for example, St Mary's hospital, Colchester, noted in J. L. Fisher, 'The Leger Book of St John's Abbey Colchester', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, n.s. 24 (1951), 77-127 (p. 121); and the Bootham hospital, York, noted in *Early Yorkshire Schools*, 1, ed. by Arthur Francis Leach, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, record series, 27 ([Leeds], 1899), p. 37).

¹¹⁴ PRO, E315/38/171.

¹¹⁵ The lepers made off with a breviary and a missal; see British Library, Harley Roll N 20, discussed in Richard Mortimer, 'The Prior of Butley and the Lepers of West Somerton', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 53 (1980), 99-103.

¹¹⁶ Rev. Canon [J. E.] Jackson, 'Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse', *Wiltshire Architectural and Natural History Magazine*, 11 (1869), 289-308 (p. 303).

¹¹⁷ British Library, MS Royal 15.C.xvi, fols ii^v and 183^v (pencil foliation), and see n. 41 above. One of Origen's most popular homilies (on St Mary Magdalen) was copied by John Cok in 1432, probably for use at St Bartholomew's hospital, London (British Library, Add. MS 10392, fols 103^v-108^r).

¹¹⁸ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Tanner (n. 8 above), 1, pp. 374-76.

Winchester, the loan of a breviary to one Master Robert Westynton came to light in 1383.¹¹⁹

Storage also provoked contention. A royal commission of inquiry into abuses at the *leprosarium* of the Holy Innocents, Lincoln, in 1316, revealed a number of problems, which suggest that books were as much at risk from leaking roofs and dilapidated buildings as they were from overt theft. Two missals had already disappeared, the 'good' breviary, three 'good' psalters, and two antiphoners that remained being liable to damage because of the master's negligence.¹²⁰ In the larger English hospitals, such as St John's, Oxford, custody of the 'ornaments, books, and other things pertaining to the church' was assigned to the sacristan, who was, significantly, also responsible for hearing the confessions of newly-admitted patients.¹²¹ Another important duty was to ensure that necessary repairs were carried out, which, at God's House, Southampton, involved an outlay of a few pence each year on rebinding service books. The sacristan of St Giles's hospital, Norwich, also made regular inspections of bindings and covers. In 1512-13, for example, the rebinding of the missal used at the high altar, a manual, and two processional, together with the repair of various unspecified volumes and the 'magnus liber' of the master, cost no less than 14s. 6d.¹²² Not all institutions were so careful to preserve their books, however. Twelve years later a visitation of the hospital and college of St Mary in the Newarke, Leicester, revealed considerable dereliction on the part of the precentor, who was castigated for endangering the spiritual health of the house. 'Either let him straightway repair the useless books', ran the injunction, 'or get new ones at the cost of the college, *that divine service may be hindered in no wise by reason of lack of books*.'¹²³

Taking a lead from its prototype, the Florentine hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, Henry VII's own foundation, the Savoy, placed particular emphasis upon proper record-keeping and the decent provision of books. In both hospitals a sacristan assumed responsibility for all ecclesiastical equipment, being assisted at the Savoy by a deputy who had to be literate. Although, in terms of care of patients, the Savoy marked a singular advance upon existing English hospitals, it is unlikely even to have begun building the type of specialist medical lending library for which Santa Maria Nuova was already famous.¹²⁴ Nor, despite the grandiose plans reflected in its statutes and

¹¹⁹ British Library, Add. MS 39976, fol. 83^r.

¹²⁰ *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (Chancery)*, vol. II: 1307-1349 (London, 1916), no. 293.

¹²¹ *A Cartulary of the Hospital of St John the Baptist*, ed. by H. E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, 66, 68-69, 3 vols (Oxford, 1914-16), III, p. 3.

¹²² See, for example, Archives of the Queen's College, Oxford, God's House account rolls, R.297, 299, 300-01, 315A; Norfolk Record Office, NCR 24A, Great Hospital Archive, box of general accounts 1510-1525, account of the receiver and steward, 1512-1513.

¹²³ Thompson, *History of . . . St Mary in the Newarke*, p. 191.

