Reflections and observations on Romanesque manuscripts and charters from Reading Abbey

Reflections and Observations on Romanesque Manuscripts and Charters from Reading Abbey

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The manuscripts and charters that can be linked to the abbey at Reading are the subjects of two books, each with good bibliographies of, and references to, the earlier literature. Brian Kemp published the abbey cartularies, using whenever possible texts from the surviving original charters, in two volumes in 1986 and 1987, and Alan Coates published an account of the abbey manuscripts in 1999.[1] The present paper reflects upon the Romanesque material, and points to some ways in which knowledge and understanding of the abbey scriptorium might be advanced. The limits of date are from the foundation of the abbey in 1121 to the production of a list of the abbey books between c. 1180 and 1191.[2]

The booklist is in the earliest abbey cartulary, and it is unusual among English booklists of the twelfth century as it describes both liturgical and non-liturgical books.[3] The inclusion of the cartulary and the booklist in the same manuscript is significant as they represent the material assets of the abbey on the one hand, and an important part of the spiritual assets of the abbey on the other. The lands and privileges recorded in the cartulary are evidence for the income that supported the material needs of the abbey, whereas the non-liturgical books represent the accumulated learning and wisdom of the Church (headed by copies of the Bible), with the liturgical ones the vehicles through which the spiritual life of the abbey was supported and manifested.[4]

A distinction between 'liturgical' and 'non-liturgical' books has long been a commonplace in the literature dealing with the production of English Romanesque manuscripts. That many medieval booklists do not include liturgical books (likely to have been kept in the church or

sacristry) but only non-liturgical books (likely to have been kept in or off the cloister), together with the very poor survival of English Romanesque liturgical books, has helped to reinforce this distinction. What is clear from the surviving English Romanesque booklists is that they all record very similar core collections of mostly patristic works, usually regarded as necessary for private reading and evidence of the energy and vigour of post-Conquest church leaders in bringing England into the European mainstream of the so-called twelfth-century Renaissance.

It has recently been pointed out by Teresa Webber that a number of non-liturgical books were needed and used for public reading within ecclesiastical establishments 'during the Chapter meeting held daily each morning, the evening meeting of the community before Compline known as Collation, and at mealtimes in the refectory'.[5] (That books were made for reading aloud has, of course, long been known, but it is not a matter explicitly acknowledged much in accounts of English Romanesque manuscripts.) The degree to which the production of manuscripts made for public reading (whether also used for private reading or not) was influenced by their intended use is not usually a matter that is taken into account in discussions of their design and arrangement. Furthermore, the acquisition or production of these kinds of books, together with liturgical books, was likely to have been of pressing concern to newly established houses, and therefore they are likely to be among the earliest products of their scriptoria.[6]

No complete Romanesque liturgical book has survived from Reading,[7] but among the earliest products of its scriptorium are copies of the first volume (of three, the second of which is lost and the third of which is a little later than the first) of Augustine on Psalms,[8] the first volume (of two, the second of which is lost) of the *Moralia in Iob* of Gregory,[9] and the second volume of two (the first is lost) of a homiliary.[10] These are all grand books and all were probably used for reading aloud from as soon as they were made, and they were all certainly used for this purpose in the fourteenth century, when they were kept in the dormitory for reading in the refectory.[11]

The three manuscripts just mentioned could certainly have been produced during the 1130s, and one of them was probably the work of a scribe who wrote a charter for the abbey in 1136.[12] All this points to the virtual certainty that within ten or fifteen years of its foundation in

1121, Reading had an active scriptorium where fine manuscripts were being produced by more than one scribe. In my experience, from examining English Romanesque manuscripts from many places, it does appear that serious programmes of book production did not usually begin until some ten or twenty years after the foundation of abbeys or priories, and Reading is therefore not unusual in this regard.[13]

A list of works by Augustine

While the late-twelfth-century abbey booklist in the abbey cartulary was first published in 1888, a slightly earlier list of works by Augustine in another Reading manuscript seems never to have been noticed. At the end of a volume of mostly sermons in the Bodleian Library, Rawlinson A 416 f. 129r, at the top of a formerly blank leaf, are the titles of twelve works by Augustine.[14] Each work begins on a new line, and the list was the work of a good scribe writing formally, who left the first letter of each line to be filled in later in colour, although these were never supplied. This might have been intended as the beginning of a booklist, although Romanesque booklists usually open with Bibles (as does the cartulary booklist), and the handwriting suggests a date towards the end of the twelfth century more or less contemporary with the cartulary booklist. However, in the absence of a heading, for which only two lines were allowed, presumably to be supplied in colour, the purpose of the list is uncertain.

If the list does record volumes at the abbey, it is notable for having as the first item Augustine's commentary on John that is a striking absentee from the cartulary booklist. (All of the other items in the list are in the booklist.) It seems very unlikely that the abbey did not have a copy early, and indeed one was at Leominster,[15] for it was the widespread custom in monasteries of all orders for passages from it to be read in the refectory during Lent.[16] Furthermore, a passage from it was read in the refectory on the anniversary of the death (1 December) of the abbey's founder, King Henry I (d. 1135), who was buried before the high altar at Reading.[17]

Charters

The first step to take in any study of the Romanesque manuscripts from any one house should be an examination of all the charters (or single-sheet documents) that can be associated with it. These are usually datable (unlike books) and, unless there are good reasons not to do so, can usually be presumed to have been written locally. During the first two thirds of the twelfth century, and often until towards the end of the century, these were written in bookhand, and their scribes can, and often do, also appear in books.[18]

There are fifteen, perhaps sixteen, twelfth-century charters written by Reading scribes,[19] but, although their texts have all been published, little or no attention has ever been paid to their scribes.[20] Thirteen of these charters are listed below chronologically by their issuing abbot, and, for ease in cross references in the commentaries, are numbered **1-13**, with the other three numbered **14-16**. Unless stated otherwise, the abbatial charters are only datable to the periods of office of individual abbots. I have made no systematic attempt to identify the charter scribes in books.[21] It will be seen that the sixteen charters were written by eleven scribes, and the work of most of them is illustrated in details at actual size.

Abbot Edward (1135-54)
1. Oxford, Brasenose College[22]
Small, mediocre and uneven bookhand.

