London, British Library Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII: A Unique Insight into the Career of a Cistercian Monk at the University of Oxford in the Early Fifteenth Century

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Part 1: Setting Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII in context

Introduction: The basic context of the manuscript, its origin, the Cistercian identity of its original owner, and the purpose and make-up of the book

Two major developments, originating in quite different sources, occurred almost simultaneously at Oxford in the early fourteenth century. In one corner, significant advances in the study of logic and natural philosophy (primarily physics) at Merton College from c. 1330 in work of scholars such as Walter Burley, William Heytesbury, Thomas Bradwardine and Richard Swyneshed (the ‘Calculator’), attracted the attention of the western academic world;\(^1\) the dominance of the curriculum by the new logic in particular created a ‘strikingly individual programme’ of arts teaching at Oxford, so the story goes: it took twice as long to gain an arts degree at the University as it did on the Continent and few came from abroad to study at Oxford.\(^2\) In another corner, pope Benedict XII began his scheme of monastic educational reform in 1335 with the bull *Fulgens sicut stella*, obliging houses of his own order, the Cistercians, to send some of their brothers to western Europe’s universities.\(^3\) The original Cistercian rule forbade monks to write books; Bernard of Clairvaux thought that the liberal arts were a dangerous distraction from the monk’s proper spiritual life of lamentation.\(^4\) How did English Cistercians react to this bull?

An investigation into the content of Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII offers a unique opportunity to comment on the lasting effects of both of these developments in one sitting. This is a singular opportunity because of the over 370 extant English manuscripts definitely or very probably of Cistercian provenance\(^5\) this book is the only one, despite its small size, which contains a full range of texts covering the content of the trivium, quadrivium, and the ‘three philosophies’: natural philosophy, ethics and metaphysics, for use by an Oxford student in the arts.

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\(^3\) Any English monastery with more than fifteen and fewer than thirty brothers was to send a monk to Oxford, see D. D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. ii: *The End of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 24-5.


\(^5\) For a full listing see D. N. Bell, *An Index of Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries in Great Britain* (Kalamazoo, 1992).
How were both the origin of this manuscript, and its owner’s Cistercian identity confirmed? The colophon on f. 48v tells us that Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII is a ‘liber [...] universitatis Oxonie’. Though the manuscript cannot be connected with certainty to any one Cistercian monastery (its provenance will be discussed at length below), the inclusion of a series of legal tracts at the back of the manuscript (ff. 82r-143v) with formulae framed specifically for a Cistercian monastery in the diocese of Lincoln points to the owner’s Cistercian identity. These tracts are replicated in their entirety in another, later, manuscript of Cistercian provenance, Royal MS. 11 A. XIV (ff. 1r-60v), and one of the procedural tracts in our manuscript (entitled De officio iudicis contra inquisitionem faciendam, ff. 82r-91v) is included in Royal MS. 12 E. XIV (early fifteenth century), which also contains a Cistercian formulary, in this case pertaining to the abbey of Hayles in Gloucestershire. The owner’s first name was probably Thomas, as is still legible on f. 3r, but there are no indications of his surname, meaning that he could not be located in Emden’s list of Oxford scholars.

Why was Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII produced? The juxtaposition of the tract De officio iudicis contra inquisitionem faciendam with legal formulae in three Cistercian manuscripts, including ours, and its elementary explanatory content suggest that the legal element was composed for a basic practical purpose: as a handbook for the execution of legal procedure. Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII was also a scholar’s handbook. Contained is a florilegium of philosophical works and four short or abridged Scholastic tracts. In addition, the small size of the book suggests that it was designed to be portable. This fits the hypothesis that the texts included reflect the basic content of a scholar’s learning, and were convenient for frequent reference. Considerations of size and content aside, the decoration of the manuscript in gold leaf on f. 4r does not necessarily mean that this was a ‘display’ book. Illumination in gold leaf was actually a relatively cheap element in the overall cost of book production and the illumination in our manuscript is, in any case, very limited.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on another physical aspect of the manuscript, its three colophons: on f. 48v (dividing the florilegium from the four Scholastic tracts), f. 80v (dividing the Scholastic from the legal tracts) and f. 143r (marking the end of the book). Our scholar had the three sections bound together and added a contents list analysing the book as a whole. The first two portions, judging from the citation in the colophon itself in the case of the first and from the content in the case of the second, were definitely produced at Oxford. The second may well have been bound immediately to the first after its production, with the new colophon added to mark the end of the book. The uniformity of decoration and layout throughout the manuscript aside, there is no immediate reason to suppose that the legal tracts were also produced in Oxford. One clue that points strongly to the possibility that all three portions were produced and subsequently bound together (in the manuscript’s original binding) at Oxford is the quality of the parchment. All three portions of Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII are made from typical Oxford parchment (revealingly, not...
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Fig. 1. Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, f. 4r.
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used for high quality manuscripts), which has a yellowish colour and a tendency to develop a distinctive orange tint on its hair-side.\textsuperscript{12} This orange tint is found clearly in the first portion of the book, on ff. 20v–21r, and in the final portion, on ff. 123v–124 r and 125v–126r.