¹²⁴ Henderson and Park, "First Hospital among Christians", pp. 172, 179-80, and see British Library, MS Cotton, Cleopatra C.V, fol. 8^r.

design, can its store of service books have rivalled the richly illuminated treasures of its prototype. Even so, the combination of liturgical spectacle and practical assistance for the sick poor envisaged by the founder offers an intriguing glimpse of the way hospital provision might have developed in England had the Reformation not swept away the doctrinal underpinnings that justified the purchase of paradise through a combination of comfortable and spiritual works.

Hospitals did not, of course, cease to acquire books, nor to serve as important centres for the education of the young and the dissemination of the new Protestant faith.¹²⁵ But the emphasis now fell upon the word of God and the inner beliefs of the individual Christian. The role of the priest at the newly merged hospitals of St John and St Nicholas, Canterbury, was to catechize, preach, and read the Bible to his charges, who were solemnly warned against falling asleep 'in time of common prayer'.¹²⁶ On his visitation of the hospital of St Cross, Winchester, in 1535, Thomas Cromwell's agent ordered the master to remove every relic and image from the church and redirect all offerings to the deserving poor alone. He was, significantly, to acquire a new library, including printed copies of the Bible and commentaries upon it by the early Fathers.¹²⁷ Perhaps John Campeden's magnificent collection of liturgical books, presented to the house during his mastership over a century before, had already been destroyed or dispersed. It would not have been required for the simple service now held daily for the almsmen. Yet it still constitutes a powerful reminder of the place of the book in the medieval English hospital, and of the important part these institutions once played in the religious life of the nation.

Norwich

APPENDIX

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL HOSPITALS DISCUSSED IN THE TEXT

Unless otherwise stated, bibliographical information about the hospitals discussed below may be found in the footnotes to this article, which, for convenience, have been listed at the end of each entry. Brief institutional histories are also available in the relevant volumes of the *Victoria County History*. A full gazetteer of leper houses, with foundation dates (often significantly revised), constitutes the appendix to Andrew Satchell, 'The Emergence of Leper-Houses in Medieval England 1100–1250' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1998).

Bristol, St Mark: An early thirteenth-century foundation for a master, twelve poor scholars, and three chaplains, this hospital initially undertook to feed a hundred

¹²⁵ Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul*, pp. 215–39.

¹²⁶ Duncombe and Battely, *History and Antiquities of the Three Archiepiscopal Hospitals*, pp. 215–16.

¹²⁷ Lewis Macnaghten Humbert, *Memorials of the Hospital of St Cross* (London, 1868), pp. 37–38.

paupers each day. Regulations of 1259 increased the clerical establishment at the expense of charitable relief. The Augustinian rule had been adopted by the fourteenth century, but there was a dramatic decline after the Black Death.

Notes: 32–35, 41, 52, 72–73, 85, 91

Buckland by Dover, Kent, St Bartholomew: Founded in the mid-twelfth century, this leper hospital was run by the nearby Augustinian priory, whose sub-prior was warden. First twenty, then sixteen infirm patients were maintained, the lepers being replaced by sick paupers after the 1340s. A priest celebrated daily for the residents.

Note: 20

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, St Saviour: Founded in about 1184 by Abbot Samson and run by the sacristan of the Benedictine abbey, this hospital originally maintained an establishment of chaplains, lay brothers, and poor sisters. Following reforms in 1294, the rules changed to admit seven priests, celebrating daily, and replaced the almswomen with elderly and incapacitated clergy. Religious life was carefully observed in a chapel, which was rebuilt and embellished in the 1380s.

Notes: 59, 65

Cambridge, St John: First mentioned in 1204 as a modest refuge for the sick poor founded by a local burgess, this hospital developed into an Augustinian house for 'the maintenance of poor scholars', as well as the sick. Priority was, however, increasingly accorded to liturgical and intercessory activities. The staff comprised a master, five priests, and as many lay brothers (see Rubin, *Charity and Community*, pp. 99–111, 148–92).

Notes: 17, 23, 104

Canterbury (Thanington), St James: By 1164 this hospital accommodated twenty-five leprous sisters, who followed a strict rule under the direction of their own prioress, even though they were not formally professed. The Benedictines of Christ Church, Canterbury, exercised overall supervision through their sub-prior, who acted as warden and directed a staff of three priests. Reforms of 1414–15, by which date the sisters had ceased to be lepers, reveal the continuing importance of religious observance.