Abbot Roger (1158-65)
2. London, British Library Add. ch. 19594[23]
Moderate bookhand with some informal features (Fig. 1). The scribe also wrote no. **4**
3. London, British Library Add. ch. 19595[24]
Goodish bookhand with informal features (Fig. 2). The scribe also wrote no. **16.**
4. London, British Library Add. ch. 19596[25]
Moderate bookhand with some informal features. The scribe also wrote no. **2**
5. London, British Library Add. ch. 19597[26]
Moderate bookhand with some informal features (Fig. 3).

6. Kew, National Archives E315/53/223 (dated 1164)[27]
Good bookhand (Fig. 4).

Abbot William (1165-73)
7. London, British Library Add ch. 19599[28]
Bookhand with a few informal features (Fig. 5). The scribe also wrote nos. **8** and **10**, and also wrote London, British Library Harley 651.[29]
8. London, British Library Add. ch. 19600[30]
Bookhand. The scribe also wrote nos. **7** and **10**.

Abbot Joseph (1173-86)
9. London, British Library Add. ch. 19601 (?1182)[31]
Goodish bookhand (Fig. 6).
10. London, British Library Add. ch. 19602[32]
Good bookhand with some informal features (Fig. 7). The scribe also wrote nos. **7** and **8**.

Abbot Hugh (1186-99)
11. London, British Library Add. ch. 19607[33]
Informal hand (Fig. 8). The scribe also wrote no. **12**.
12. London, British Library Add. ch. 19608[34]
Informal hand. The scribe also wrote no. **11**.
13. London, British Library Add. ch. 19610 (1189 x 1193, perhaps 1191 x 1193)[35]
Informal hand.

Queen Adeliza to Reading
14. Hertford, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Centre DE/X1034/M1 (1136)[36]
Expert bookhand (Fig. 9). This large and very grand charter was issued at Reading, and it looks to have been written by a scribe who worked in (at least) one abbey manuscript, Oxford, St John's College 11.[37]

Empress Matilda to Bishop Alexander of Lincoln and others concerning a gift to Reading
15. London, British Library Add. ch. 19578 (1141)[38]
Bookhand with informal features. The charter was issued at Reading and may have been written by a Reading scribe.

Empress Matilda to Reading
16. London, British Library Add. ch. 19577 (s. xii$^{3/4}$, after 1144)[39]
Goodish bookhand with some informal features. Empress Matilda granted Blewbury in Berkshire to Reading in a charter datable 1144 x 1147, perhaps in 1144 (London, British Library Add. ch. 19579[40]). This charter is a 'duplicate', written by the scribe who also wrote no. **3**.

Of the eleven scribes who wrote the charters, one wrote three (nos. **7**, **8** and **10**) and three wrote two each (nos. **2** and **4**, **3** and **16**, and **11** and **12** respectively), and one, perhaps two, of the scribes have been found so far in Reading books (see the commentaries to nos. **7** and **14**). The trajectory of the handwriting of the charters, from bookhand with round arches, to bookhand with broken arches and near horizontal feet, to bookhand with informal features, follows the pattern of handwriting in all English charters.[41]

Manuscripts

The second step to take in any study of Romanesque manuscripts from any house should be the identification of all the scribes, rubricators, correctors and artists who worked in them. Only when all of these have been identified is it possible to begin to determine the patterns of collaboration between them, distinguish locally-made books from imports, and to place the manuscripts into some kind of chronology.[42] In particular, it was not (I believe) uncommon during the Romanesque period for scribes to supply the initials to the books they wrote, and two or more manuscripts written by the same scribe with initials by the same hand would suggest that they were the work of the scribe.[43]

Reading, for an English house, has quite a large number of surviving Romanesque books (the handlist by Alan Coates on pp. 144-154 lists fifty-seven) to embark upon such work. A good beginning has been made by Coates, who has placed what he considers local productions into one of two groups, representing two phases of work. The first phase is dated to between the late 1130s and late 1140s (about twenty-four books), and the second to about the 1150s to the 1170s (about fifteen books).[44] One notable feature of the earlier group is the presence in fourteen of a single corrector.[45]

Coates relied on the general aspect of the handwriting in the books of both phases, and the presence of initials with what has been dubbed a 'tassel design' in thirteen books of the first phase to group the manuscripts.[46] He remarked that it was only 'possible in a limited number of instances to identify individual scribes', and lists three, one who worked in three manuscripts, a second who worked in four, and a third who worked in two.[47] The second identification is mistaken, and is discussed below,[48] the first cannot be entirely confirmed,[49] but the third is correct.[50]

My impression from a recent brief survey of the manuscripts in the Bodleian and British libraries, together with my notes and observations of these and some other manuscripts mostly made over twenty-five years ago, is that there is much to be discovered and said about the scribes in Reading books from a close examination. The initials certainly deserve a closer examination, for my impression is that there are several artists who used the tassel design or something similar, and that, while not all of the locally-made books used the design, their general aspect does suggest local manufacture. Coates has cleared the ground, and his study is a useful beginning, not an ending, wanting much more detail if the working habits of the abbey scriptorium are to be better understood. What follows are some revisions and additions to what has been published on the abbey manuscripts as a small contribution to this process.

A locally made manuscript

Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson A 376 is placed by Coates among a small group of manuscripts of unknown origin, dated to the mid-twelfth century, and noted to have been at Reading by the time of the cartulary booklist.[51] However, it can be shown to have been locally made. The opening page (Fig. 10) has an elegant initial **S** (pink letter, with a twist design in the central diagonal, and most of the other details in blue) is very close in its form, the quality of its execution and many of its details to an initial **S** in a phase one manuscript (Edinburgh University Library 104).[52] The principal difference between the two is the inclusion of tassel designs in the counter spaces of the Edinburgh initial, whereas these are empty in the Rawlinson one. Following the initial **S** are two lines of red rustic capitals for the incipit (with a green initial **I** whose colour matches the green in the initial **S**), one line of pen-drawn ink capitals all touched yellow, one line of handwriting by a good scribe, followed by lines of handwriting by a second scribe. It seems likely that there are two scribes at work here, one responsible for the initial, incipit, capital letters and first line of handwriting, and the second for the rest. The closeness of the two initial **S**s in the manuscripts suggests that they might be the work of the same hand, and they certainly show that the Rawlinson manuscript was a local product of the mid-twelfth century.

