Most scholars are aware of the major role played by writing tablets as a vehicle for informal composition, learning exercises, note-taking, correspondence, accounting and document-production during Antiquity. Fewer, perhaps, are familiar with the extension and modification of their use throughout the Middle Ages (and indeed even until the nineteenth century when the fisherfolk of Dieppe still recorded their catches upon them) and with the nature of the evidence for their protracted existence and use.

British attention was drawn to the subject in 1989 with the discovery by members of the York Archaeological Trust of a small set of wax tablets (see figs. 1–2) during excavations at Swinegate, York, in preparation for the construction of a ‘medieval’ shopping precinct.¹ The archaeological find context was a later medieval rubbish heap in the rear garden of a tenement in a district inhabited by ladies of the night, artisans and small-scale shopkeepers. Despite this, excavators initially assumed that the tablets might be, however incongruously, of the Roman period, owing to lack of familiarity with the medieval use of such artifacts.² This was not perhaps surprising given that those tablets previously found in Britain, from Vindolanda and Somerset, were of the Romano-British period.³ As a representative of the British Library, I was asked to examine the tablets immediately after excavation, and it was undoubtedly a thrilling experience to be one of the first to come into contact with such a personal expression of medieval life since it was lost or discarded by an early or original owner. The faith of one’s archaeological colleagues as they proudly placed their prize beneath one’s microscope, swimming in muddy water and congealed into a solid and inscrutable mass, was touching, as was their expectation of instant text identification. On close inspection, the script was revealed to be a fourteenth-century cursiva anglicana, used for passages in both Middle English and Latin. Some time later, armed with a battery of photographs taken under every conceivable angle of raking light, I began the voyage of discovery on those outer tablets which were not seemingly hopelessly welded to their neighbours, painstakingly transcribing fragmented wax and ploughing through the Middle English Dictionary in search of a textual context for any of the few discernible nouns. Over the ensuing year, as the conservators, Sonia O’Conner and Erica Paterson, applied rigid plastic sheeting in an attempt to prise apart the fused waxen surfaces of the water-logged tablets (without causing the text to hopelessly offset), more and more of the ridge-and-furrow script
emerged—a ploughing metaphor much loved by the Anglo-Saxons in their riddle-references to writing in wax. I shall return to a discussion of the implications of what has so far been discovered concerning these tablets, but should like to preface this by a survey of some of the information available concerning the manufacture and use of writing tablets during the Middle Ages.

The *tabula*, *tabletta* or *ceraculum*, a tablet of wood, clay, metal, slate, ivory or bone, which carried graphic symbols either directly on its surface or, more commonly, upon wax recessed into one or both sides of the tablet, is known from early Antiquity, the earliest examples being from Nimrud in Assyria and from chance finds such as an amphora in a Mesopotamian shipwreck. The ancient Egyptians employed them widely and they entered into general use during Graeco-Roman Antiquity for the varied
functions already mentioned (with major caches from Pompeii and Transylvania and the *Tablettes Albertini*, a set of agricultural contracts from late fifth-century Vandal-occupied Algeria). They continued to be used in a slightly more limited but still widespread fashion until the sixteenth century, and more sporadically thereafter until the nineteenth century. They assumed a number of forms, occurring singly, as diptychs or polyptychs bound with leather, parchment or linen thongs into the codex form (see fig. 3) of up to 200 × 300 mm in dimension (or occasionally during Antiquity into a concertina), as larger notice-boards or posters and as bat-like handled note-taking forms (the *tabula ansata*, see figs. 6 and 8). They were a cheap, reusable alternative to other writing surfaces and the utilitarian character of the majority of examples, coupled with the problems of survival of organic materials in other than arid or water-logged archaeological environments, has undoubtedly contributed to the relative scarcity of extant examples. Advances in archaeological technique may well continue to augment the survival rate. Tablets were written upon with a stylus of metal, bone or wood, the ends of which were often expanded into triangular terminals which, when heated, were used to erase and smooth the wax for reuse (see fig. 4). These might be embedded in the wax when not

Fig. 3. Wax tablets with tachygraphic symbols and memoranda in Greek concerning haulage, Third Century A.D. BL, Add. MS. 33270
in use, as in the case of a Viking example now in Oslo, or housed in the owner's pen-case, which might even be incorporated into the construction of the tablet, as in an eleventh-century heavily carved ivory example at St Martin, Angers.  