Note: 84

Canterbury, St John and St Nicholas: Although some distance apart, these two hospitals were regarded as twin foundations, both having been set up by Archbishop Lanfranc (d. 1189). They were not officially merged until after the Dissolution, when Archbishop Parker devised a joint rule. St John's had been established for the infirm and sick poor, and St Nicholas's outside the city, at Harbledown, for lepers. Both were served by their own priest and placed great stress upon a daily round of prayer.

Note: 126

Colchester, St Mary Magdalen: Allegedly founded in the early twelfth century and run under the aegis of the Benedictine monks of St John's abbey, this hospital initially supported a significant number of lepers and the sick poor. By 1423 the master, who was a priest, also ministered to the local parish, and it was assumed that at least some of the five remaining almsmen would be literate.

Note: 113

Ewelme, Oxfordshire, God's House: Founded between 1437 and 1442 by the duke and duchess of Suffolk for two priests and thirteen respectable poor men, this

almshouse incorporated a lavishly appointed chapel and sizeable grammar school.

Notes: 13, 14, 19

Exeter, St John the Baptist: Founded by 1184 for the sick poor, St John's came under episcopal control in 1243, and by the fourteenth century was following the Augustinian rule. Reforms in 1329 instituted an establishment of five priests and an elected master under the supervision of a warden appointed by the bishop. Highly regarded in the city and popular as a place of burial, the hospital began supporting a grammar school in the 1330s, and was thus able to run a sizeable choir (Orme and Webster, *English Hospital*, pp. 233–39).

Notes: 29, 41, 46–50

Gateshead, County Durham, St Edmund the Confessor: Founded by Bishop Farnham in 1248, largely as a chantry chapel with a master and three priests, this house concentrated almost exclusively upon liturgical provision.

Notes: 19, 38, 111

Hadleigh, Suffolk, Pykenham's almshouse: In his will of 1497 William Pykenham, archdeacon of Suffolk, founded this almshouse for twenty-four poor people, some of whom were assumed to be sufficiently 'learned' to read the psalter. The demanding liturgical round reflects the donor's dedication to the cult of the Five Wounds.

Note: 105

Heytesbury, Wiltshire, Hungerford's almshouse: Planned by Walter, Lord Hungerford (d. 1449), and completed by his daughter-in-law in 1472, this house accommodated twelve almsmen (some literate), two nurses, and a priest, who also ran the hospital school and served the family chantry in the nearby church. The rules were strict and imposed a heavy round of daily worship.

Note: 116

Kepier, near Durham, St Giles: Founded in the early twelfth century, rebuilt on a new site in 1180 and twice badly ravaged by fire, this hospital followed a quasi-monastic rule, heavily influenced by the Augustinians. The staff comprised six (later eight) chaplains and seven lay brethren under a master. Evidence from the early sixteenth century suggests that standards of religious observance remained high, despite manifold financial problems.

Note: 39, 46

King's Lynn, Norfolk (Gaywood), St Mary Magdalen: Allegedly drawn up in 1145 for the guidance of a master and twelve brothers and sisters, three of whom were to be lepers, the statutes confirmed in the early fourteenth century are of doubtful antiquity. They do, however, reveal the existence of a strict religious rule.

Notes: 106, 113

Leicester, the Annunciation of St Mary in the Newarke: This prestigious institution was founded in 1331 by Henry, earl of Lancaster, for a warden, five chaplains, and fifty sick paupers tended by five nurses. The religious life of the hospital, already prominent, was greatly augmented in 1356 by Henry's son, the first duke of Lancaster, who added a secular college with a dean and chapter and doubled the number of patients.

Notes: 14, 25, 100, 123

Leicester, Wyggeston's almshouse: Between 1513 and 1522 the wealthy local wool merchant, William Wyggeston, set up his almshouse for two scholars and twelve poor men, along with a chantry at the hospital of St Mary in the Newarke (q.v.). Because it was efficiently managed, the house survived the Dissolution virtually intact.

Note: 14

Lincoln, Holy Innocents and St Mary Magdalen: Despite its claims to far greater antiquity, this hospital was an early-twelfth-century royal foundation for a warden, a clerk, ten lepers, and two chaplains, who celebrated for the souls of the patrons as well as ministering to the sick. It experienced a long period of neglect and decline in the later Middle Ages.