With these things confirmed, Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII must be dated in order to place it in its correct context with respect to the two major developments outlined above.

2. Dating Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII: Brief analysis of script

It is highly probable that the owner of Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII was also its scribe; it must have been common practice from the mid-thirteenth century at the latest for university scholars to copy some of their own books, particularly collections of short tracts like those in this manuscript. The clearest evidence that scholars in Oxford copied texts for themselves does in fact come from fifteenth-century sources.\textsuperscript{13} Even with no knowledge of what it contained, a trained eye could identify our manuscript as written in the first half of the fifteenth century, and at an English university.\textsuperscript{14}

Characteristic of a fifteenth-century English book hand is our scribe’s use of a mixture of Anglicana\textsuperscript{15} and French Secretary letter forms. He alternates use of the Anglicana ‘6 shaped’ final ‘s’, for example, with the distinctive Secretary two-compartment final ‘s’. As the first letter in a word, ‘s’ appears in both the long, Secretary form and the short, ‘6-shaped’ Anglicana form. Both the Anglicana ‘8 –shaped g’ and the Secretary ‘horned’ single compartment ‘g’ feature, as do the Anglicana cursive ‘e’ and the secretary open lobed, ‘horned’ e. The Anglicana double compartment ‘a’ is present, alongside the Secretary single compartment ‘a’. The influence of the duct of Secretary shows in the scribe’s use of broken strokes where cursive ones might be expected, for example in forming ‘o’ and the lobes of ‘a’ ‘g’ and ‘q’ and ‘d’.\textsuperscript{16} The lateral compression of this scribe’s hand and the vertical tracing of minim strokes are typical of ‘academic Anglicana’ specifically.\textsuperscript{17}

Moreover it is clear that this is an early fifteenth-century hand. From c. 1450 the influence of the duct of Secretary became far more dominant in English university scripts; they took on Secretary’s characteristic ‘splayed’ appearance.\textsuperscript{18} This scribe’s hand, however, has an upright appearance (crucially, the ‘f’ and long ‘s’ are not slanted). It retains the large looped ascenders typical of Anglicana, which tended to be replaced by shorter ascenders.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Parkes, ‘Provision of Books’, p. 426.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Talbot dated this manuscript one hundred years too early, even with some knowledge of its contents. His argument that it was written before 1310 by Thomas Kirkeby, later abbot of Rewley in Oxford, seems to hinge on the need to fit the name Thomas with Rewley as the location. This was at the expense of the realization that the \textit{Termini naturales}, the \textit{Proporciones} and probably most of the legal tracts contained in the manuscript were written later in the fourteenth century. See C. H. Talbot, ‘English Cistercians and the Universities’, \textit{Studia Monastica}, iv (1962), p. 204.
\item \textsuperscript{15} The name was coined by Malcolm Parkes for the cursive script which became the book hand of choice for English scribes from the latter half of the thirteenth century. It developed from from thirteenth-century English documentary hand. See M. B. Parkes, \textit{English Cursive Book Hands} (London, 1979), p. xvi.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. xix.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Parkes, ‘Provision of Books’, p. 428, n. 107.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Parkes, \textit{English Cursive Book Hands}, plates 17 (ii) and 18 (i), pp. 17, 19.
\end{itemize}
Fig. 2. Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, f. 9r.
with far smaller loops later in the fifteenth century. The single compartment Secretary ‘a’, it is true, is the dominant form of that letter in this manuscript, but the Secretary ‘horned g’, which became by far the more common form in the hands of the latter half of the fifteenth century, is not found nearly as frequently as the Anglicana ‘8-shaped g’.

