

A Franciscan Bible Illuminated in the Style of William de Brailes

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With the possible exception of his contemporary Matthew Paris, William de Brailes is probably the best-known named English artist of the Middle Ages.¹ He signed two works ‘W. de Brailes’ and is recorded in company with illuminators, binders, and other members of the book-trade in Oxford documents of c. 1230–c. 1260.² The general style of his two signed works is distinctive and easily recognizable,³ and on the basis of these, his work has been identified in more than a dozen other manuscripts, although it must be admitted that it is not possible to state with certainty that all the illuminations in his style are by his own hand: he may have worked with, or in competition with, others who worked in the same style. The situation is complicated by variations in style within a single series of illuminations: it was readily apparent in the recent *Cambridge Illuminations* exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum that there is variation in style among the six leaves that comprise one of his two signed works;⁴ as Nigel Morgan notes, ‘One of the major problems in the study of de Brailes is to distinguish his work from that of other artists belonging to the workshop’.⁵ Whether or not by William himself, the purpose of this note is to describe a previously unpublished Bible illuminated in the de Brailes style.⁶

¹ Both men have entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

² The principal studies are: Sydney C. Cockerell, *The Work of W. de Brailes: An English Illuminator of the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Roxburghe Club, 1930); G. Pollard, ‘William de Brailles’, *Bodleian Library Record*, v (1955), pp. 202–9; and N. J. Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts (I) 1190–1250, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, iv (London, 1982), especially p. 30 and nos 69–74, with extensive further bibliography. Claire Donovan, *The de Brailes Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-Century Oxford* (London, 1991), is especially useful for its numerous reproductions.

³ These are the ‘de Brailes Hours’, BL, Additional MS. 49999 (Morgan, op. cit., no. 73) and a series of full-page miniatures from a Psalter, now divided between Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS. 330, and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. M. 913 (Morgan, op. cit., nos. 72a and 72b).

⁴ While scrutinizing the leaves at the Fitzwilliam exhibition on more than one occasion, I benefited from discussions of their style with Laura Jereski and Scot McKendrick, among others.

⁵ Morgan, op. cit., p. 115; he attributes Paris, BNF, ms. fr. 19525 to the ‘workshop’, *ibid.*, p. 36 n. 35. In the document of c. 1230 in which William de Brailles is listed as a witness, at least three of the other witnesses are also illuminators: Radulfo le Liminur, Roberto le Liminur, and Iob’ le Liminur (cf. Pollard, op. cit., p. 205–6; Donovan, op. cit., p. 206 no. 1). The problem of dividing up the ‘de Brailes’ oeuvre is passed over in silence by Donovan, but is tackled by William Noel, *The Oxford Bible Pictures: Ms. W. 106, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; Musée Marmottan, Paris* (Luzern, 2005).

⁶ The only printed notice of which I am aware is the description in the Harley catalogue, *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 4 vols (London, 1808–12), which reads: ‘2813. Biblia vulgata, cum prologis et Interpretatione nominum Hebraicor. Codex membranaceus in 4to minore. [Saec.] xiv’. A slightly shorter description also appeared in the 1759 two-volume edition of the Harley catalogue; a more detailed description is provided below as an Appendix.

British Library, Harley MS. 2813 is at first glance a typical ‘pocket’ Bible of the sort produced in large numbers in Paris and elsewhere in the thirteenth century.⁷ The usual first text, St Jerome’s general prologue to the Bible in the form of a letter from Jerome to Paulinus, beginning ‘Frater Ambrosius ...’, is illustrated with an historiated initial showing a tonsured figure in a reddish-coloured habit seated writing at a desk (figs 1, 2). In Bibles with historiated initials this scene usually depicts Jerome writing his letter to Paulinus, often dressed in a habit and with a halo. The reddish colour of the habit is unusual, but is found in the equivalent initial in other de Brailes Bibles, such as Oxford, Merton College, MS. 7. Owing to oxidization the style is not easily legible, but with careful scrutiny one can discern de Brailes-like features such as the unnaturally large hands, the close-fitting cuffs, and the way that the line of the hood of the habit continues from the line of the tonsured head (fig. 2).⁸

The initial to Genesis would probably have been the most elaborate in the volume, and was doubtless also historiated, but the leaf on which it was painted has been excised. All the rest of the initials in the volume are essentially foliate rather than historiated, but they often incorporate animals, dragons, and hybrids, of types found in other de Brailes Bibles. The single exception is that at the start of St John’s Gospel: here we see a standing figure (with a halo but beardless, and therefore presumably intended to represent John himself) apparently preaching to a group of seated men (figs 3, 4).

This is unmistakably in the de Brailes style: the comparatively thick black outlines and drapery contours; the way in which facial features are drawn; the massing of the heads of the four sitting men to imply a larger crowd; plus details of costume such as the tight-fitting cuffs and the cloak worn with empty sleeves hanging diagonally straight outward from the shoulder.⁹ The composition is similar to that in several initials in another Bible illuminated in the de Brailes style,¹⁰ London, Gray’s Inn, MS. 24, such as that on f. 290r. In addition, the arrangement and ornament of the initial itself is especially characteristic of de Brailes: the scene is set in a semi-circle abutting the left-hand edge of the column of text, framed on the curved side with a stepped outline,¹¹ and terminating at the top with a block set off to the left (cf. fig. 5).¹²

⁷ There is some confusion in the literature between ‘pocket’ Bibles and ‘Paris’ Bibles; the two are not synonymous. The ‘Paris’ Bible should be taken to mean the Bible which evolved in the first few decades of the thirteenth century, containing a version of the text influenced by the glossed biblical books of the twelfth century; with a standard selection and sequence of books, with the ‘modern’ chapter divisions, accompanied by a standard set of prologues and usually the Interpretation of Hebrew Names, but usually without the chapter lists and canon tables that are common in twelfth-century Bibles. A ‘Paris’ Bible is not necessarily ‘pocket’ sized or made in Paris, but is often both.

⁸ Cf. Donovan, op. cit., ills 56, 82; Oxford, Merton College, MS. 7 (reproduced by J. J. G. Alexander and Elżbieta Temple, *Illuminated Manuscripts in Oxford College Libraries, The University Archives, and the Taylor Institution* (Oxford, 1985), no. 190); and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS. 350/567.

⁹ Cockerell, op. cit., p. 5, characterizes one aspect of the style as follows: ‘Tightly drawn faces. Nose long, eyes wide open, straight mouth, short upper lip’; but it must be admitted that in four out of five of the figures in the present initial the line of the nose extends to the line of the forehead, above the eyebrow – a detail not found in most ‘de Brailes’ facial types. He also refers to ‘The bold handling of crowds’ as another characteristic of the style (cf. Donovan, op. cit., ills 15, 29, 43, 52, 70, 75, 82, col. pls. 1, 6).