Note: 120

London, Richard Whittington's hospital of the Holy Ghost, Blessed Virgin, St Michael, and All Saints: The former mayor's executors devised detailed regulations for this house in 1424, shortly after his death. It was to receive thirteen poor people, preference being given to members of his own company, the Mercers, or clergy from the college he had established nearby, to which the hospital was closely connected.

Notes 10, 11

London, St Anthony of Vienne: An alien priory, founded by the brothers of the order of St Anthony of Vienne before 1254 for two priests, a schoolmaster, scholars, and twelve poor men, the hospital was finally sequestered by the crown in 1414 after years of mismanagement by royal placemen. A period of renaissance followed: the church was rebuilt on imposing lines, and choristers from the school enhanced its reputation for high standards of musicianship. Annexation to St George's chapel, Windsor, in 1479, led (in the short term) to further improvements, and by 1522 the staff included a master, four priests, seven clerks, two schoolmasters (teaching song and grammar), a curate, and an usher.

Notes: 66–70, 79

London, St Bartholomew, Smithfield: The original foundation of about 1123 incorporated both an Augustinian priory and a hospital for the sick poor, pilgrims, and homeless wayfarers. By 1316 the hospital alone had a master, five priests, two lay brothers, and five sisters. Independence from the priory was secured after a struggle, the church was rebuilt as a major liturgical centre, and the hospital school attracted considerable support.

Notes: 26–31, 87, 117

London, St Giles, Holborn: Founded by Henry I's saintly queen, Matilda, this leper hospital was the subject of continuous disputes between the city, the Order of St Lazarus, and the crown over management and patronage. By the close of the fourteenth century it was supposed to maintain a master, clerk, chaplain, and fourteen lepers, but lacked the necessary resources to function effectively. The church was, however, well appointed (see E. Williams, *Early Holborn and the Legal Quarter of London*, 2 vols (London, 1927), II, nos 1610–54).

Notes: 110, 114

London, St Katherine by the Tower: Founded in about 1148 by King Stephen's wife, Matilda of Boulogne, for a master, brothers, sisters, and thirteen paupers, the hospital was initially run by the nearby Augustinian priory of Holy Trinity. It was,

however, reconstituted in 1273 as an independent house under the same rule, with additional facilities for scholars. A major liturgical centre, noted for its music, by 1535 it supported a master, three brothers, three priests, six clerks, six choristers, and a schoolmaster, as well as three sisters and ten almswomen.

Notes: 21, 79

London, St Mary Bethlehem: Founded in 1247 by Simon Fitzmary, an alderman, as a religious house for the support of the Order of Bethlehem, it later developed into London's first (and only medieval) hospital for the insane. The corporation, which supervised its day to day work, attempted to wrest patronage from the crown, not least because of financial mismanagement. Despite these problems, it maintained a churchyard and two chapels, the larger of which was the meeting place of at least two city guilds (see Jonathan Andrews and others, *The History of Bethlehem* (London, 1997), chs 3–4).

Notes: 79, 110

London, St Mary, Bishopsgate: An Augustinian house of late-twelfth-century foundation, this hospital expanded over the next century to support twelve canons, five lay brothers, and seven lay sisters, who cared for the sick and transient poor. One of the largest hospitals in England, by 1535 it accommodated 180 'well furnished' beds for the patients, as well as offering a high standard of liturgical display in the greatly enlarged and refurbished church.

Notes: 17, 22, 79

London, St Mary's, Cripplegate, or Elsingspital: Founded by a city merchant in 1331 for one hundred blind and incapacitated persons, with priority being given to clergymen, St Mary's was initially run as a secular college. Its five priests were replaced in 1340 by Augustinian canons and a prior. Although the hospital never accommodated its full complement of paupers, the church was greatly enlarged and embellished; by 1534 there were ten canons and many chantry priests.

Notes: 17, 19, 46, 48, 51, 52

London, St Thomas Acon: Relatives of the murdered Thomas Becket founded this hospital before 1191 for a master and twelve brothers, who were to relieve the sick poor in his name. Disputes over patronage led to serious financial problems, eventually relieved through a profitable connection with the city and, most notably, the wealthy Mercers' Company. The large and magnificent church, with many altars and chantry chapels, provided a fine liturgical setting, choristers being supplied by the hospital school.