An imported manuscript

A collection of several works in a manuscript in the Bodleian, Laud misc. 578, was included by Coates in his study because of the coincidence of its content with an item in the abbey book list.[53] (The upper, or front, end-leaves are lost and with them any evidence of an ex libris.) It is another manuscript placed by Coates among a small group of unknown origin (its handwriting and initials certainly do not suggest a Reading origin), and misdated to the late twelfth century.

The handwriting and initials of the Laud manuscript suggest that its scribes (there appears to be eight of them) were trained in the west country, and worked in or about the period between 1110 and 1140. Among the closest parallels to the Laud manuscript are a small group

of manuscripts probably or certainly from the abbey at Evesham, and one of uncertain origin.[54] The terminal at the foot of an initial **P** in the Laud manuscript (Ill. 1, left) has finials with bulbous projections ending in bifurcated ends turned back and ended with disks. There are floating disks at the ends, and a purple tear-drop shape between the principal division of the finial. (The use of purple is a little unusual, but it is common in Evesham initials, and some of the plain initials in the Laud manuscript are also purple.) A more elaborate initial **P** in an Evesham manuscript (Ill. 1, right) has all these features, and they are characteristic of initials in a number of west country books.[55] It seems likely that the Laud manuscript was made in a west country house (perhaps Evesham) and soon acquired in some way by Reading, not least because of containing the work of a number of scribes, none of whose hands have been noticed in any Reading book.[56]

Ill. 1, Left: Oxford, Laud misc. 578 f. 13v (the initial is in blue, green and red, and the decoration in red and purple). Right: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Jesus College 93 f. 56v (the initial is red, and the decoration in red, green and purple).

A hitherto unidentified Reading manuscript

In the Bodleian Library is a hitherto unrecognised abbey manuscript of the mid-twelfth century, Laud misc. 232, identifiable in the abbey booklist.[57] It is a composite manuscript of three contemporary

parts, with no end-leaves at the beginning that may have contained an ex-libris:

Part 1 (ff. 1r-70v): **a** Hugh of St Victor, *Summa sententarium* **b** Hugh of St Victor, *De uirgintate beatae Mariae* **c** Hugh of St Victor, *De sapientia animae Christi* (incomplete for leaf loss)

Part 2 (ff. 71r-93v): **d** Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo Deo* **e** Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep.* 462 **f** Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem S. Theodorici* (incomplete for leaf loss) **g** *Tractatus abbatis cuiusdam.*

Part 3 (ff. 94r-186v): **h** Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*[58]

The order of the contents does not quite match the description in the booklist in which the order of the works in the manuscript is as follows: **h**, **a**, **b**, **d**, and **f** with no mention of items **c**, **e** and **g**.

If Part 3 originally came before Part 1, the discrepancy in content order between the manuscript and the booklist could be explained, but the poor condition of the manuscript and its present binding make it impossible to determine whether this was so or not.

It is not merely the coincidence of the content of the manuscript with the catalogue entry that points to the Laud manuscript being a Reading book, for there are two modest arabesque initials (both somewhat damaged) in a 'style' that has been most associated with Reading,[59] one at the beginning of Part 1 (f. 1r) and the other at the beginning of Part 2 (f. 71r). Furthermore, one of the scribes who worked in the manuscript also worked in another Oxford volume long associated with Reading (Rawlinson A 416).[60] What gives the Laud manuscript a particular value is item **g** at the end of Part 2. This is a kind of response or reply to the work of Bernard of Clairvaux that comes immediately before it, and it was edited by Jean Leclercq in 1957 and stated to be the only known copy of the piece.[61]

A misunderstood Reading manuscript

The production of a glossed Psalter in the Bodleian, Auct. D.4.6, has long been tentatively associated with Reading. It contains an initial signed by its artist (*Iohannes me fecit*) and also in the initial the name *Rogerio*, often identified, with varying degrees of conviction, as Roger,

abbot of Reading between 1158 and 1165.[62] It has recently been shown by Nigel Morgan that the litany in the manuscript is a Winchester one, and, as the litany includes Thomas Becket who died in 1170 and was canonised in 1173, the Auct. manuscript must have been made after the death of Roger and it cannot have been made for him.[63] The cartulary booklist has two psalters described as the gift of a Roger (*Rogerii Sigar* and *Rogerus Dure*), one with the gloss of Gilbert of Poitiers, and the likeliest donor of the Auctarium Psalter is Roger Sigar.[64] This would narrow the date of the psalter to between about 1173 and 1191, and notes in the manuscript do show that the manuscript was later at Reading.

A misdated Reading manuscript

The second part of a composite manuscript in the Bodleian, Laud misc. 91 ff. 106-237, contains a commentary on the psalms in French. It is listed by Coates, with the first part of the manuscript, in the thirteenth-century section of his handlist of Reading books.[65] However, the psalter commentary is datable from its handwriting, which is English, to about the middle of the second half of the twelfth century.[66] Where the psalter commentary was written, and when it was joined with the first part of the manuscript, is at present uncertain.

The reflections and observations offered in this paper are not intended to be either definitive or comprehensive, but merely to advance in a small way an understanding of some of the Reading material. Manuscripts and charters are still mostly consulted and used for their content rather than their production, but the material can never be said to be properly understood unless the full details of its production (so far as it is possible to do so) has been unravelled. I hope that the Reading material will soon catch the eye of some future scholars, for its extent and importance deserves more attention.

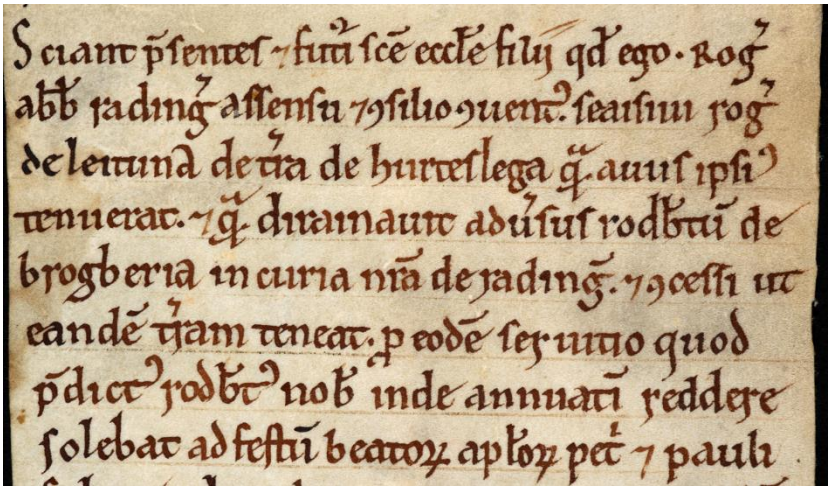

Fig. 1, London, British Library Add. ch. 19594 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