¹⁰ The attribution was first made by Adelaide Bennett, ‘The Place of Garrett 28 in Thirteenth-Century English Illumination’ (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1973), p. 109, who refers to the ‘atelier’ of de Brailes; Morgan, op. cit., p. 115 includes it in a list of ‘Bibles with the illumination partly by de Brailes himself’; a full description of the manuscript is in N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1969–2001), vol. i, pp. 66–7.

¹¹ Cf. Donovan, op. cit., ills 59, 64, col. pls 5 and 11.

¹² Cf. Donovan, op. cit., col. pl. 11.



Fig. 1. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 4: General prologue, with historiated initial.



Fig. 2. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 4 (detail): Historiated initial depicting St. Jerome(?).

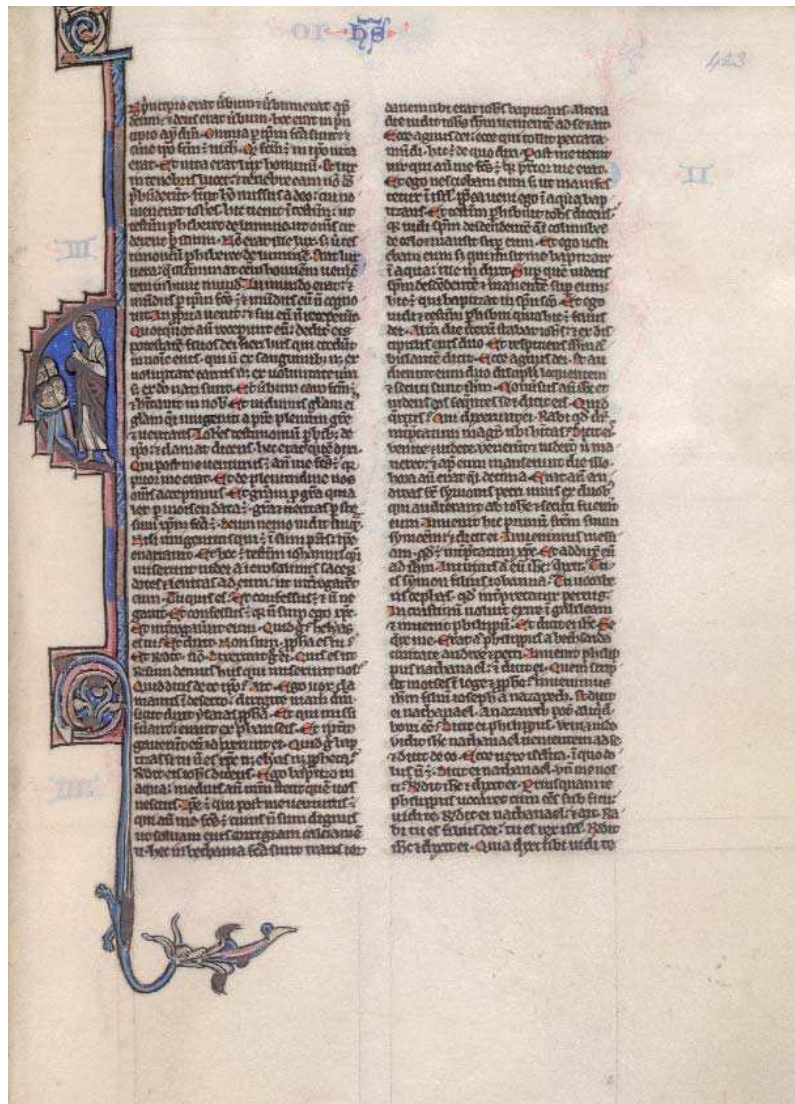


Fig. 3. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 423: The Gospel of John, with historiated initial.



Fig. 4. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 423 (detail): Historiated initial depicting St. John(?) preaching.



Fig. 5. BL, Additional MS. 49999, f. 48: The beginning of None in the Hours of the Virgin, with historiated initial.

A number of comparisons may be made between other initials in the Harley Bible and de Brailes's signed Book of Hours (BL, Additional MS. 49999). For example, the initial to I Samuel (f. 101r, fig. 6) has a marginal extension, on the end of which perches a hook-beaked bird looking backward over its shoulder, rather like the caladrius as depicted in Bestiaries, and the same bird can be found perched on marginal extensions from initials in the de Brailes Hours.¹³ The Bible's initial to II Corinthians (f. 442v; figs 7, 8) has at its base a cockerel extremely similar to that which crows three times at the denial of St Peter in the de Brailes Hours (f. 1r; figs 9, 10), and the non-naturalistic colouring is the same: both have orange bodies and heads, blue wings, and tail feathers alternately orange and blue.¹⁴ At the base of the initial to Thessalonians (f. 451v) is a dog-like creature (figs 11, 12), similar to that at the base of the initial on f. 327r of the de Brailes Bible in Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College, MS. 350/567. The Harley Bible's ornamental initials and their dragon-hybrids are extremely similar to other de Brailes books.¹⁵

The Bodleian Library has two Bibles containing illumination in the de Brailes style, and the smaller of the two (MS. Lat. bib. e. 7) has the unusual feature of a series of masses and related mass texts (ff. 227r-236v) between Psalms and Proverbs.¹⁶ These include masses for St Dominic, which strongly suggests that the manuscript was made after his canonization in 1234, for a member of the Dominican house founded in Oxford in 1221. Three years later, in September 1224, the first Franciscans arrived in Oxford, and they founded their own house early the next year; by 1233 there were said to be eighty friars of the two orders in Oxford. Between them they must have created a considerable demand for small portable Bibles, suitable for carrying about by mendicants.¹⁷

¹³ Cf. Donovan, op. cit., ills 20, 22, 46. The bird appears in other de Brailes Bibles, including Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. bib. e. 7, ff. 303v, 304v, and Merton College, MS. 7, f. 133v.

¹⁴ Cf. Donovan, op. cit., col. pl. 4 and dust-jacket. The cockerel also appears in Oxford, Merton College, MS. 7, f. 317r.

¹⁵ Digitized slides of a considerable number of the foliate initials in the Bodleian, MS. Lat. bib. e. 7, are available on the Bodleian website at www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/medieval/browse.htm. A feature of the Harley Bible initials that is not typical of other de Brailes books is that the dragons often stand on little sprouts of foliage that grow from a wavy ground line.