Excavation within library and museum holdings also serves to expand considerably the body of known tablets. Elizabeth Lalou of the I.R.H.T. is compiling a corpus, and a conference which she organized in Paris in October 1990 revealed a wealth of unknown, or unco-ordinated, material. In the British Library we have a number of Roman examples (see figs. 3–4), many found by the Egypt Exploration Society during the nineteenth century, and an important example carrying accounts for the Abbey of Citeaux of circa 1300 (see fig. 5), entered in the Department of Manuscripts' nineteenth-century subject index under 'miscellaneous'. Random enquiry at the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities of the British Museum elicited references to a large early sixteenth-century notice-board tablet from 'an old church in Switzerland' carrying a list of names executed in an exuberant formal display script and resembling the list of incumbents or roll of honour in a parish church. A number of ivory panels often thought to have come from caskets or book covers seem rather to have formed tablets, with recesses for wax and scratches produced during writing remaining on their surfaces. The corpus will continue to grow, with the aid of new finds, such as that from York.
Fig. 5. Wax tablets carrying accounts, from the Abbey of Citeaux, circa 1300. BL, Add. MS. 33215
In addition to surviving tablets, valuable information concerning their manufacture and use may be gleaned from visual and literary sources. The statutes of the tablet-makers of thirteenth-century Paris, preserved in the _Livre des métiers d’Étienne Boileau_, says that box-wood was the preferred medium for wooden tablets (as used for the York tablets, although many other woods, from oak to brazil and conifer, were employed). Its light weight probably commended it for this purpose. Incidentally, analysis of certain German medieval tablets has shown that the waxen surface was composed of beeswax tempered with resin, turps or linseed oil, and coloured with the same agents as those used in illumination. Black was commonly used, with green also frequently occurring. Red is used on a luxurious set of ivory tablets in Namur and yellow is sometimes depicted in miniatures (presumably representing uncoloured wax, which is, however, more difficult to read from). Only wooden tablets are mentioned in these statutes and there are indications that ivory and metalwork tablets were considered the preserve of other professions. The tablet-makers were often linked in sources with metalworkers and carvers and the Parisian statutes show that metalworkers often made tablets themselves – one such statute even forbids tablet-makers _per se_ to produce items with metalwork embellishment. From the late fifteenth century onwards sources mention tablets of ivory, bone or metalwork more frequently than wood and there are signs of a change in the tablet-making profession, with greater concentration on the manufacture of gaming-boards and marquetry and a change of patron saint to St Hildebert rather than the traditional guild-patrons, SS Eloi and Leonard (shared with the mercers and metalworkers). The comparative status of the guilds is sometimes indicated in listings and the Parisian sources again show the tablet-makers as occurring below the horn and ivory carvers and above the manufacturers of tables and button-makers. Other sidelights upon tablet manufacture include an ordinance of the Provost of Paris of 1333 prohibiting the painting of the covers of wooden tablets as ‘improper’, although they could be carved (as in the case of a set of early Angevin examples from Chalonnes-sur-Loire, now lost), forming a middle grade between the plain wooden tablets and more luxurious examples of ivory or metalwork. The Parisian statutes also prohibit the manufacture of tablets for export, whilst simultaneously indicating that the tablet-makers paid heavy dues for the right to sell at fairs (especially that of St Germain-des-Prés). It is not, therefore, surprising to find tablets of very similar manufacture at Florence and Champagne, at Beauvais and Oslo. An example of a notebook of wax tablets now in the Archivio di Stato in Florence was owned by a Florentine merchant who appears to have bought them at the fairs of Champagne for immediate use there, and this is likely to have been a common context for purchase and use.

Turning to the question of the range of uses of medieval tablets, it has been assumed that, of the varied functions prevalent in Antiquity, the recording of legal texts and documents and correspondence cease to apply during the Middle Ages. As will be seen, the York tablets may include a letter, but this would be a draft, rather than the missive actually sent. Miniatures also depict the use of tablets in the court-room, but this may represent a legacy from the imagery of late Antiquity. From the evidence of surviving
examples, written sources and visual representation a wide range of functions emerges. Tablets were employed as learning aids, notebooks, modelbooks, *objets d'art* and love tokens; for quasi-liturgical purposes; as vehicles for the drafting of literary and other texts; for keeping up both temporary and formal administrative records, especially financial transactions (including everything from royal and civic accounts to rentals and gaming tallies), and for compiling lists such as library inventories.