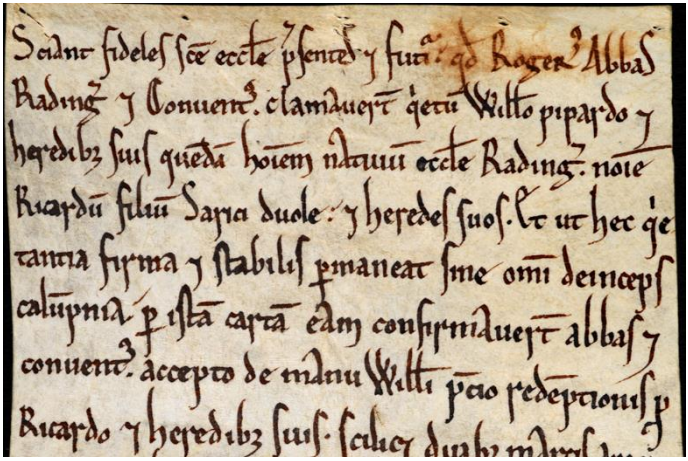

Fig. 2, London, British Library Add. ch. 19595 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

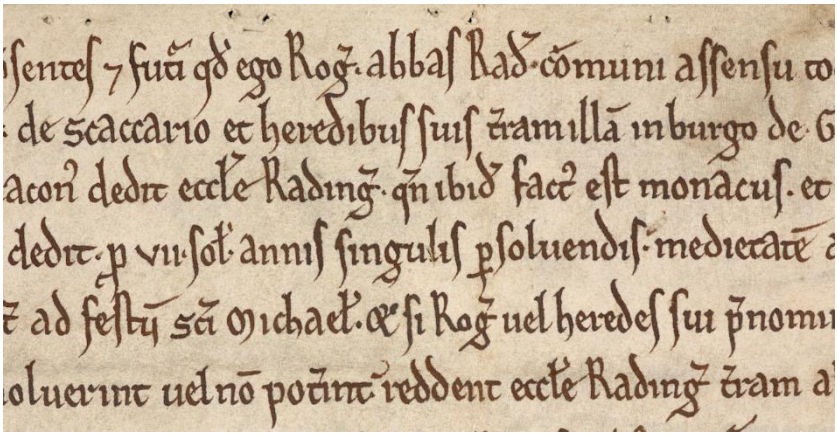

Fig. 3, London, British Library Add. ch. 19597 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

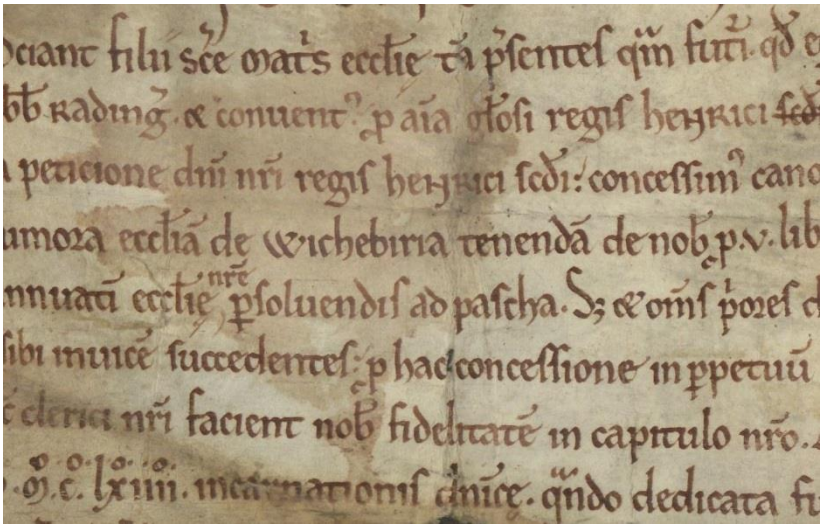

Fig. 4, Kew, The National Archives E315/53/223 (detail, approximately actual size).

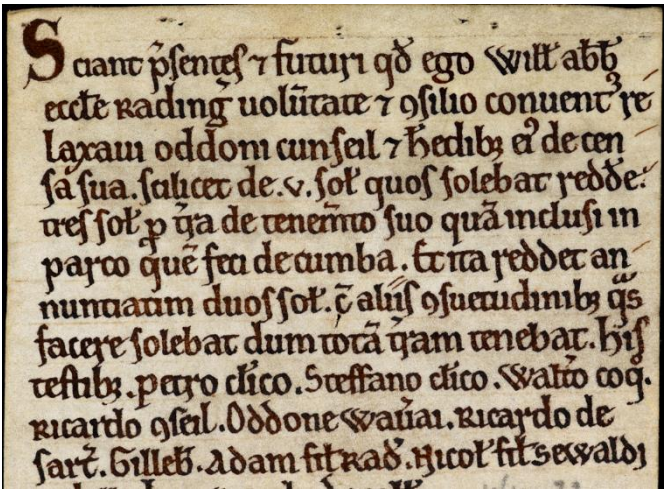

Fig. 5, London, British Library Add. ch. 19599 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

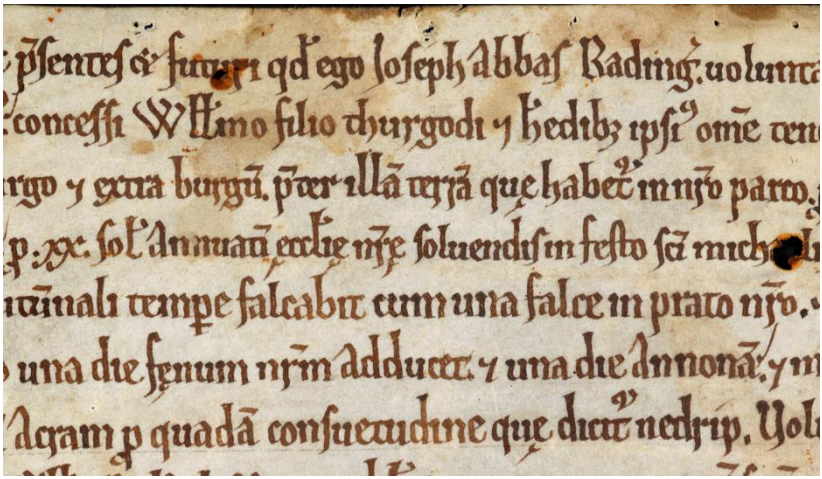

Fig. 6, London, British Library Add. ch. 19601 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