¹⁶ Other examples of Bibles dating from the second and third quarters of the thirteenth century which have Missal sections are: San Marino, Huntington Library, HM 26061, which is also associated with the Oxford Franciscans (see C. W. Dutschke, *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, 1989), vol. ii, pp. 649–54); Boston, Public Library, MS. f.Med.q 202, whose Missal section is also Franciscan; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat 10431, with an English Cistercian calendar datable between 1235 and 1255, and illuminated by an artist who worked on the Stockholm Psalter, to which de Brailes also contributed (see François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine insulaire VI^e-XX^e siècle* (Paris, 1987), pp. 73–5 no. 117). Another example that I have not examined in person, with a Dominican calendar, was sold at Sotheby's, 21 June 1988, lot 50, which may be datable to between 1234 and 1253.

¹⁷ In addition to the Bibles discussed here, de Brailes may have illuminated other texts for the friars, or for others closely associated with them: Michael Camille, 'An Oxford University Textbook Illuminated by William de Brailes', *The Burlington Magazine*, cxxxvii, no. 1106 (May 1995), pp. 292–3, proposes that Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Borgh. 58, with three historiated initials attributed to de Brailes, 'was produced c. 1230 for someone associated with the Oxford Franciscan convent' (p. 299).



Fig. 6. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 101: I Samuel.

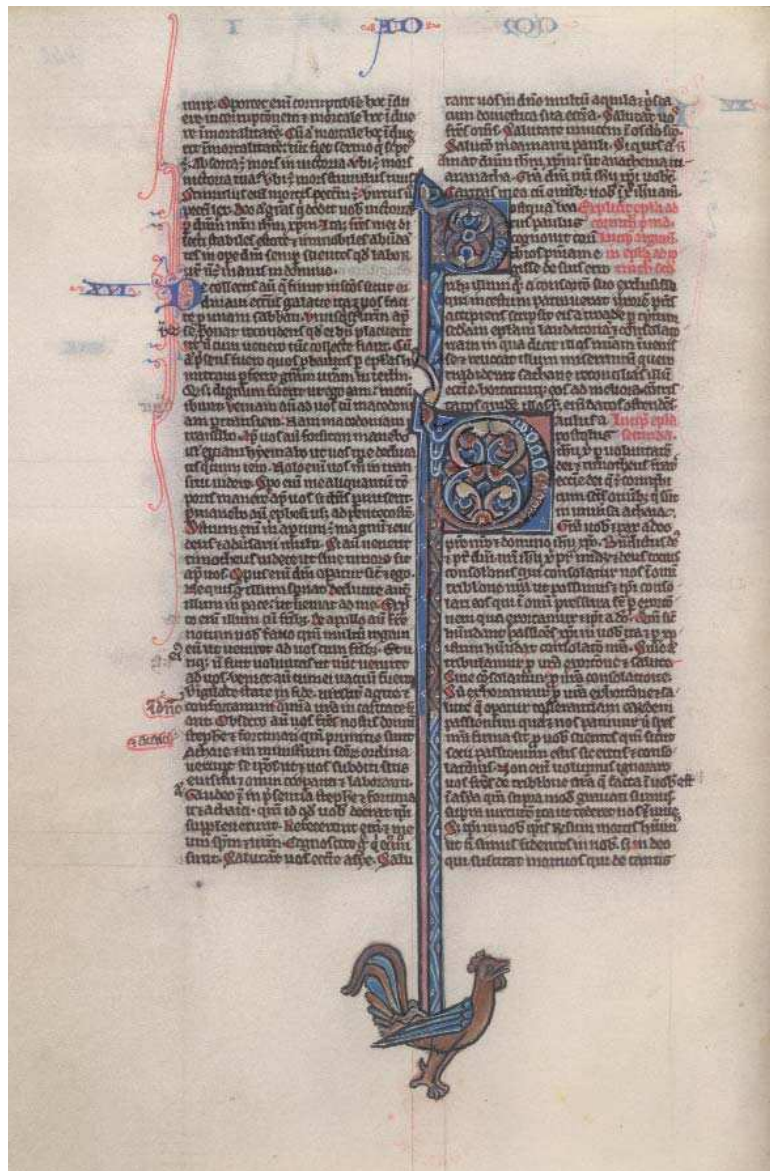


Fig. 7. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 442v: II Corinthians.



Fig. 8. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 442v (detail).



Fig. 9. BL, Add. MS. 49999, f. 1r.



Fig. 10. BL, ADD. MS. 49999, f. 1r (detail).



Fig. 11. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 451v: Thessalonians.