Tablets were widely used in the schoolroom during Antiquity and this function continued. One of the earliest extant specimens of Insular script, dating to the early seventh century, occurs on a set of wax tablets found in an Irish peat-bog and carrying excerpts from the Psalms. Aspiring priests were required to be *psalteratus* and the Psalms were recommended reading when travelling, but presumably one was not meant to become absorbed to the point of losing one’s tablets in an encounter with the forces of the bog. Another important Irish find was the cache of about fifty slate teaching tablets at Smarmore, Co. Louth (with slates, incidentally, also being used to record Visigothic charters and being excavated at the Abbey of Vauclair). Remaining with sources indicating educational use, Einhard’s biography tells us of the wax tablets suspended around Charlemagne’s neck, upon which he unsuccessfully attempted to inscribe the alphabet. Orderic Vitalis undertook the task of manufacturing tablets for his students’ use with his own hands (and also reveals that, when wishing to copy a text from a visitor during winter he transcribed it in abbreviated form onto tablets in order to transfer it to parchment when it was not too cold to write formally). At Cluny pupils are recorded as using *tabule breviales* when learning to write and for note-taking during lectures and sermons. In the fourteenth century Count Robert of Artois is also known to have used them in childhood when learning the alphabet. A charming verse from *Floire et Blancheflor* reads:

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Et quand a l’escole venoient
les tables d’yvoire prenoient
adonc lor veissez escrire
lettres et vers d’amors en cire
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whilst *L’Orologe de la Mort* mentions that some learn to write upon wax and others upon parchment, a difference in training which may well have moulded personal preference, as perhaps in the case of Robert Grosseteste who is recorded as having used scraps of parchment for rough notes. Baudri de Bourgueil, however, was so attached to his preferred technology, wax tablets, that he composed verses on and about them. Finally, a student’s outfit consisting of tablets, stylets and ink pots is preserved at Lübeck Museum and Guignes de Chartreux, in his *Customs*, states that the Carthusian scribe ‘should be given an ink well, quill pens, chalk, two pumice stones, two horns, a small knife, two razors for scraping the parchment, one ordinary stylus and one finer one, a lead-point, a ruler, some writing tablets and a stylet’, the distinction between the types of stylus perhaps reflecting different circumferences and designs appropriate to pricking, ruling and hard-point designs and notes, as well as writing on wax.
Sets of small wax tablets were widely used as notebooks, and the York example, along with two sets excavated from a similar urban context at Lübeck, are good examples of these ‘proto-filofaxes’.35 These were the type already referred to as having been purchased for use in situ by merchants at the fairs of France. Such small sets functioned like girdlebooks, suspended from the belt, and could be easily supported in the palm of the hand. Their larger counterparts also formed a portable writing desk and were often held rather like lap-top computers.36 The handled version, the tabula ansata (see figs. 6 and 7), was a handy, less sophisticated form.37 Diptychs were also carried for simple note-taking. BL, Harley 4971, f. 26v, an English manual of the second half of the fourteenth century, says that the ideal clerk should record his lord’s incidental expenses immediately upon his diptych, in order not to forget anything. The sixteenth century witnessed the increasing use of alternative forms of notebooks, a heightened use of paper accompanying the growth of the printing trade. Such notebooks were generally made of paper or linen, the surface of which had been covered with plaster and which could be erased with a damp sponge.38

Forms similar to the notebooks were used by artists for sketches and as modelbooks: Notker, in his translation of Boethius’s Consolation of Philosophy, records seeing an animal drawn on wax, whilst Neckam advocates that metalworking apprentices should try out their designs on tablets.39 In addition to drawing on wax, it could be executed directly onto the surface of the tablet, or onto paper or parchment stuck onto the surface.
The canonesses of Maubeuge possessed in their treasury in 1480 six ivory tablets with images of the Virgin and the Passion; a set of ten wooden tablets carrying images of the saints survives at the Victoria & Albert Museum and two northern French sketchbooks, using silverpoint on sized boxwood, of the late-fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries, associated with the school of Jacquemart de Hesdin, form MSS. 346 and 346a in the Pierpoint Morgan Collection.\textsuperscript{40} Portraits and even a Catalan atlas, drawn upon sheets attached to tablets, are known.\textsuperscript{41} Such sheets of writing material also sometimes occur on parts of wax notebooks, perhaps recording invariable elements in the exercise, with variables, such as payments, being recorded on the adjacent wax.\textsuperscript{42}