3. The Scholastic texts (ff. 4r-80v): their authors and what they reveal about learning in the arts at Oxford in the early fifteenth century

In the early fifteenth century, had the nature of what was read and learned in logic and natural philosophy really transformed so dramatically over the previous hundred years? The limitations of what such a short book as Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII can tell us about such broad developments are obvious, and should be borne constantly in mind. Nevertheless, arguments which stress the scale of the change in Oxford learning in the later Middle Ages tend to focus on the work of the ‘Merton School’ in the fourteenth century: a relatively small group of advanced scholars with specialist interests in the intricacies of logic and physics. For example, work on supposition in linguistic logic, detailed interest in which was provoked by Ockham’s ‘razor’ (and his doctrine of the suppositio simplex, the rejection of the objective reality of universal natures), exploded in the 1430s as scholars such as William Sutton, Walter Burley and Richard Billingham started to discuss supposition of different parts of speech (previously, supposition was strictly associated with subject terms alone).19 Accounts of the lasting significance of developments in physics tend to be more sober; it is generally recognized that there was little interest in extending and developing the sophisticated methods of scholars such as the ‘Calculator’ Richard Swyneshed.20 As a scholar’s handbook, our manuscript can go some way to revealing a picture of the day-to-day experience of a scholar, and probably of the generality of scholars; as a set of tracts for beginners it reveals the content of a more basic kind of learning. To this end, each Scholastic tract will be identified and discussed below, and will also be set in its European context. Was a scholar’s learning experience in Oxford really so drastically different from that on the Continent?

3.1 The ‘Parvi flores’ (ff. 4r-48v)21

The Parvi flores is a florilegium or compendium of sententiae from philosophical works of c. 1300. Johannes de Fonte, then lector of theology at the Franciscan house in Montpellier, is now generally recognized as its compiler.22 Hamesse in her edition has identified the precise origin of each sententia in the work.23 It is for the most part compiled from the full range of works (genuine and spurious) in the thirteenth-century Corpus Aristotelicum, and Averroes’s commentaries on these texts. It is arranged in two sections: a section containing exclusively logical works and a section containing works on natural philosophy.

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20 Fletcher, ‘Developments in the Faculty of Arts’, p. 340.
21 ‘The In Principio online database failed to identify this set of sententiae as Johannes de Fonte’s Parvi flores. The identity of the compendium was eventually discovered using the Brepolis Library of Latin Texts database, online at the Institute of Classical Studies at Senate House. The identification process involved entering a number of distinctive word forms from the manuscript text in succession into a search field, and electronically allocating a time period within which to limit the search.
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(predominantly), metaphysics and ethics. Aristotelian sententiae commonly circulated, as in this compilation, with sayings drawn from Plato, Porphyry, Seneca, Apuleius and Boethius. Some of the works in the Parvi flores were available in the Middle Ages only in this abridged format. This is true, for example, of Aristotle’s Poetics. The compilation and circulation of florilegia was the principal means by which key Senecan ethical works both genuine (De beneficiis and Epistulae ad Lucilium) and dubious (De fortuna, in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, more commonly circulated under the title De quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus and was actually composed by Martin of Braga in the sixth century) were known in the west from the twelfth century.

Hamesse also identifies in the introduction to her edition works which she has included and Royal MS 8 A. XVIII lacks: the Pseudo-Aristotelian De regimine principum, De pomo et morte, Epistula ad Alexandrum and De bona fortuna (more precisely, she has determined that this last is actually a conflation of excerpts from the dubious Magna moralia and the genuinely Aristotelian Eudemian Ethics) and Pseudo-Boethius De disciplina scholarium. Among these, she neglects to mention that the manuscript lacks Aristotle’s Poetics, De somnpo et vigilia with commentary by Averroes, and De longitudine et brevitate vitae. A physical examination of the manuscript, and comparison of its text with Hamesse’s edition (along with some educated guesswork as to the physical space each work could have occupied in the manuscript), demonstrate the distinct possibility that these works, now missing, were originally included on the folia missing from quires 4, 5, 6 and 7.

In the scribe’s original version, then, the folium now missing after f. 30 probably bore De somnpo et vigilia (the subheading for which is at the very foot of f. 30v) with Averroes’s commentary and De longitudine et brevitate vitae, along with the beginning of Averroes’s commentary on the last work, which last lacks its first half on f. 31r. De bona fortuna probably followed the end of the (incomplete) excerpts from book IX and those from book X of Aristotle’s Ethics and was followed by the true beginning of the set of excerpts from the Economics (whose beginning in the manuscript at the head of f. 40r is found about half-way through the complete sequence printed by Hamesse) on the folium now missing after f. 39. It is likely that excerpts from the Poetics, De regimine principum, De pomo et morte and Epistula ad Alexandrum were written on the now missing bifolium following the rest of the (incomplete) set of excerpts from Aristotle’s Rhetoric on f. 42v. Finally, only the first part of De disciplina scholarium is actually missing (the final excerpts are found at the head of f. 48r) and this was presumably written on the missing folium after f. 47, following the incomplete set of excerpts from book IV (and the missing excerpts from book V) of Boethius’s De consolatione philosophiae.