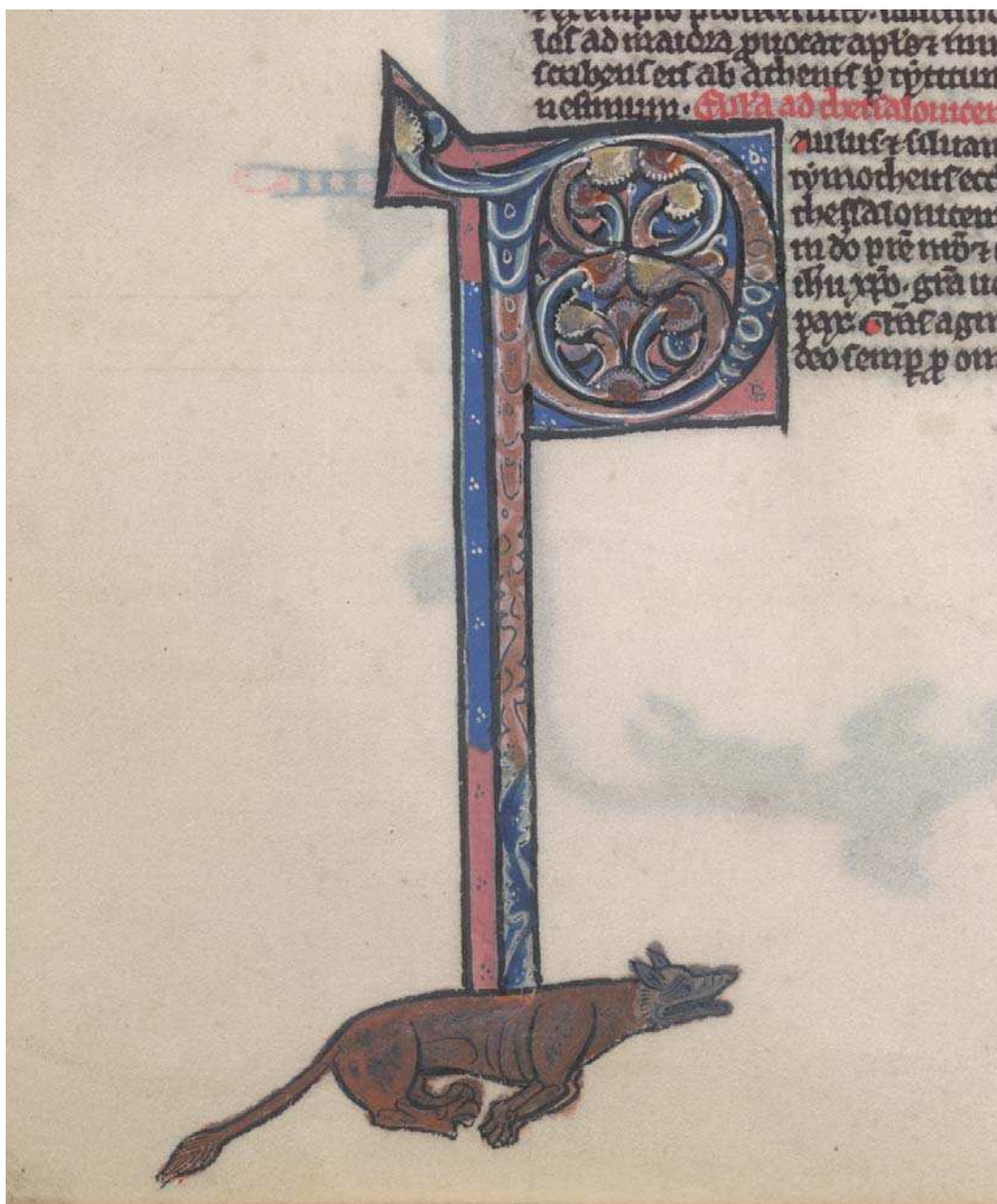


Fig. 12. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 451v (detail): Thessalonians.

The Harley Bible also has a series of masses between Psalms and Proverbs. They begin with masses for the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Cross, Angels, and St Francis, and are followed by others for Advent, Christmas, the Purification, and so on.¹⁸ The presence of St Francis (d. 1226) here and in following prayers allows us to date the manuscript no earlier than the year of his canonization in 1228 (fig. 13, 14), and allows us to assume that it was made for a Franciscan. In addition, passages of the biblical text, including Proverbs, are annotated using marginal indexing symbols of the sort devised by Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), the famous bishop, scholar, philosopher, author and translator (fig. 15).¹⁹ Grosseteste studied at Oxford, later becoming first rector of the Oxford Franciscans, chancellor of the University, and finally bishop of Lincoln (in which diocese Oxford lay) from 1235 until his death in 1253. Most of the manuscripts that contain his indexing symbols can be associated with the Oxford Franciscan house: we can therefore be doubly confident that the person for whom the manuscript was made was an Oxford Franciscan.²⁰ It would be satisfying to be able to suggest that the Harley Bible belonged to Grosseteste himself, but this would be going well beyond the evidence. We can, however, somewhat narrow down the range of possible Oxford Franciscans who might have owned the manuscript.

Just as Psalm 109 in English thirteenth-century Psalters frequently starts on a new quire (often with different scribes writing each 'half' of the text) with the preceding quire shortened or lengthened as necessary, so too in English thirteenth-century Bibles it is very common that Proverbs starts on a new quire,²¹ with the preceding quire shortened or lengthened. Such is the case with Harley MS 2813, so it could therefore be argued that the biblical text was written without a Franciscan recipient in mind, and that the missal section

¹⁸ A full list is given in the description below. I am grateful to Nicholas Orchard for help in reading some of the minutely written and highly abbreviated rubrics, for advice on liturgical terminology, and for commenting on a draft of this article and the accompanying description. Stella Panayotova also read a draft of this article and the accompanying description carefully, and kindly saved me from a number of other errors.

¹⁹ For discussions and reproductions of his indexing symbols see: 'Tabula', ed. Philipp W. Rosemann, in *Opera Roberti Grosseteste Lincolnensis*, i, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, cxxx (Turnhout, 1995), pp. 235–320; S. Harrison Thomson, 'Grosseteste's Topical Concordance of the Bible and the Fathers', *Speculum*, ix (1934), pp. 139–44; R. W. Hunt, 'Manuscripts Containing the Indexing Symbols of Robert Grosseteste', *Bodleian Library Record*, iv (1952–3), pp. 241–55, and idem 'The Library of Robert Grosseteste' in D. A. Callus (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 121–45, and frontispiece; M. B. Parkes, 'Books and Aids to Scholarship of the Oxford Friars', in A. C. de la Mare and B. C. Barker-Benfield (eds.), *Manuscripts at Oxford: An Exhibition in Memory of Richard William Hunt (1908–1979), Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1945–1975, on Themes Selected and Described by Some of his Friends* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 57–9, no. XIII.2 and fig. 37. I am grateful to Philipp Rosemann for confirming that at least some of the symbols in the Harley Bible do seem to be the same as those used in the Grosseteste *Tabula* (personal communication, dated 9 September 2004).

²⁰ Pope Gregory IX's bull of 1230, *Quo elongat*, established the principle that although a Franciscan friar could not own property (such as a book), he could have the use of it. Inscriptions sometimes record that a friar had the use of a book for his lifetime, after which it would revert to his convent; see Malcolm Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', in J. I. Catto and Ralph Evans (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford, II: Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 407–83, at pp. 432–5.

²¹ Examples include two other de Brailes Bibles: Bodleian, MS. Lat. bib. e. 7, and Perth (Scotland), Museum and Art Gallery, MS. 462.