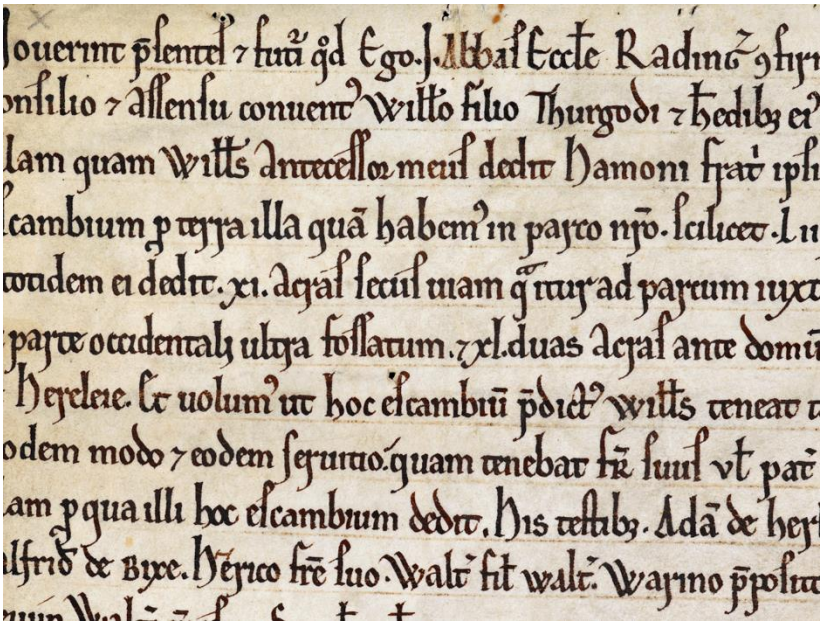

Fig. 7, London, British Library Add. ch. 19602 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

Fig. 8, London, British Library Add. ch. 19607 (detail, actual size) © The British Library Board.

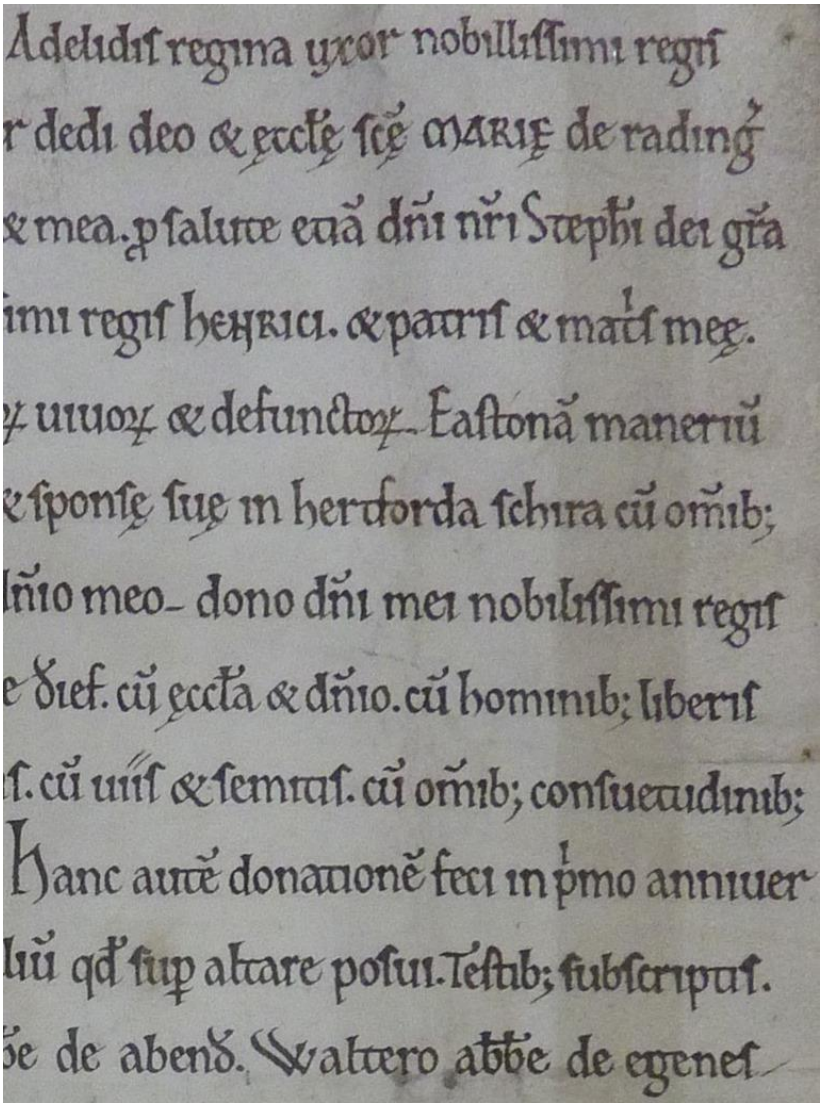

Fig. 9, Hertford, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Centre DE/X1034/M1 (detail, actual size).