It might be supposed tentatively that with so many of the missing works subsequently found to have been spurious, they were removed as a response, though this would not explain the removal of every one of the missing leaves. In addition, Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII includes Seneca’s De remediis fortuitorum, omitted from Hamesse’s edition.

27 Hamesse incorrectly claims that Aristotle’s Predicamenta does not feature. It is at ff. 4r-5r.
28 De remediis fortuitorum is also excluded from two early modern editions available in the BL: Paris, 1493 and Lyon, 1490. This work often circulated with Pseudo-Senecan sententiae, but is generally considered to be an epitome of a genuine Senecan text. See G. M. Ross, ‘Seneca’s Philosophical Influence’, in G. D. N. Costa (ed.), Seneca (London, 1974), pp. 130-1.
That the Parvi flores appears in our manuscript is significant in two respects. The first relates to its contents. Quite simply, the use of the Parvi flores in early fifteenth-century Oxford serves to highlight the fact that the core of the curriculum of study had not changed over the previous hundred years: the keynote was continuity rather than innovation. For training in logic, University statutes in 1409 prescribed Porphyry’s Isagoge, the Liber sex principiorum, and Aristotle’s Predicamenta and De sophisticis elenchis; in 1431 there were lectures for three terms on Aristotle’s Peri hermeneias, Topics or Prior analytics (or, indeed, the first three books of Boethius’s Topics); the substantial similarities between these texts and their apparent equivalence in the curriculum might go some way to explain why our scribe confusedly labels the extracts from the Prior analytics as if they were from Boethius’s work). Even more telling is the structuring of our scholar’s copy of the Parvi flores: he copied the logical part of the Parvi flores before the natural philosophical part (the logical part is at the very least bound first in the book), whereas Hamesse’s edition and therefore, presumably, the weight of the manuscript tradition, places it second. The scribe’s version reflects his chronological progression through the curriculum, but more than this, the fact that the logical treatises are contained within one quire of twelve, larger than the standard quires of eight in this manuscript, strongly suggests that this first quire was at some point a separately existing booklet (that it is written in darker ink also suggests that it was copied separately), which is to say that the scribe targeted the logical treatises and copied them specifically and independently. There is not the possibility that they were just another part of the Parvi flores collection of sententiae which he eventually copied as a whole. This confirms that although Mertonian masters had developed their own, distinctive teaching material in logic in the fourteenth century, short tracts written specifically for teaching their undergraduates, the traditional core material for the learning of logic remained in specific demand at Oxford. The meticulously executed diagram of a ‘Porphyrian Tree’ on f. 3v hammers this point firmly home.

Undergraduates at Oxford did not necessarily need their own books; lectures read out sentence by sentence with commentary would basically suffice, but it is easy to appreciate that a book such as this compilation could become indispensable to a scholar of logic or natural philosophy, for which lectures on Aristotle’s Physics and ‘other related works’, presumably at least De anima, and probably also De caelo et mundo, Meteor, and De generatione et corruptione, were prescribed for three terms in 1431. It could serve initially as an introduction to the core material, then as a handbook to be read in tandem with full Professor, King’s College London; e-mail: d.bunke@kcl.ac.uk
Aristotelian texts and, finally, as a revision tool to prepare for the regular parvisus exercises (or disputationes) which were at the core of the learning process and their final ‘determination’; in short, reference to this work was almost certainly a crucial part of our scholar’s learning experience at every stage. Johannes de Fonte himself in the shorter version of his prologue (the longer version appears in our manuscript) identifies study in the arts as one of the specific uses to which the Parvi flores is to be put. This looks toward the second respect in which the inclusion of a work like the Parvi flores in our fifteenth-century Oxford manuscript is significant: the breadth of its distribution. Surviving in over 150 copies, it was the most widely distributed of the medieval philosophical florilegia and vastly popular across western Europe, particularly in northern European universities judging from the general location of extant manuscripts. Moreover its popularity endured into the Renaissance with fifty early printed editions. The Parvi flores, therefore, represents a form in which scholars all over Europe encountered and used Aristotelian works and the commentaries of Averroes on a day-to-day basis: it served for two centuries as a common elementary point of access to the core of the curriculum, both in Oxford and on the Continent, still at the beginning of the fifteenth century as at the beginning of the fourteenth.