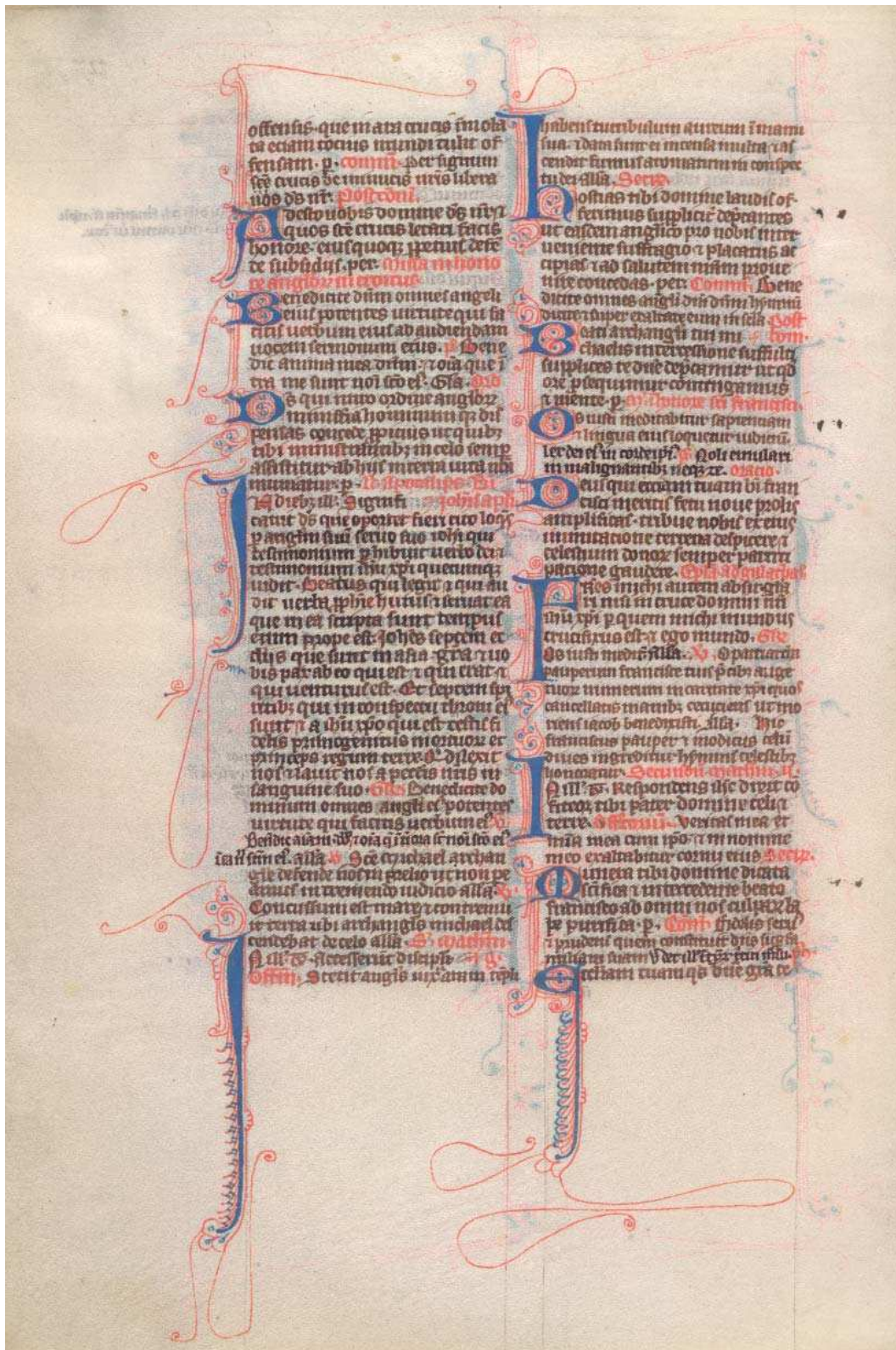


Fig. 13. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 228r: Masses, including one for St. Francis.



Fig. 14. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 227v (detail).

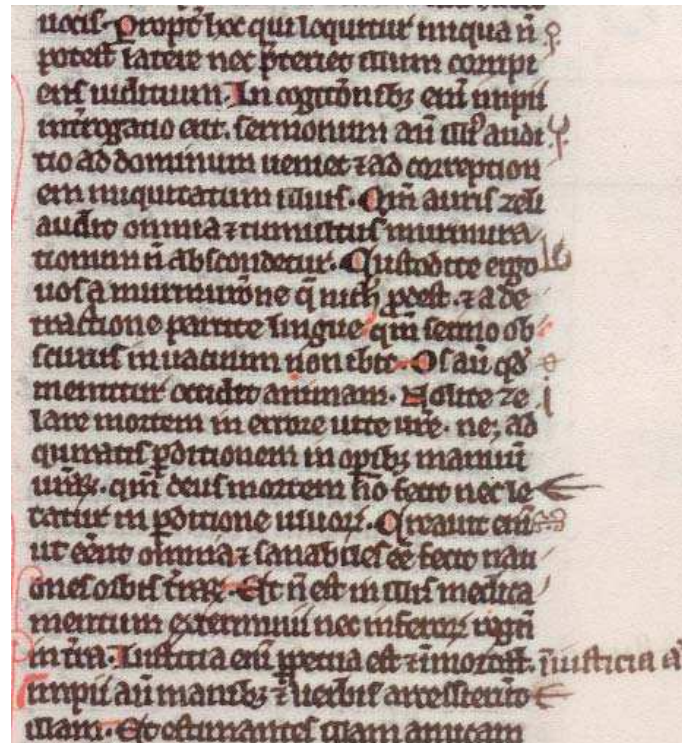


Fig. 15. BL, Harley MS. 2813, f. 250 (detail), with marginal indexing symbols.

was inserted as an afterthought — indeed the scribe and artist of the missal section certainly appear to be different from those of the rest of the volume.²² But even if the writing of the text of Harley MS. 2813 were not originally *started* for a specific Franciscan, the mass texts show that the volume must surely have been *completed* for one, and the illumination very possibly also belonged to this final ‘bespoke’ stage in the production of the book.

We now step into the realm of speculation, but this may perhaps explain the fact that, aside from the first text page of the volume, and presumably also the missing first page of the biblical text, the only other historiated initial does not mark the start of Psalms, or the start of the New Testament, as one might have expected, but marks the beginning of the fourth Gospel, and illustrates it with an image of preaching: preaching was one of the fundamental duties enjoined by Francis upon members of the Franciscan Order. But not all members of the Order were permitted to preach: in the final version of the *Rule* of St Francis, drawn up in 1223, part of Chapter IX states ‘And let none of the brothers dare to preach in any way to the people unless he has been examined and approved by the general minister of this fraternity and the office of preacher has been conferred upon him.’²³ If the original owner of the Harley Bible was an Oxford Franciscan during the second quarter of the thirteenth century who was approved as a preacher, it may be possible to narrow down his identity to one of a small number of other men including Adam Marsh (d. 1259), the advisor and friend of Robert Grosseteste and Simon de Montfort. A letter survives from Adam Marsh to the provincial minister asking him to assign the Bible of the late ‘P. of Worcester’ for the use of Friar Thomas of Docking (d. c. 1270), a pupil of Grosseteste, Marsh and Roger Bacon, who wrote several biblical commentaries.²⁴

²² The missal section is ruled differently from the rest of the book, by not having horizontal lines ruled across the middle of the text area; the scribe of this section writes in paler ink; he usually uses an uncial form of ‘d’, while the main scribe(s) usually write upright ‘d’s, and when they use the uncial form, they add a serif at right angles at the top of the ascender, as is also found on a much larger scale in de Brailes manuscripts such as the de Brailes Hours; the scribe of the missal section writes his tironian ‘et’s uncrossed, and with a long vertical lead-in stroke, while the main scribes write their tironian ‘et’s crossed, without the lead-in stroke; other contrasts between the scribes could be provided. The scribe of the missal section may also have been its decorator: the flourished initials are different from those in the rest of the volume.