In addition to being used in the design process, tablets could form works of art in their own right. A number of high quality girdlebook sets with ivory or metalwork embellishment, sometimes accompanied by worked leather cases, are known to have been produced for members of the aristocracy. A fine set with love poems written upon red wax (probably an added sign of luxury) with beautifully carved ivory covers depicting scenes of courtly love is preserved at Namur.\textsuperscript{43} On the subject of love-lyrics, Bernardus Noricus tells the tale of an early fourteenth-century presbyter, Leuthold von Hagwald, who was temporarily blinded for inappropriate possession of wax tablets carrying such texts.\textsuperscript{44} A pair of golden tablets may be found in the Musée du Louvre, and the inventory of Charles V of France mentions a silver set with enamelled covers.\textsuperscript{45} Elaborately carved ivory tablets were produced during Antiquity, with consuls often presenting such diptychs as gifts upon entering office.\textsuperscript{46} Some of these were subsequently used during the early Middle Ages for recording litanies and the like, and the Anglo-Saxon church is known to have used tablets in a quasi-liturgical context for recording litanies and the feasts proper to given services.\textsuperscript{47} It is interesting to observe that the Old Testament tablets of the law are often depicted as wax tablets, and conversely that the arched heads of a number of examples of tablets may have emulated the convention of depicting the tablets received by Moses.\textsuperscript{48} In England the badge which had, legally, to be worn by Jews (prior to the expulsion in 1290) was a wax diptych with arched heads, signifying the tablets of the law. These might also be worn on the forehead as phylacteries (see fig. 8).\textsuperscript{49}

The use of tablets in the drafting of texts is difficult to illustrate from surviving examples, although tablets at Angers contain drafts of annals, but a number of written references survive.\textsuperscript{50} A later life of St Boniface records that the eighth century version by Willibald was composed upon wax tablets and submitted for the approval of Archbishops Lull and Megingoz, before being copied onto parchment (and indeed it appears to have remained unfinished after the initial draft).\textsuperscript{51} Eadmer recalls the stratagems of the Devil to destroy the tablets upon which Anselm was composing his \textit{Proslogion} and Galbert de Bruges tells us that he made notes on tablets before writing his \textit{Histoire du meurtre de Charles le Bon} in 1127.\textsuperscript{52} Michael Clanchy has drawn attention to the use of dictation when composing texts, pointing out that such dictation might be to an assistant or by authors to themselves, the verb being interchangeable in this context with the verb ‘to write’.\textsuperscript{53} There are some illuminated depictions of this process, with
the author writing his own words on wax and an assistant copying from the tablets onto parchment.

Finally, moving on to the use of tablets for accounting purposes, there appears to have been something of a regional distinction concerning use. Dr C. M. Woolgar suggests that in England tablets were forbidden in manorial records and their use was peculiar to household accounting, perhaps a reflection upon the legality of their status and their vulnerability to fraud. A good reference to their domestic use occurs in BL, Sloane 1986, f. 21, the Boke of Curtasye of circa 1430–40 which reads, when outlining the role of the household steward:

At countying stuarde schalle ben,
Tylle alle be brevet of wax so grene,
Wrytten in-to bokes, with-out let,
That be-fore in tabuls hase ben sett,
Tyl countes also there-on ben cast,
And somet up holy at tho last.

However, on the Continent their use seems to have been more widespread, with accounts surviving for the Abbeys of Citeaux and Preuilly and town accounts for Leipzig, Enns, Nuremberg and Senlis. Long tablets were favoured, some preserving a double-entry format, similar to that found in books, and some sharing the layout of the accounts on parchment of the Hansa merchants. A record of enlistments for the Aragonese Crusade also survives. Series of volumes of records on tablets seem to have existed and three extremely formal sets survive carrying French royal accounts, from
daily expenditure to special payments made from the Treasury of the Temple. Volumes are extant for St Louis (Paris, Archives nat., J. 1166), Philippe III (Paris, B. N., lat. 9022) and Philippe IV (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mostra no. 6).