3.2 The ‘Tractatus de anima et eius potenciis’ (ff. 49r–56v)

This tract is an abridgment of an abridgment. De potenciis anime, an abridged text on the soul and its powers which circulated in the compilation known as the Philosophia pauperum, has tentatively been ascribed to Albertus Magnus. The tract in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII is a further abridgment of the version in that compilation. The original De potenciis anime is thought to have been written c. 1225 in Paris, the inclusion of this derivation in our manuscript therefore serves dramatically to emphasize the point already made regarding continuity in basic learning in the arts at Oxford back through the fourteenth century and (in this case) the thirteenth also: this is an abridgment of one of the earliest interpretative tracts on Aristotle’s De anima and Averroes’s commentary on that work. The Philosophia pauperum itself was popular and has a complicated manuscript tradition, with five families of manuscripts and twenty-three early modern printed editions. The most recent modern edition of De potenciis anime, by Gauß, does not clearly match the text in our manuscript. Geyer’s edition of the entire Philosophia pauperum includes two recensions, and the text in our manuscript is a shortened version (matching in respect of its incipit and

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36 Ibid., p. 325.
38 Ibid., pp. 24–35.
40 ‘This was a short textbook, with epitomes of many of Albertus Magnus’s works on natural philosophy and psychology, designed as an introduction for scholars and believed by Grabmann to have been compiled by Albertus of Orlamünde in the late thirteenth century: see M. Grabmann, Die ‘Philosophia pauperum’ und ihr Verfasser, Albert von Orlamünde: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des philosophischen Unterrichtes an den deutschen Stadtschulen des ausgehenden Mittelalters (Munster, 1918).
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more closely in its first half than its second) of recension A, chapter V of that edition. Geyer lists eighteen manuscripts containing this version, including Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII and BL., Add. MS. 38810 (ff. 1r-3r), scattered for the most part throughout northern Europe: there are two manuscripts in Oxford and one in Paris. Though not explicitly mentioned on any university curriculum, the *Philosophia pauperum* and its contents were clearly considered useful little introductory texts, on the Continent as well as in Oxford.

3.3 The ‘Tractatus de spera’ (ff. 56v–69r)

John of Sacrobosco’s *De spera*, an introduction to astronomy written c. 1230 in Paris, is here reproduced in full. Providing a brief summary of the parts of the finite spherical universe in four short sections, it was tremendously successful in the schools. Though elementary, *De spera* gained a far higher official status than tracts such as those in the *Philosophia pauperum* and was a mainstay of the quadrivium in universities throughout western Europe for the remainder of the Middle Ages, even in universities whose primary intellectual interest lay elsewhere: it was required reading in the fifteenth century, for example, in the predominantly legal environment of Bologna. It saw around 200 printed editions from 1472 to 1673, remaining in use in spite of the Copernican Revolution. Of all the texts in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, it is *De spera* which contains the most annotation identifiably by subsequent users of the book. The reason for the remarkable staying power of the tract is simple: it was the best introduction to astronomy available. Essentially it is a summary of Ptolemy’s *Almagest* which, although it furnished the range of astronomical knowledge in the medieval period, was considered too technical for use. In Oxford in 1431 lectures were prescribed on the *Almagest*, but only *De spera* and the *Compotus*, a work on practical astronomy by Sacrobosco, were required *pro forma* for the quadrivium in a 1409 statute. Discussions of developments in the arts curriculum in later medieval Oxford tend to skim over astronomy, since there were no major innovative developments in the field. Nevertheless the point to be made about the inclusion of *De spera* here is precisely a point about continuity, and a community of experience in basic learning throughout Europe.

In his edition, Thorndike lists over ninety witnesses for *De spera*. Aside from our manuscript, two of these are in the BL: Royal MS. 12 C. XVII (ff. 16v–32v) and Royal MS. 12 E. XVI (ff. 23v–42r). The former is illustrated with astronomical diagrams.