²³ ‘Et nullus fratrum populo oenitus audeat praedicare nisi a ministro generali huius fraternitatis fuerit examinatus et approbatus et ab eo officium sibi praedicationis concessum’. The whole *Rule* is printed, for example, in P. Livarius Oligier, *Expositio quatuor magistrorum super regulam fratrum minorum (1241–1242) accedit eiusdem regulae textus cum fontibus et locis parallelis* (Rome, 1950).

²⁴ See Jenny Swanson, ‘Docking, Thomas of (d. c. 1270)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), with further references, and A. G. Little, ‘The Franciscan School at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century’, *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, xix (1926), pp. 803–74 at p. 846.

Harley MS. 2813

Bible, with prologues, the Interpretations of Hebrew names, and an abbreviated Missal

England (Oxford), s. xiii^{2/4}

Text

Bible with most, but not all, of the ‘modern’ chapter divisions (e.g. Exodus has only 39 chapters; II Chronicles chapter 36 starts at the modern 36:2; Job 14 starts at the modern 14:7). The prologues, here cited by ‘S’ numbers, referring to Stegmüller, *Repertorium biblicum medii aevi*, include many (shown in bold type) which do not belong to the standard ‘Paris’ series.

[Item 1 occupies Quire 1]

1. (f. 2r) Added list of the books of the Bible, with the number of chapters in each (Genesis: 50, Exodus: 40, etc.).

[Items 2–3 occupy Quires 2–14]

2. (ff. 4r–226r) Old Testament as far as Psalms, with prologues: ‘Frater Ambrosius ...’ (S. 284), not originally divided into chapters, but with divisions later marked in the margins (f. 4r), ‘Desiderii mee ...’ (S. 285) (f. 6v); Genesis (f. 7r), starting imperfect in 3:19 (at ‘| |tis pane donec ...’) owing to the loss of a leaf after f. 6; Exodus (f. 24v); Leviticus (f. 40r); Numbers (f. 51r); Deuteronomy (f. 66r); ‘Tandem finito penthateuco ...’ (S. 311) (f. 79v); Joshua (f. 79v); Judges (f. 89r); Ruth (f. 99r), with the textual variant ‘posita revertendi’, which is said to reliably indicate a ‘monastic’ text as opposed to a ‘Parisian’ text (see François Avril and Patricia Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminés d’origine insulaire VII^e–XX^e siècle* (Paris, 1987), p. 50); ‘Uiginti duas ...’ (S. 323) (f. 100r), I Samuel (f. 101r); II Samuel (f. 114r); I Kings (f. 125r); II Kings (f. 137r); ‘Si septuaginta ...’ (S. 328) (f. 148r), I Chronicles (f. 148v), II Chronicles (f. 159r) without the Prayer of Manasses; ‘Utrum difficilium ...’ (S. 330) (f. 172v), Esdras (f. 172v); Nehemiah (f. 176v) ‘Esdre II’ as running title; ‘Cromatio et Heliodoro ... Mirari non desino ...’ (S. 332) (f. 181v), ‘Tobias filius Ananihel ...’ (S. 5190), Tobit (f. 181v); ‘Apud Hebreos liber Iudith ...’ (S. 335) (f. 185v), Judith (f. 185v); ‘Librum Hester variis translatoribus ... non possunt. Rufini in libro ... maluimus.’ (S. 341+343) (f. 190r), Esther (f. 190v); ‘Cogor per singulos ...’ (S. 344) (f. 195r), ‘Si aut fiscellam ...’ (S. 357) (f. 195v), ‘Iob exemplar paciencie ...’ (S. 350), ‘In terra quidem habitasse Iob ...’ (S. 349), Job (f. 195v), with marginal variant readings (e.g. next to ‘suscipiamus’ in 2:10 is ‘u(e)l sustineam(us)’; next to ‘ceruus’ in 7:2 is ‘u(e)l seru(us)’), and with ‘correctu(m)’ written next to the start of the text and with other early marginal notes; Psalms (f. 204v), with large initials at the usual 10–part divisions (ff. 208r, 210r, 212r (x2), 214r, 216v, 218r (x2), 221v), and followed immediately by the incipits of the six ferial canticles (f. 226r).
3. (f. 226v) List of the books of the Bible, omitting Ruth, Nehemiah, Song of Songs, Colossians, and Titus; Psalms referred to as ‘David’; Acts between the Pauline and Canonical Epistles.

[Item 4 occupies Quires 15–16]