This survey has summarized some, but by no means all, of the known evidence concerning the role of the wax tablet. Let us turn now to a brief discussion of the York tablets to see what they can tell us of everyday life in medieval York. They consist of eight tiny (approx. 50 x 30 mm), but exquisitely manufactured, boxwood tablets with black wax recessed on both sides (see figs. 1–2). These were contained in a black/brown leather slip-case (open at top and bottom) tooled with oak-leaves, with a suspension strip (now lost) fed through tabs at the sides, presumably serving originally to prevent them from slipping out of the bottom and to suspend them from a belt. The construction of the case is such that a small iron stylus was also slipped in. Each tablet carried script in a cursiva anglicana, datable by analogy to the final quarter of the fourteenth century, following ‘ruled’ lines and being quite carefully written (although wax does tend to alter letter-forms slightly, a tendency alleged to have contributed to the evolution of Old and New Roman Cursive). This dating was substantiated by the archaeological context, a rubbish heap in the back garden of a tenement in Swinegate, containing sherds of pottery of the period. Some of the neighbouring tenements were engaged in leather and bone-working. The close relationship of the dating of script and find-context indicates that the tablets were probably lost or discarded within the generation of their use. Were they owned, as seems likely, by an occupant of the tenement (although alternative explanations, such as theft, cannot be ruled out) and what do their contents tell us about their owner? The process of transcribing the tablets is far from complete, if indeed their state of preservation will ever allow for completion. The fused waxen surfaces have now been prised apart, but, at the time of writing, the tablets have still to be kept water-logged until a satisfactory method of conservation is decided upon. Conventional methods of drying, such as freeze-drying, might preserve the wood but, unless handled particularly carefully, might shatter the wax. At present it is possible to say the following: that the tablets appear to carry three types of text, all written in the same hand. The verso of tablet 1 is laid out in such a way as to suggest that it functioned as something of a ‘title-page’ with the two lines of text at its head apparently repeating words found in the first text. There appears to be a columnar layout at its right foot, perhaps an ‘a’ between two vertical lines, and a symbol resembling a dumb-bell. By analogy with a fifteenth-century notebook in Lübeck this may represent an ownership mark. Tablets 2 recto to 5 recto carry a Middle English text (see fig. 2). The placing of certain words in relationship to one another upon the line suggests that the text may represent a verse form, with words such as ‘wille’ and ‘ffille’ occurring in the same position on the first and third lines of tablet 2 recto (see fig. 2). The little that has been deciphered has not proven locatable through the Middle English Dictionary, the Index of Middle English Verse or similar reference tools. One phrase does recur regularly, namely ‘stille scho seyde me noht na nay’, perhaps to be interpreted as ‘still she did not answer me, but she didn’t say no’. Other tantalizing nouns include ‘bedde’ and phrases
such as ‘playd my ffille’ occur and there is a temptation to assume that we may be dealing with a love poem of sorts, possibly unknown. Tablets 5 verso and 6 recto assume a more pragmatic form and are bisected by a narrow column containing what may be Arabic numerals (6 and 9). This layout does not correspond to English household accounts, but it is not inconceivable that it may represent notes made during the accounting process, with the damaged text on the left perhaps recording names (the word ‘fratres’ may occur) followed by notes relating to transactions. What may be a ‘con’ abbreviation symbol occurs several times on the right-hand side, and might represent ‘computare’ or ‘computum’ (as encountered in an accounting context). A possible reading of the last line of this section is ‘...Nati | | non comp(utatum)’, perhaps a reference to a rent or transaction as yet unpaid.\(^1\) An analogy for this sort of use again occurs in the fifteenth-century Lübeck notebooks which carry lists of names of tradespeople and records of receipt or otherwise of unspecified payments.\(^2\) Tablets 6 verso to 8 recto carry a text in Latin which contains what may be references to a legal transaction of some sort (with occurrence of the word ‘possident’ and of the phrase ‘habenda et tenenda’ and possible mention of a ‘magister le cidd’). It ends with what may read ‘...salutem et produciam (mane?)...amice’ suggesting that it might be a draft of a letter.

So, our late fourteenth-century burgess of York was literate in both English and Latin. Some orthographical peculiarities in their usage are distinguishable, such as ‘nessessitas’, and the orthography of words such as ‘scho’ perhaps reinforces the proposed northern English origin. They were engaged in transactions, perhaps of a commercial or property-related nature, composed their own correspondence (unless, of course, acting in a secretarial capacity on behalf of someone else or simply producing the texts as a learning exercise). The inclusion of the Middle English text would tend to suggest, however, that the notebook was probably the personal possession of the owner, who may have been of a romantic inclination. This intimate little object should undoubtedly play an important part in our assessment of the role of the wax tablet and of late medieval literacy.