3.4 ‘Termini naturales’ (ff. 69v–75r)

This is the first of two remaining Scholastic tracts, which are linked by the fact that they are the only two which show any sign of the fruits of the fourteenth–century Mertonian developments. These are not logical tracts, but tracts on physics. The *Termini naturales*, a text on simple definitions and divisions in natural philosophy, was written for beginners in

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45 Ibid., p. 21, n. 10.
48 See below, p. 37.
50 Fletcher, ‘Developments in the Faculty of Arts’, p. 323.
physics at Oxford. Though it bears witness to the innovative trend towards the application of a purely mathematical method to physics, in itself it is of no speculative importance.\(^{53}\) The basic introductory nature of the tract meant that it saw many adaptations and commentaries at Oxford, and hence many of the extant manuscripts fail to cite an author (as does Royal MS. 8 A. VIII) and others point to different authors. The most common misattribution is to Johannes Garisdale, as in Oxford, New College, MS. 289.\(^{54}\) Johannes merely commented on this text, however, and the original author was almost certainly William Heytesbury, probably writing in the 1330s: two manuscripts at Munich, Clm. MS. 5691 and Clm. MS. 8997, name him as the author.\(^{55}\) The number of extant commentaries on this treatise, including that of Garisdale, indicates its popularity, though reading it was certainly never required by statute. Thirteen manuscripts of the *Termini naturales* proper have been identified.\(^{56}\)

The diagram accompanying this tract on f. 73r paints a revealing picture. It represents, specifically, the Aristotelian theory of the terrestrial elements. Its inclusion as a major diagram in the *Termini naturales* is an important reminder that although the latter can in general terms be cast as a tract which introduced new, non qualitative mathematical concepts to the study of natural philosophy, these developments did not touch every area of natural philosophical learning. The Aristotelian theory of the elements was explicitly and intentionally qualitative; it was, in fact, a reaction against Plato’s theory of elemental particles as geometric solids according to which reactions between elements were explained in terms of mathematical, proportional relationships.\(^{57}\) Of course Heytesbury, Bradwardine (author of the very next item in this manuscript, the *De proporcionibus*) and his colleagues at Merton were the promoters of mathematical reasoning of quite a different kind, but Aristotle’s forceful point was that no analysis attempting to gain knowledge of the terrestrial elements as a physical substratum could succeed. Proceeding logically, he argued, one reaches the conclusion that elemental reactions can only be explained in terms of the opposition of four basic primary qualities: hot-cold and dry-moist. To each element, Aristotle attributed two primary qualities, for example hot and dry to fire.\(^{58}\)

The representation of this idea was well suited to a simple square-shaped diagram, in which the elements with opposed primary qualities figured in diagonally opposite corners of the larger square. This layout is the basis for the diagram on f. 73r, and was a popular figure used to display the theory.\(^{59}\) However the precise form of the diagram on f. 73r, the ‘square of opposition’, is one imported from the study of logic used to display the specific types of relationship between propositions.\(^{60}\) So whilst the elements with their primary qualities in diagonally opposite corners of the square are labelled correctly as ‘contradictorie’, the ascription of the remaining logical relationships pertaining to the ‘square of opposition’ format – contrary, subcontrary and subaltern, covering all the logical implications of


\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 133.


\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 62. For examples of ‘squares of opposition’ in logic see also pp. 63-66, nos 59-61.
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Fig. 3. Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, f. 3v. The Porphyrian tree.
Fig. 4. Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, f. 73r. The square of opposition.
universal–particular and affirmative-negative relationships – in the additional vertical and horizontal bands is certainly incorrect. This is a ‘force-fit’ diagram, implying the existence of relationships whose terminology belongs to an entirely separate science.\footnote{Ibid., p. 353.} Another fifteenth-century copy of the \textit{Termini naturales}, also of Oxford origin, Bodleian MS. Digby 75, on f. 129r makes precisely the same mistake.\footnote{Ibid.} This diagram differs significantly from that in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII in other respects, however: it is a circular diagram and the elements are arranged in a different order. A textual critic would have to examine the text of both manuscripts to determine whether they are connected in non-obvious scribal errors: it is not unreasonable to suppose that ‘force-fitting’ a theory specifically based on the idea of opposition into the form of the logical ‘square of opposition’ was a common mistake for a scholar new to the study of natural philosophy, but already thoroughly trained in logic.