Notes: 41, 65, 71, 74–78, 98, 105, 111, 117

London, The Savoy: Modelled on the Florentine Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova, this hospital for a hundred poor men was planned on an ambitious scale by Henry VII and set up by his executors. Statutes of 1524 provided for a master, four resident chaplains, a sizeable complement of priests, altarists, and clerks, and a dozen lay nurses under the direction of a matron. The chapel was magnificently decorated and appointed (see Robert Somerville, *The Savoy: Manor, Hospital, Chapel* (London, 1960), chs 2–3; *The History of the King's Works*, ed. by H. M. Colvin, vol. III: 1485–1660 (London, 1975), pp. 196–206).

Notes: 96, 97, 98, 124

Norwich, St Giles: Founded in 1249 by Bishop Walter Suffield, with thirty beds for the sick poor and additional facilities for elderly priests and seven poor scholars, the

hospital attracted considerable local support. The clerical staff of a master, four chaplains, and two clerks had, by 1430, been increased to a master, eight chaplains, two clerks, and seven choristers, as well as numerous hired priests. The magnificent church, rebuilt in the 1380s, provided ample scope for liturgical display.

Notes: 7, 17, 23, 25, 45, 63, 64, 72, 88, 108, 122

Norwich (Sprowston), St Mary Magdalen: This twelfth-century leper hospital was reputedly founded by Herbert de Losinga (d. 1119), Norwich's first bishop. It was run under the aegis of the cathedral priory, a Benedictine house, although from the outset it maintained its own priest and chapel.

Notes: 54, 56

Oxford, St John: Founded in the late twelfth century for a combination of resident brothers and sisters and transient paupers, the house had adopted the Augustinian rule by 1234, when it came under royal patronage. An establishment of three priests (one being master) served the two chapels, where high standards of religious observance were maintained, despite some later financial problems. The hospital was dissolved in 1456 and its assets used to augment the endowment of Magdalen Hall.

Note: 121

Ripon, Yorkshire, St John the Baptist: An early-twelfth-century foundation for poor travellers, the hospital was run by a master and resident brethren. By 1341 it was also supporting four or five poor clerks, who taught in Ripon and may have run a hospital school.

Note: 36

Saffron Walden, Essex, Almshouses: This communal venture was founded in about 1400 by the leading parishioners of the town for thirteen poor residents of good character, two keepers, and passing travellers in need. An impressive library catered for the needs of the local clergy as well as the institution itself.

Notes: 3-5, 7-8, 99

Salisbury, Holy Trinity: Founded in the mid-fourteenth century for twelve residents and eighteen short-stay patients, this hospital was efficiently run by the corporation, which, in 1438, excluded vagrants and homeless wayfarers. The chapel was served by its own priest, who celebrated daily for benefactors.

Note: 92

Salisbury, St Nicholas: Founded before 1227 for 'Christ's poor, weak and infirm', the older of the town's established hospitals was run under the aegis of the Dean and Chapter. It was staffed by a master and three other priests, who served the chapel on the nearby bridge as well as the two in the hospital itself.

Note: 93

Sherburn, County Durham, The Blessed Virgin, St Lazarus, St Mary, and St Martha: Originally a leper hospital for sixty-five brothers and sisters, the house was refounded in 1434 for a master, four chaplains, four clerks, two choristers, and just two lepers. The clerical staff had further increased by 1501, when there were six chaplains, two deacons, four clerks, and six boy choristers.

Notes: 2, 37, 84, 89

Southampton, God's House or St Julian: This Augustinian hospital was founded before 1196 for a small *familia* of a prior, two priests, a clerk, brothers, sisters, and

an unspecified (but small) number of poor patients. It was granted to Queen's College, Oxford, in the 1340s, and became a rest home for elderly or sick fellows, although some charitable functions continued.

Notes: 19, 46, 61, 102, 122

Southwark, Surrey, St Thomas: Founded in the 1170s as part of the Augustinian priory of St Mary, this hospital gained independence in 1213–15 on a new site. By 1295 the establishment comprised a master, six canons, five lay brothers, and five sisters, who tended about forty patients. Almshouses were added in 1507, but the hospital was dogged by laxity and maladministration (described by Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, pp. 75–85).