4. (ff. 227r–236v) Abbreviated Missal, consisting of:
 - a. (ff. 227r–228v) Masses: ‘Missa in honore sancte trinitatis’, ‘Missa de sancto spiritu’, ‘Missa in honore sancte crucis’, ‘Missa in honore angelorum’, ‘Missa in honore sancti Francisci’ (ff. 227v–228r), ‘In adventu de sancta Maria’, ‘A nativitate domini usque ad purificationem dicitur istud officium’, ‘A purificationem usque usque [sic] ad pascham’, ‘A pascha usque ad pentecosten’;
 - b. (ff. 228v–229r) Prefaces: [Marginal rubric:] ‘Sequens prefacio cum suo cantu dicitur cotidie a vigile nativitate usque ad epiphaniam et in purificationem beate Marie’, ‘Sequens prefacio cum suo cantu dicitur in epiphania domini et post octabas’, ‘In quadragesima prefacio’, ‘In resurrectione domini prefacio’, ‘In ascensione domini prefacio’, ‘In pentecoste prefacio’, ‘In natali apostolorum prefacio’, ‘In solemnitatibus beate Marie virginis prefacio’, ‘In honore sancte crucis prefacio’, ‘Prefacio de sancta trinitate’;
 - c. (ff. 229r–230v) Canon of the mass: ‘Prefacio generalis’, followed by the *Te igitur* with a large foliate painted initial; two prefaces after the *Nobis quoque* have smaller painted initials;
 - d. (ff. 230v–232r) Votive masses containing just the mass-prayers (collect, secret, and postcommunion): ‘Missa ad postulandam gratiam sancti spiritu’, ‘Missa ad poscenda suffragia sanctorum’, ‘Alia missa ad poscenda suffragia sanctorum que fecit dominus papa Innocentius [III]’ (f. 230v) the collect beginning ‘A cunctis nos quesumus domine mentis et corporis defende periculis intercedente gloriosa virgine dei genitrice Maria cum beatis apostolis Petro et Paulo atque beato Francisco et omnibus sanctis ...’, and the postcommunion also including ‘... Petro et Paulo atque beato Francisco ...’ (f. 231v), ‘Missa pro pace’, ‘Missa pro papa’ (‘... famulum tuum N. ...’), ‘Pro infirmis’, ‘Missa pro se ipso sacerdote’, ‘Missa pro congregatione’, ‘Missa pro devotis amicis’, ‘Missa generalis sancti Augustini pro vivis et defunctis’, ‘Alia missa generalis’, ‘Pro quacumque necessitate’, ‘Missa pro elemosinis nobis facientibus’;
 - e. (ff. 232r–233r) A mass ‘In agenda defunctorum’, followed by votive masses for the dead: ‘Missa pro defunctis sacerdotibus’, ‘Missa pro uno defuncto’, ‘Missa pro defuncta femina’, ‘Missa pro fratribus defunctis’, ‘Missa in anniversario’, ‘Missa pro patre et matre’, ‘Missa pluralis pro defunctis’, ‘Missa generalis pro omnibus fidelibus defunctis’;
 - f. (ff. 233r–235v) Common masses for saints, introduced by a small painted initial: ‘Incipit commemorationes sanctorum. In vigilia unius apostoli’, ‘In vigilia plurimorum apostolorum’, ‘In natali apostolorum’, ‘In natali unius martyris pontificis’, [in the lower margin:] ‘In festo unius sancti a septuagesima usque ad pascha’, ‘In natali unius martyris non pontificis’, ‘In natali unius sancti a pasche usque pentecosten’, ‘In natali plurimorum martyrum a pascha usque ad pentecosten’, ‘In natali plurimorum martyrum’ with alternative readings ‘Si fuerit pontifex’, ‘In natali unius confessoris pontificis’ with alternative readings ‘Si fuerit doctor’, ‘In natali unius confessoris non pontificis’, with alternative readings ‘Si fuerit abbas’ and ‘Si fuerit doctor’, ‘In natali unius virginis’ with alternative readings ‘Si fuerint plures’;
 - g. Votive mass: ‘Missa pro [per]secutoribus ecclesie’;
 - h. Proper mass: ‘Missa sancta Katherine virginis et martyris’;
 - i. (ff. 235v–236r) Blessing for salt and water, etc.: ‘Incipit ordo ad faciendum aquam benedictam. Dominica prima adventus et omnibus dominicis per annum. pulsato signo ad terciam ebdomedarius intrat sacristam ...’;
 - j. (f. 236r–v) Sequences: ‘Sequencia de sancto spiritu’, ‘Sequencia de sancta Maria’;
 - k. The Apostles’ Creed: ‘Credo in unum deum patrem omnipotentem ...’;
 - l. (f. 236v) A mass ‘In festo sancte Marie Magdalene’.

[Items 5–7 occupy Quires 17–31]

5. (ff. 237r–388r) Old Testament continued: ‘Iungat epistola ...’ (S. 457), ‘Tribus nominibus vocatum fuisse ...’ (S. 456) (f. 237v), Proverbs (f. 237v), with marginalia including indexing symbols of the sort devised by Robert Grossesteste and Adam Marsh; Ecclesiastes (f. 245v), with marginalia; Song of Songs (f. 248v); ‘Liber sapientie apud Hebreos ...’ (S. 468) (f. 250r), ‘Tres libros Salomonis id est ...’ (S. 455), Wisdom (f. 250r), the first page with indexing symbols; Ecclesiasticus (f. 256r) (‘Multorum nobis ...’, f. 255v, treated as a prologue); ‘Nemo cum prophetas ...’ (S. 482) (f. 271v); Isaiah (f. 272r); ‘Ieremias propheta cui hic prologus scribitur ...’ (S. 487) (f. 290v), Jeremiah (f. 290v); Lamentations (f. 313r); ‘Liber iste ...’ (S. 491) (f. 315r), Baruch (f. 315r); ‘Ezekiel propheta ...’ (S. 492) (f. 317v), ‘Ezechiel sacerdos filius Buzi ...’ (S. 5203), an unusual preface which also occurs in the roughly contemporary Bible of Robert de Bello, BL, Burney MS. 3 (f. 318r), Ezekiel (f. 318r); ‘Danielem prophetam ...’ (S. 494) (f. 328v), Daniel (f. 239v); ‘Non idem ordo ...’ (S. 500) (f. 348r), ‘Duodecim prophete in unius voluimus ...’ (S. 503), Hosea (f. 348r); ‘Iohel filius Phaniel [sic] ...’ (S. 510) (f. 351r), ‘Sanctus Ioel apud [sic] Hebreos ...’ (S. 511), Joel (f. 351r); ‘Hzias [sic] rex cum dei ...’ (S. 515) (f. 352r), ‘Amos prophete et pastor et rusticus ...’ (S. 512) (f. 352v), Amos (f. 352v); ‘Iacob patriarcha ... significant. Hebrei ... eloquio.’ (S. 519+517) (f. 355r), Abdias (f. 355r); ‘Sanctum Ionam Hebrei ...’ (S. 524) (f. 355v), Jonah (f. 355v); ‘Temporibus Ioathe ...’ (S. 526) (f. 356v), Micah (f. 356v); ‘Naum prophetam ...’ (S. 528) (f. 358r), Nahum (358v), ending imperfect in 3:3 (at ‘... granis ruine nec | |’) due to the loss of a leaf after f. 358; Habakkuk (f. 359r), starting imperfect in 1:12 (at ‘| | ti eum. Mundi ...’) due to the loss of a leaf after f.358; ‘Tradunt hebrei ...’ (S. 534) (f. 359v), Sophonias (f. 359v); ‘Ieremias propheta ...’ (S. 538) (f. 360v), Aggeus (f. 361r); ‘Anno secundo Darii ...’ (S. 539) (f. 361v), Zacharias (f. 362r); ‘Altimum [sic] xii prophetarum Malachi ... et in primo mensi quinti venit in ierusalem. Malachias interpretatur angelus domini ... quando et Aggeus. Malachias aperte ... oblatio munda’ (S. 3371[beginning only]+545+544; cf. Huntington Library, HM 51) (f. 365r), Malachi (f. 365v); ‘Machabeorum libri duo ...’ (S. 551) (f. 366v) I Maccabees (f. 366v); II Maccabees (f. 379r).
6. (ff. 388r–485r) New Testament, with Acts after the Pauline Epistles: ‘Matheus ex Iudea [sic] sicut in ordine ...’ (S. 590) (f. 388r), Matthew (f. 389v); ‘Marcus evangelista dei electus ...’ (S. 607) (f. 401r), Mark (f. 401r); ‘Lucas syrus natione ...’ (S. 620) (f. 409r), Luke (409r) (‘Quoniam quidem ...’ treated as a prologue); ‘Hic est Iohannes ...’ (S. 624) (f. 422v), John (f. 423r; rubric on f. 422v: ‘Incipit euuangelium Ioha(n)nis baptiste’ [sic]); ‘Romani sunt partes Ytalie. Hii [sic] preventi sunt ...’ (S. 677) (f. 433r), Romans (f. 433r); ‘Corinthii sunt Achaici denominati ...’ (S. 683) (f. 437v), I Corinthians (f. 438r); ‘Postquam beatus Paulus cognovit ...’ (S. 701) (f. 442v), II Corinthians (f. 442v); ‘Galathe sunt Greci a candore ...’ (S. 706) (f. 445v), Galatians (f. 446r); ‘Ephesus est civitas Asye ...’ (S. 721) (f. 447v), Ephesians (f. 447v); ‘Philipenses sunt Macedones id est Greci ...’ (S. 730) (f. 449r), Philippians (f. 449r); ‘Colosenses et hii [sic] ...’ (S. 736) (f. 450v), Colossians (f. 450v); ‘Thessalonicenses sunt Macedones hii [sic] accepto ... Onesimum’ (S. 748) (f. 451v), I Thessalonians (f. 451v); ‘Ad Thessalonicenses secundam scribit epistolam ...’ (S. 752) (f. 452v), II Thessalonians (f. 452v); ‘Tymotheum instruit ... discipline preterea ... Roma.’ (S. 766) (f. 453r), I Timothy (f. 453r); ‘Ad Tymotheum [sic] secundam scribit ...’ (S. 772) (f. 454v), II Timothy (f. 454v); ‘Tithum commonefacit ...’ (S. 780) (f. 455v), Titus (f.455v); ‘Phylemoni familiares litteras facit ...’ (S. 783) (456r), Philemon (456r); ‘In primis dicendum ... scribendo ...’ (S. 793) (f. 456r), Hebrews (f. 456v); ‘Actus apostolorum nudam ...’ (S. 631) (f. 460r), Acts (f. 460r); ‘Non ita [sic] est ordo ...’ (S. 809) (f. 473r); ‘Iacobus qui appellatur ...’ (S. 808) (f. 473r), ‘Iacobus apostolus sanctum ...’ (S. 806) (f. 473v), James (f. 473v); ‘Symo [sic] Petrus filius Iohannis [sic] provincie Galylee ...’ (S. 815) (f. 474v), I Peter (f. 474v); ‘Simon Petrus per fidem ...’