3.5 ‘\textit{Proporciones}’ (ff. 75r–80v)

This tract is one of at least two shortened and simplified versions of Thomas Bradwardine’s \textit{De proporcionibus} which circulated in the English schools and on the Continent (besides Albert of Saxony’s well known Paris version); many, perhaps most, scholars who read Bradwardine’s complex and innovative treatise would have encountered it for the first time in such a form. The abridgment consists of two short sections, the first dealing with proportionality in general, the second with three erroneous opinions on kinematics, and Bradwardine’s solutions. Its juxtaposition with the \textit{Termini naturales} in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII (it begins on the second line after the explicit of the \textit{Termini naturales}, on f. 75r), is fitting since the latter essentially, if not explicitly, serves as an introduction to the \textit{Proporciones}: if the \textit{Termini naturales} introduced our scholar to the basics involved in a mathematical approach to natural philosophy, it was Bradwardine’s \textit{De proporcionibus} (though written earlier, c. 1328) which embodied the most significant and influential application of this method. Heytesbury was a disciple of Bradwardine and it is a distinct possibility that he wrote the \textit{Termini naturales} specifically with a view to teaching the \textit{De proporcionibus}. This relationship between the two treatises is reflected elsewhere in the manuscript tradition: the tracts are found juxtaposed in this same order in Worcester Cathedral MS. F. 118, of the later fifteenth century.\footnote{De Rijk, ‘Logica Oxoniensis’, pp. 124–41, esp. p. 133.}

Bradwardine’s innovation was his attempt to express variations in velocity with a universally valid mathematical law (in simple terms, his kinematic law stated that the relation of a force and the resistance impending upon it is proportional to resultant velocity). The tradition of scholarship in commentaries on Aristotle’s \textit{Physica} accounted for problems of motion and change in qualitative terms as the Philosopher himself had done; Bradwardine sought to express these changes in purely mathematical terms. Though certainly embodying a new approach, Bradwardine’s tract does not imply an outright rejection of tradition. It was, rather, a ‘mathematisation of Aristotle’.\footnote{J. D. North, ‘Natural Philosophy in Late Medieval Oxford’, in Catto and Evans (eds.), \textit{The History of the University of Oxford}, vol. ii: Late Medieval Oxford, p. 102.} Bradwardine’s tract seems to have proven more widely intellectually accessible than some of the more rarefied mathematical endeavours of those he inspired. The lack of enthusiasm for Swyneshed’s work on velocity was already been mentioned.\footnote{Above, p. 5.} Both the \textit{De proporcionibus} and the \textit{Termini naturales} circulated widely outside Oxford, often with other (mainly logical) texts of Oxford
origin, demonstrating the fame of the University’s scientific advances. On the Continent these tracts tended to be identified in their explicits as ‘secundum usum Oxonii’. There are many surviving commentaries and questiones on the De proportionibus. Including our manuscript, thirty copies have been identified as containing the tract, another of which is BL, Harley MS. 267.

4. A drastically individual Oxford curriculum?

It is clear from an analysis of the Scholastic content of Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII that our scholar’s basic learning experience in the arts, and probably that of the generality of scholars at early fifteenth-century Oxford, would have had more far more similarities to than differences from that of his predecessors in the early fourteenth century and his contemporaries on the Continent. The inclusion of the Tractatus de anima et eius potenciis represents continuity in respect of the texts used for elementary learning, even from the beginning of the thirteenth century. In those tracts which present innovations, these coexist alongside traditional and widespread doctrines and assumptions; this is demonstrated vividly in the inclusion of a distinctive traditional Aristotelian diagram with the Termini naturales.

5. The arts and law: the university career of a Cistercian

What does Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII reveal about the long-term effects of the provisions of Fulgens sicut stella on English Cistercian intellectual culture c. 1400-1450? Both the place of the arts and law in intellectual culture will be discussed, but in order to place the answer to this first question in perspective, a more basic question must first be answered: was the pursuit of academic learning at Oxford a well-trodden career path for Cistercians at the beginning of the fifteenth century? All of the available evidence suggests that the answer is a resounding ‘no’; at no point before 1500 does academia seem to have held wide appeal for English Cistercians. Emden’s list shows that 17% of recorded Oxford alumni until 1500 were from religious orders. Of these, the Benedictines are the best represented, with 681 alumni; the mendicant orders, unsurprisingly, are well represented with 543 Dominicans, 487 Franciscans, 283 Austin friars and 244 Carmelites among the listed graduates. The Cistercians come in sixth with 178 alumni. One might guess that the mendicant orders as a group would be the best represented; after c. 1230 men with academic aspirations would naturally have been drawn to join the friars. However, the contrast between the Benedictine and Cistercian numbers is striking. At the beginning of the fifteenth century one Benedictine house, Durham college, could support more students than the entire order of White Monks. By this time however Rewley, the one monastery established to