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9 See Lalou, *Les Tablettes à Ecrire*. The York tablets were given a preliminary discussion at this conference by Dominic Tweddle and Sonia O’Conner; see their ‘A set of waxed tablets from Swinegate, York’ in ibid, pp. 307–22.

10 Good examples of wax tablets from Graeco-Roman Antiquity, now in the British Library, include Add. MSS. 33270, 33368, 33369, 33797, 33999, 34186, 34244, 40723 and 41203. The problem of the fusing of facing layers of wax was solved in the case of Add. MS. 33270, which consists of a number of tablets bound together with leather cords in ‘codex’ form, by setting wooden bars into the surfaces (see fig. 3). Another interesting example is Add. MS. 34186 which consists of two robust tablets which seem to have served, during the second century A.D., as a schoolroom exercise-book, carrying lines from the poems of Menander copied by both tutor and pupil and a mathematical exercise (see fig. 4). The Citeaux tablets of c. 1300 are Add. MS. 33215 (see fig. 5).

11 The Swiss board is British Museum, Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, 64.791.


14 For the Namur tablets, see Glenisson, *Le Livre*, p. 31; Lalou, ‘Les tablettes de cire’, p. 126 and Appendix no. 14, p. 139.


23 See, for example, the miniature of Hortensia pleading the case of the Roman matrons in BL, Harl. MS. 4375, f. 138v, a French copy of Valerius Maximus, *Les Fais et Dits Mémorables*, of the third quarter of the fifteenth century; reproduced in P. Basing, *Trades and Crafts in Medieval Manuscripts* (London, 1990), p. 100, pl. xiv. The clerk records the proceedings on a *tabula ansata*.

24 See, for example, the exercise book referred to in n. 10, above, and the Roman sculpture depicting a school scene on a sarcophagus of c. 200 from Neumagen, now in the Landesmuseum, Trier.


32 Ibid. On Grosseteste, see Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 92.


34 For the Lübeck material, see Lalou, ‘Les tablettes de cire’, p. 131. For Guignes de Chartreux and the Carthusian rule, see Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, pp. 18–19; Jean, *Writing*, p. 85.


36 For this type of tablet, see Glenisson, *Le Livre*, pp. 18 and 30.

37 For the *tabula ansata* form, see n. 23, above. Other depictions occur in the Anglo-Saxon Benedictional of St Ethelwold, BL, Add. MS. 49598, f. 92v (see fig. 6), and the Caligula Troper, BL, Cotton MS. Caligula A. XIV, f. 20v, both depicting the naming of John the Baptist, and in a manuscript made at Bruges for Edward IV of England in 1479, BL, Royal MS. 17 F. II, f. 344 (see fig. 8), in a miniature depicting the murder of Caesar.


41 See Lalou, ‘Les tablettes de cire’, p. 130.

42 Ibid., p. 127. A medieval German example of this sort of tablet was lot 81 at Sotheby’s, 21 June 1994.

43 For the Namur tablets, see Glenisson, *Le Livre*, p. 31; Lalou, ‘Les tablettes de cire’, Appendix no. 14, p. 139.


48 See, for example, the depiction of Moses holding arched Tablets of the Law in the Jesse Tree miniature of the Holkham Bible Picture Book, BL, Add. MS. 47682, f. 10, which was made in England, c. 1320–30. See W. O. Hassall, *The Holkham Bible Picture Book* (London, 1954).

49 The Holkham Bible Picture Book, ibid., contains a miniature depicting the Pharisees, f. 27v (see fig. 7), in which arched wax tablets are shown, one Pharisee holding the Tablets of the Law before his eyes and others wearing them as phylacteries. See Hassall, *Holkham Bible*, pp. 124–5. Tablets worn as badges may be seen in BL, Cotton MS. Nero D. II, f. 180, illustrating the English regulation of 1275 prohibiting usury by Jews. For related depictions of the Jews and on the law concerning badges, see, for example, C. Roth, ‘Portraits and caricatures of Medieval Jews’, *Jewish Monthly* (April 1950), p. ii. Much valuable work in this area has been undertaken by Dr Ruth Mellinkoff: see especially ‘The


61 On the Lübeck tablets, see Grassmann, *Archäologie in Lübeck*.


63 I am indebted to Dr C. M. Woolgar and Dr Pamela Robinson for comments in this respect.

64 See Grassmann, *Archäologie in Lübeck*.