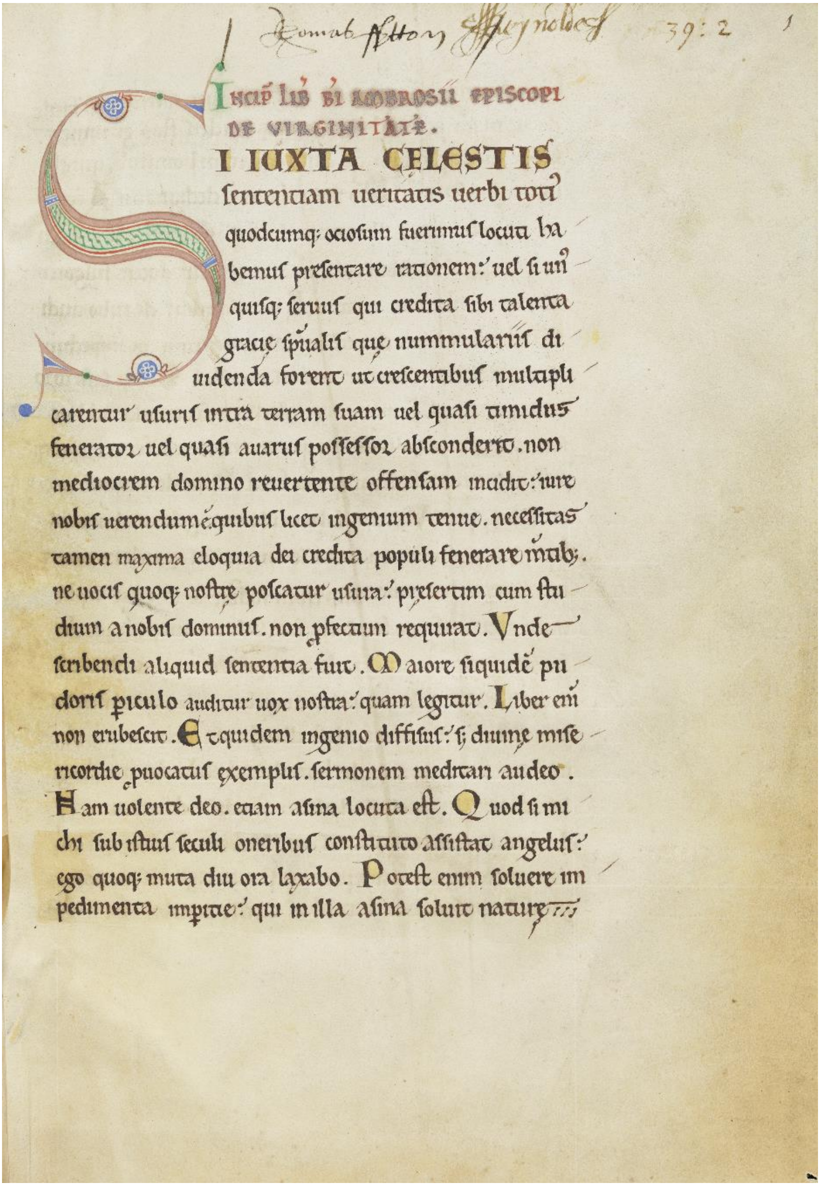

Fig. 10, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson A 376 f. 1r (reduced from 250 x 180 mm) © The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

Notes

1 B. R. Kemp ed., *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, 2 vols (London, 1986-7), and A. Coates, *English Medieval Books. The Reading Abbey Collections from Foundation to Dispersal* (Oxford, 1999).

2 I follow the date for the catalogue proposed by Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 20, where he also discusses the slightly later dates given to the booklist by earlier scholars.

3 It has recently been edited twice, once in R. Sharpe, J. P. Carley, R. M. Thomson and A. G. Watson, *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues* (London, 1996), pp. 420-47 (with the siglum B71), and again in Coates, *Medieval Books*, pp. 25-34. Following the abbey booklist is another with books at the dependent priory at Leominster, edited by Sharpe et al., *Benedictine Libraries*, pp. 454-61 (with the siglum B75), and Coates, *Medieval Books*, pp. 34-6. The editions of these booklists in Sharpe et al. number each item (1, 2 and so on), whereas the editions of Coates, rather inconveniently, do not. Below the two lists will be cited by their respective siglum in the earlier of these two editions followed by item number (for example, B71.100 refers to item 100 in the Reading booklist), followed by a page number reference to the later edition (for example, B71.100 = Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 29).

4 However, this combination of cartulary and booklist during the Romanesque period otherwise only occurs at one other place, the cathedral priory at Rochester, although the booklist does not include any liturgical books, produced rather earlier in the twelfth century. For an edition see Sharpe et al., *Benedictine Libraries*, pp. 469-92.

5 Teresa Webber, *Reading in the Refectory: Monastic Practice in England from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Centuries, London University Annual John Coffin Memorial Palaeography Lecture, 18 February 2010*, online revised version, 2013: http://www.ies.sas.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/Publications/Coffin%20lectures/Webber_Teresa_ReadingintheRefectory_Feb2012_RevisedEdition2013_new.pdf (accessed 29.6.2016).

6 I owe much of what is said in the previous two paragraphs to the work of Teresa Webber, cited in the previous footnote, and to helpful conversations with her during the past few years, in which I have been the one to have benefited the most.

7 A fragment of one (Woolhampton, Douai Abbey 11) is listed by Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 153, where it is suggested that this is one of the earliest extant manuscripts from Reading, although whether written there or not is

uncertain, see ibid. p. 58, where reference is made to N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* ii (Oxford, 1977), pp. 418-19, where the similarity of its handwriting to that in three Reading manuscripts is noticed.

8 Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 257 (Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 146). For the fine opening initial, which uses gold, see O. Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* iii (Oxford, 1973), pl. 15 (no. 140). The third volume is Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 241 (Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 146).

9 Eton College 226 (Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 149).

10 Oxford, St John's College 11 (Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 150). From the description of this manuscript in R. Hanna, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of St John's College, Oxford* (Oxford, 2002), it appears possible that the fragment of a breviary formerly used as a paste-down (f. ii) and dated to s. xii med or s. xii$^{3/4}$ is the remains of an abbey service book (see p. 20), but it was not noticed by Coates, *Medieval Books*.

11 For the list of the books kept in the dormitory see Sharpe et al., *Benedictine Libraries*, pp. 451-3, where those noticed above are nos. 7, 21 and 11 respectively.

12 See below, p. 5 no. 14.

13 However, it is possible that in the years before recognisable programmes of book production began that the principal concern of a monastic scriptorium would have been with the making of service books, and these have a very poor survival rate from all English houses.

14 The list is not noticed in either the first volume of the catalogue of the Rawlinson manuscripts at col. 401 (Oxford, 1862), or Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 144.