(S. 818) (f. 476r), II Peter (f. 476r); 'Iohannes apostolus et evangelista quem Iesus amavit plurimum ... urbem sepultus. Rationem verbi ... occasio.' (S. 820+822) (f. 477r), I John (f. 477r); 'Usque adeo ...' (S. 823) (f. 478r), II John (f. 478r); 'Gayum pietatis ...' (S. 824) (f. 478v), III John; 'Iudas frater Iacobi unam parvam de .vii. catholicis ... computatur. Iudas apostolus fratres ... servilibus' (S. 826+825), Jude (f. 478v); 'Iohannes apostolus et evangelista ...' (S. 834/835) (f. 479r), 'Apocalipsis Iohannis tot habet sacramenta ...' (S. 829), Apocalypse (f. 479r).

7. (ff. 485r–504) Interpretations of Hebrew names, in the usual version from 'Aaz' to 'Zuzim' (S. 7709).
8. (ff. 504ar–506r) On formerly blank flyleaves are thirteenth-century notes in faint leadpoint, and ink, the latter including distinctions, and references to works by Augustine and Haymo.

Physical description

Parchment. The leaves c. 183 x c. 133 mm.

ff. 508, foliated in pencil: [i], 1–504, 504a, 504b, 505–506.

Quires mainly of 18 leaves; collation: 1⁺¹ (1st leaf — formerly the pastedown? — missing; ff. 1–3), 2¹⁸⁻¹ (4th leaf missing, after f. 6; ff. 4–20), 3–13¹⁸ (ff. 21–218), 14⁸ (ff. 219–226); 15⁸ (ff. 227–234), 16² (ff. 235–236); 17–22¹⁸ (ff. 237–344), 23¹⁸⁻¹ (15th leaf excised after f. 358; ff. 345–361), 24–30¹⁸ (ff. 362–487), 31¹⁸⁻¹ (18th leaf cancelled; ff. 488–504); 32⁴ (last leaf is the former pastedown; ff. 504a–506). The leaf missing in quire 2 contained the start of Genesis, and the leaf missing in quire 23 contained the start of Habakkuk.

Ruled in grey/brown plummet, the ruled space c. 114 x c. 74 mm., divided into two columns each c. 34 mm. wide; each column with single vertical bounding lines; double lines ruled at the top, middle, and bottom of the written space, and for the running titles (including Psalms, where there is no running title).

Written with 51 lines per page, 'below top line', in a typical minute gothic script; rubrics in red, often set wedge-shaped into the column of text; chapters start on new lines.

Decoration

Two surviving historiated initials, at the beginning of the General Prologue and the Gospel of John:

(f. 1) St Jerome (?) writing.

(f. 423) St John the Evangelist (?) preaching to a group of seated men.

Biblical books and the divisions of the Psalms with painted initials, typically eight lines high (excluding ascenders and descenders), incorporating dragons, foliage, etc.; prologues with similar but simpler initials, typically four lines high.

Chapters and psalms with two-line initials in blue, with predominantly red flourishing, and details in blue. Psalm verses with one-line initials alternately plain red or blue.

Running-titles and marginal chapter numbers in alternate blue and red characters as far as Psalms; from Proverbs onwards they are more elaborate, and in blue with simple red flourishing.

The painted and penwork decoration of the Missal section differs from that of the rest of the volume.

Binding

British Museum binding, with the quires sewn on paper guards; dated 22 December 1965 on the back pastedown.

Provenance

1. Written in England, almost certainly in Oxford. The style of illumination, the writing 'below top line', and the chapter numbers in the margin (rather than within the text area), suggest a date in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, perhaps the 1230s, but the use of blue initials with red penwork (rather than alternating red and blue initials with penwork of the other colour) perhaps suggest the 1240s. The emphasis given to St Francis among the Masses suggest that the original owner was an Oxford Franciscan.
2. Inscribed, s. xv?, 'M(agistr)i Thome Clarke / Baccalarii theology.' (f. 505v) and 'Caucio Magistri gWyn' (f. 506r); more than one man of each name are recorded in medieval Oxford and Cambridge.
3. Acquired by Robert Harley (1661–1724) or his son Edward (1689–1741), first and second Earls of Oxford, and sold in 1753 as part of the Harley collection to Parliament by the Countess of Oxford, widow of the 2nd Earl, and their daughter, the Duchess of Portland, and incorporated into the newly founded British Museum.