Notes: 85, 90, 98, 110

Stamford, Lincolnshire, William Brown's Almshouse of All Saints: Founded at considerable expense by Brown, a wealthy local merchant, in 1475, for two chaplains and twelve poor persons. The beautiful chapel still survives, with much of the original stained glass still intact.

Note: 12

Thetford, Norfolk, St Mary Magdalen: This relatively obscure twelfth- or early-thirteenth-century leper hospital catered for a master and an unspecified number of brethren, who used what had once been the local parish church as their chapel.

Note: 54

West Somerton, Norfolk, St Leonard: Ralph de Glanville, the king's justiciar, established this hospital in the 1180s for a chaplain, a clerk, and thirteen lepers, placing it under the management of Butley priory, another of his foundations. Relations between the lepers and the priors deteriorated to the point of violence, and after an acrimonious round of litigation in the 1290s the house entered a period of irreversible decline.

Note: 115

Westminster, Middlesex, St James: Founded in the latter part of the twelfth century, this hospital served a community which, by 1260, comprised eight brothers and sixteen leprous sisters, all following the Augustinian rule. It was managed by the Benedictine abbots of Westminster, who failed to arrest a long period of decline. The hospital eventually became an almshouse for female corrodians.

Note: 85

Winchester, St Cross: Founded in the 1130s by Bishop Henry of Blois to support thirteen poor men under a master, this hospital also provided meals for a hundred paupers each day. It declined dramatically after two contentious periods of rule by the Knights Templar, but was reformed and greatly embellished in the late fourteenth century by Bishop Wykeham. Cardinal Beaufort added an almshouse in 1445, but not all his ambitious plans came to fruition. There were, even so, six priests, six clerks, six choristers, and thirteen almsmen in residence in 1546.

Notes: 19, 40, 41, 119, 127

Winchester, St John the Baptist: Founded before 1235 for poor travellers, the sick, and pilgrims, this hospital enjoyed close connections with the mercantile elite from the outset. A century later, the establishment comprised a master, four chaplains, and a small community of resident lay brothers and sisters. There were two well-appointed chapels, one used by the city's ruling guild as a meeting place.

Note: 80

Winchester, St Mary Magdalen: A Norman foundation, reputedly established between 1129 and 1148, this hospital initially catered for a community of about eighteen lepers and their priest. The lepers were later replaced by ten poor brothers and sisters, who enjoyed the benefits of a well-appointed chapel.

Note: 19, 55

York, Christ and the Blessed Virgin, Fossgate: This almshouse was founded by John de Rawcliffe in 1373 for a priest, thirteen (later twenty) poor people, and two poor clerks, who ran a school there. Early in the following century it became the headquarters of the rich and powerful Company of Mercers, and thus assumed the role of guild chapel.

Notes: 44, 81, 108

York, St Leonard: The largest and one of the oldest hospitals in England, with (dubious) claims to a pre-Conquest foundation, this house followed the Augustinian rule and was capable of accommodating over 200 patients. By 1364 the master directed a staff of thirteen canons, various hired chaplains (two of whom heard confessions), and eight professed sisters, whose nursing duties grew less onerous after the Black Death. The hospital school had two masters (for grammar and singing respectively) and helped to supply a choir which, by 1376, numbered thirty choristers, the musical resources being considerably more impressive than those of many English cathedrals (see P. H. Cullum, *Cremetts and Corrodies: Care of the Poor and Sick at St Leonard's Hospital, York, in the Middle Ages*, Borthwick Papers, 79 (York, 1991)).

Notes: 85, 87, 94, 107, 109

York, St Mary, Bootham Bar: Founded in about 1300 by the Dean of York for a master, two chaplains, a clerk, and six poor priests, too sick or elderly to earn a living, this hospital became an exclusively religious institution. By 1547 the almsmen had gone, but there were twice as many chaplains.

Note: 113

York, St Thomas Becket, Micklegate Bar: From 1478 onwards the chapel of this modest almshouse for seven 'pore and indigent travayling people' became the meeting place of the Corpus Christi guild, which was responsible for mounting the most lavish procession of the civic year.

Note: 82