15 B75.4 = Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 34.

16 For a brief account of the use of this work see Webber, *Reading in the Refectory*, pp. 18-19.

17 Oxford, St John's College 1 is a later (s. xiii/xiv) copy of Augustine on John with a Reading provenance, and at the end is the reading for the anniversary of Henry I, see Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 103. (It is notable that this is the only late medieval manuscript from Reading containing Augustine, and this suggests that if there was an earlier copy of the work, as seems virtually certain, it needed to be replaced or renewed for some reason.) The direction concerning the reading is first recorded in a late fourteenth-century list of texts to be read in the refectory in Oxford, St John's College 11 f. 1r, see Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 84, with discussion ibid. p. 66.

18 For example, a document concerning an agreement between the abbeys of St Albans and Reading (London, British Library Add. ch. 19590), datable

to between 1151 and 1154, was written by a St Albans scribe who wrote other charters and all or part of a number of books, see R. M. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans Abbey 1066-1235*, 2 vols. (Woodbridge, 1982), i. p. 29, and, for a reproduction of part of the document, see ii. pl. 90 (for a complete and better one see G. F. Warner and H. J. Ellis, *Facsimiles of Royal and Other Charters in the British Museum. 1. William I to Richard I* (London, 1903), no. 30), and see also M. Gullick and A. Pegrum, 'A twelfth-century royal charter for St Albans and a local scribe', *Hertfordshire Archaeology* 13 (1997-2003), 127-9. For the document see Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 688.

19 I have (a little reluctantly) excluded three, all in bookhands, but by different scribes, whose scribal status is uncertain. One was issued by William, earl of Lincoln, to Reading (London, British Library Add. ch. 19586, datable 1139 x 1141), the second by Queen Adeliza to Reading (London, British Library Add. ch. 19573, datable 1139 x 1141), and the third one issued by Hubert, bishop of Salisbury, that Brian Kemp has observed may have been composed [and therefore perhaps written?] at Reading (London, British Library Add. ch. 19611, datable 1189 x 1190). These are Kemp, *Cartularies*, I, nos. 371, 535 and 203 respectively, and the first is reproduced in Warner and Ellis, *Facsimiles of Royal and Other Charters in the British Museum*, no. 14, and the third in B. R. Kemp, *English Episcopal Acta 18. Salisbury 1078-1217* (Oxford, 1999), pl. 4 (no. 179). The first two may have been issued very close in time, as they have very similar witness lists, but they are not scribally very close.

20 Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 52, mentions five, but his suggestion that three of them (one a charter of Hilary, bishop of Chichester, to Reading that seems likely to be by a scribe of the bishop) are by the same scribe is certainly wrong.

21 Several of the charters do not occur in any of the abbey cartularies, and I am very grateful to Brian Kemp for telling me that he knows of no others than those included in the list below.

22 H. E. Salter, *Facsimiles of Early Charters in Oxford Muniment Rooms* (Oxford, 1929), no. 55. Not in Kemp, *Cartularies*, as in none of the abbey cartularies.

23 Kemp, *Cartularies*, I, no. 349.

24 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1204.

25 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1205, and C. F. Slade, 'Whitley deeds of the twelfth century', *A Medieval Miscellany for Doris May Stenton*, ed. P. M. Barnes and C. F. Slade, Pipe Roll Society n.s. 36 (1962), pp. 235-46, pl. opp. p. 243.

26 Not in Kemp, *Cartularies*, as not in any of the abbey cartularies.

27 L. C. Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents* (London, 1958), p. 100 (edition) and pl. 3a, and see also the commentary to Kemp, *Cartularies*, I, no. 310. I have not seen this charter and do not know whether it has any endorsements. (Hector does not notice any, but this does not mean there may not be some.) The present location of the charter, a chirograph, suggests that it is from the archive of the recipient, the priory of Breamore. Note that Hector gives the item number of the charter as 213 instead of 223.
28 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1208.
29 The identification of the scribe of the charters with the Reading manuscript was fortuitous as, asked by Laura Cleaver for my views on the scribe of the book, I looked carefully at his hand not long before I saw the charters, when it was easy to make the identification. For Harley 651, with an important collection of historical texts, see Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 149, and Laura Cleaver, 'History Books at Reading in the Twelfth Century' in the present volume.
30 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1207.
31 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1209, and Slade, 'Whitley deeds of the twelfth century', pl. opp p. 242.
32 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1210.
33 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1212.
34 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 1211.
35 Not in any of the abbey cartularies, but for its interest printed by Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, Appendix B no. 1.
36 Kemp, *Cartularies*, I, no. 370 (when the charter was still in private hands). There is a reduced reproduction of the whole charter in W. Brigg, 'Grant of the Manor of Aston to Reading Abbey', *Transactions of the East Herts Archaeological Society* 1 (1900), 129-35, pl. opp. p. 129, and a much reduced reproduction in H. C. Andrews, 'Two Twelfth Century Charters of Reading Abbey', *Antiquaries Journal* 14 (1934), 7-12, pl. 1.
37 My hesitation in affirming the identification is because I have only seen several photographs of the manuscript and not the manuscript itself. For it see Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 150, and see also ibid. p. 59, where it is put in his first phase of abbey book production dated to between the late 1130s and the late 1140s. Its initials are very fine, and, unusually in an English book of this kind (a homiliary), use gold.
38 Kemp, *Cartularies*, I, no. 537, and Warner and Ellis, *Facsimiles of Royal and Other Charters in the British Museum*, no. 20.
39 Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 667, and Warner and Ellis, *Facsimiles of Royal and Other Charters in the British Museum*, no. 22.

40 H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davis, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum. Volume 4. Facsimiles of Original Charters and Writs of King Stephen, The Empress Matilda and Dukes Geoffrey and Henry 1135-1154* (Oxford, 1969), pl. 46, and the commentary to Kemp, *Cartularies*, II, no. 667.

41 See T. Webber, 'L'écriture des documents en Angleterre au XIIe siècle', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 165 (2007), 139-65.

42 No account of any English Romanesque scriptorium has come close to the comprehensive work of A. Cohen-Mushlin, *A Medieval Scriptorium. Sancta Maria Magdalena de Frankendal*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1990) in its extent, method and detail, but it shows what can be done.

43 On this matter see J. J. G. Alexander, 'Scribes as artists: the arabesque initial in twelfth-century English manuscripts', *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries. Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson (London, 1978), pp. 87-116, esp. pp. 96-104, and see further P. D. Stirnemann, 'Where do we go from here? The study of French twelfth-century manuscripts', *Romanesque Art and Thought in the Twelfth Century: Essays in Honor of Walter Cahn*, ed. C. Hourihane (Pennsylvania State University Press in association with the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 2008), pp. 82-94, at pp. 83-5,

44 Coates, *Medieval Books*, pp. 58-9.

45 Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 53 and pl. 8.

