

Report from Zachary Stone on SSMLL Travel Bursary 2012

A Travel Bursary from the Society for the Study of Medieval Literature and Languages allowed me to spend January 2012 at Oxford studying the medieval manuscript collection of Wadham College. For the purposes of this project, I defined the medieval period as pre-1500. My initial goal was to make final corrections to the descriptions for each manuscript that were included in my MPhil thesis, a catalogue of medieval manuscripts of Wadham College. While N.R. Ker's *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* includes an entry for Wadham, Ker only catalogued manuscripts not included in H.O. Coxe's 1852 catalogue of Oxford college libraries (*Catalogus codicum mss. qui in collegiis aulisque oxoniensibus hodie adservantur*). My project was to re-catalogue the eight pre-1500 manuscripts catalogued by Coxe in order to bring the descriptions up to a standard comparable to *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*. In the course of my investigations I also discovered a ninth pre-1500 manuscript, MS A.10.19, a small gospel book previously unmentioned in any catalogue. I was happy to discover that the substance of the descriptions included in my thesis required little change and grateful for the chance to correct many small errors.

The bulk of my time, however, was spent analyzing several individual manuscripts in a depth not possible when cataloguing. In particular, I extended my work on Wadham MS 2, an eleventh-century gospel book from England. Careful collation of textual corrections allowed me to identify at least two phases of production. The initial production was left incomplete for an indeterminate amount of time, and then the book was completed in the late eleventh century. Based on a few modified headings I was able to correlate a pattern of textual corrections with an illumination programme. Despite these successes, I have not yet been able to determine the origin of MS 2, but I hope to continue my work on the manuscript and, hopefully, publish on it soon.

As a post medieval foundation, Wadham never purchased manuscripts institutionally. Rather, all the manuscripts came to the college as gifts, generally very small parts of large gifts consisting almost entirely of printed books. Analysis of the development of Wadham's library allowed me to explore the place of manuscript books in Early Modern book collections. For example, while much work has been done on major manuscript collectors, less is known about large private libraries that happened to include a few manuscripts, such as that of Philip Bisse, a sixteenth and seventeenth century book collector who left several thousand early print books to Wadham in 1613. Bisse's collection also boasts a few manuscripts including a fifteenth century manuscript of Gregory I's *Pastoral Care* that features numerous Middle English glosses. While not a major collector himself, Philip Stubbs--an eighteenth-century minister and who gave Wadham a copy of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* (MS 5)--was involved in the London book trade, and at times seems to have worked for or with the noted seventeenth century bibliographer Humfrey Wanley. Book owners like Bisse and Stubbs seldom receive scholarly attention, and yet these lesser collectors might be more representative of their respective times than, say, Robert Cotton or Archbishop Parker. Investigations into the bibliographic habits of men like Bisse and Stubbs shed light on previously neglected reading cultures.

Going forward I hope to achieve three things: first I hope to publish a few short studies of individual manuscripts, such as MS 2; secondarily, I hope to publish my

descriptions of all of the manuscripts I looked at, including the one I discovered in the Hilary 2011 that has never been described; finally, I hope to publish a study of the development and growth of Wadham's manuscript collection that explores the place of manuscript books in libraries comprised mainly of printed books. I am very grateful to SSMLL for supporting my work this year. Their generous grant made possible work I otherwise would not have been able to carry out.