46 Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 53, and for the tassel design see ibid. pls. 3 and 4. For two modest initials in abbey books without the tassel design, in Chicago, Newberry Library 12.7 and 12.1 respectively, see R. Clemens and T. Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca, 2007), pls. 2-15 and 8-9.

47 Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 53.

48 This is a scribe identified in Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. D.4.6 and elsewhere, see pp. 10-11 below.

49 The scribe is identified in Edinburgh, University Library 104 (see C. R. Borland, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts in Edinburgh University Library* (Edinburgh, 1916), pl. 18, which shows details of two pages both with initials with tassel designs), Chicago, Newberry Library 12.2, and Oxford, St John's College 73, but I am not aware of good published reproductions of the last two manuscripts. According to Coates, the first scribe in the Edinburgh manuscript is the first scribe in the other two, and Borland in her description of the Edinburgh manuscript notices that the first scribe wrote to f. 142 ('the hand changes at f. 143', p. 165) and her plate shows details from ff. 2r and 108r. According to my notes on the scribes of the Chicago manuscript (made when I saw it in 1983), its first scribe, who wrote to f. 55r, is probably identifiable as the first scribe of the Edinburgh manuscript.

50 The scribe is identified in Oxford, Trinity College 63 (Coates, *Medieval Books*, pl. 8) and Eton College 226 (see N. R. Ker, 'The English Manuscripts of the Moralia of Gregory the Great', *Kunsthistorische Forschungen Otto Pächt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Rosenauer and G. Weber (Salzburg, 1972), pp. 77-89, pl. 1, which also shows an initial in the manuscript with a tassel design). According to N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* ii (Oxford, 1977), p. 702, the Eton manuscript was probably the work of two scribes, 'changing for the better at f. 120', and the reproduction cited above is from f. 142v, and this does appear to show the scribe in the Oxford manuscript. Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 149, who does not cite Ker's description, gives the Eton manuscript to one scribe. I have not seen either of them.

51 B71.104 = Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 30; Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 57 and for the manuscript see ibid. p. 144. The first four items in the book are by Ambrose, and form a small corpus on virginity and widowhood that are often found together.

52 For the manuscript see Coates, *Medieval Books*, pp. 144-5, and for the initial see Borland, *Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts in Edinburgh University Library*, pl. 18.

53 B71.123 = Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 30. For the manuscript, with works by Bachiarius, Julianus Pomerius and Augustine, see Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 147. The reason for the inclusion of the manuscript is not explained by Coates, but it is made explicit in the commentary to B71.123 with acknowledgement to Coates.

54 Oxford, Jesus College 51, 54, 64, 69 and 93, and Hereford Cathedral P.iv.6.

55 See also the preliminary account of initials in Winchcombe manuscripts in M. Gullick, 'The English-Owned Manuscripts of the *Collectio Lanfranci* (s.xi/xii)', *The Legacy of M. R. James*, ed. L. Dennison (Donington, 2001), pp. 99-117, on p. 113, and the discussion of the initials in a manuscript that may be from Winchester ibid. p. 106.

56 Another Reading manuscript (Bodleian Library Digby 158 f. 6 onwards) has the same kind of handwriting as the Laud manuscript, with its opening initial on f. 7r using purple, and this was probably also an early import. This shows that the presence of the Anselmian miscellany towards the end of the manuscript (ff. 91r-106v), known from only two other manuscripts, was not due to the monks of Reading. (For this miscellany see R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt, *Memorials of St Anselm* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 319-33.) The opening leaves of the Digby manuscript (ff. 1-5, with a short piece) are a little later in date and may have been added at Reading. For the manuscript see Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 148.

57 B75.171 = Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 33.

58 A copy of this work was among the small collection of books sent to King John from Reading in 1208. The nature of these books is uncertain, but it has been suggested that 'it is possible . . . that the books were produced in the scriptorium at Reading'. The list of these books was discussed and printed in Sharpe et al., *Benedictine Libraries*, pp. 447-8, from where the above quotation is taken.

59 Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 48. Modest arabesque initials in part 3 of the Laud manuscript (ff. 148r, 167v and 177r) are in a different 'style'.

60 The scribe of Laud misc. 232 ff. 59v-62r wrote all of Rawlinson A 416 (Coates, *Medieval Books*, pl. 7). The discovery of the same scribe in the two books was fortuitous as on a visit to the Bodleian I saw the two manuscripts in succession and it was easy to make the identification. I have not made any kind of search for this scribe elsewhere among the Reading books, nor searched for any of the other scribes (perhaps seven of them) in the Laud manuscript elsewhere.

61 'Nouvelle reponse de l'ancien monachisme aux critiques des cisterciens', *Revue Bénédictine* 67 (1957), 77-93. The piece was briefly noticed by C. Holdsworth, 'The Reception of St Bernard in England' in *Bernhard von Clairvaux*, ed. K. Elm (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 161-77 on p. 174.

62 Coates pp. 152-3, and pl. 6. Coates suggested that the scribe of the manuscript wrote some or all of three other Reading manuscripts, but, although the hands are certainly quite similar, I do not find the identification convincing.

63 *English Monastic Litanies of the Saints after 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society 119 and 120 (2012), ii. pp. 33-4.

64 See B71.20 and 24 = Coates, *Medieval Books*, p. 25 and p. 26 respectively. The commentary to B71.20 is the most reasoned account of the problem concerning the identification. The recent detailed account of the Auct. manuscript in E. Solopova, *Latin Liturgical Psalters in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 43-8, notices the two possible donors, the Winchester litany (not noticing Thomas Becket), but dates the manuscript to the third quarter of the twelfth century and accepts the identification of the scribe made by Coates in three other Reading books.

65 Coates, *Medieval Books*, pp. 165-6.

66 This part of the manuscript is carefully described, and its handwriting illustrated, in M. Careri, C. Ruby and I. Short, *Livres et écritures en français et en occitan au XIIe siècle. Catalogue illustré* (Rome, 2011), pp. 140-1, where the dating was attributed to Malcolm Parkes. The commentary is known from other manuscripts.