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67 On the significance of this inscription in general see De Rijk, ‘Logica Oxoniensis’. For more on these advances in physics at Oxford, see C. Trifogli, Oxford Physics in the Thirteenth Century (ca. 1250-1270): Motion, Infinity, Space and Time (Leiden, 2000).
69 Ashton, ‘Oxford’s Medieval Alumni’, p. 17. See n. 9 above. The skewing of Emden’s data would leave the religious orders vastly underrepresented. Nevertheless, the data for all of the religious orders would have been affected indiscriminately by this bias in qualitative terms if not necessarily in precise quantitative terms. Therefore a comparison of numerical data for religious orders, one against another, is still revealing for purposes of establishing a general context for Cistercian developments.
70 Ibid.
house Cistercian scholars at Oxford, had withdrawn its provision of accommodation for students.\footnote{Prior to the circulation of *Fulgens sicut stella*, the Cistercian order had become the first of the English monastic orders to settle in Oxford. Rewley opened its doors to students as early as 1282 and monks could reside at Rewley whilst they studied, as long as their own monasteries would pay their rent. The impetus for this development seems to have come from a pressure group of Cistercian converts who had already pursued academic careers, led by Stephen Lexington. See C. H. Lawrence, ‘Stephen of Lexington and Cistercian University Studies in the Thirteenth Century’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xi (1960), pp. 164–78. Rewley closed its doors to scholars in 1381. On the foundation and early history of Rewley in general, see H. G. Richardson, ‘Cistercian Formularies’ in H. E. Salter, W. A. Pantin and H. G. Richardson (eds.), *Formularies Which Bear Upon The History of Oxford c. 1204-1420*, vol. ii (Oxford, 1942), pp. 279–301, and W. H. Stevenson and H. E. Salter (eds.), *The Early History of St John's College Oxford* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 1–86.} Until St Bernard’s college was established in 1437, most Cistercian scholars, probably including our scribe, lived in rented accommodation. The foundation charter for St Bernard’s stated that Cistercian scholars at Oxford were for the most part living ‘in diversis hospiciis sive locis’ including Trillock’s Inn, a property of New College.\footnote{ibid., pp. 11–12.} The situation was particularly dire at the turn of the century: at a parade of religious welcoming the King to Oxford in 1399 (at which attendance was obligatory), only five Cistercians were present.\footnote{Dobson, ‘The Religious Orders 1370–1540’, pp. 545.}

Therefore our scholar’s identity as a Cistercian student at Oxford in the early fifteenth century places him in a minority group, and a small minority group at that, in terms of both English Cistercians taken as a whole and of scholars of all kinds at Oxford during that period. What deterred Cistercian abbots from sending their subordinates to Oxford in this period? The explicit evidence we have points to the conclusion that it was the problem of insecurity in accommodation at the University for Cistercian students, beginning with an inadequate initial endowment for Rewley.\footnote{Richardson, ‘Cistercian Formularies’, p. 297.} Without a secure and common domestic setting, Cistercian students could not follow their Rule. This pragmatic concern for discipline was the primary reason for the foundation of St Bernard’s.\footnote{Most of the building work on St Bernard’s was still not complete in 1482: Dobson, ‘The Religious Orders 1370–1540’, p. 545. Throughout the fifteenth century, therefore, accommodation problems continued for Cistercian scholars. When complete, St Bernard’s could still only provide for around 40% of the Cistercian scholars resident at Oxford at any one time: see Ashton, ‘Oxford’s Medieval Alumni’, pp. 18–19.} It is particularly telling that Cistercian university attendance finally picked up at the beginning of the sixteenth century when work on St Bernard’s was finally completed.\footnote{For a comprehensive narrative of the effects of the schism, see R. Graham, ‘The Great Schism and the English Monasteries of the Cistercian Order’, *English Historical Review*, xlv (1929), pp. 373–87.} There is no evidence, on the other hand, to suggest that the general failure of abbots to send their required quota of subordinates to Oxford, their failure to respond positively to the legislation, threats, censures and fines imposed by General Chapters in the fourteenth century, was founded on active antipathy to Scholastic education per se. At worst, English abbots were apathetic towards academic education, and there were insufficient mechanisms in place to enforce the legislation: the Schism had cut ties with France, and therefore lines of authority, at the end of the fourteenth century.\footnote{Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. ii, p. 109.} In the event, before the restoration of unity with Cîteaux in 1409, there were severe disciplinary problems: disputed elections at Dore and Meaux turned violent in 1396.\footnote{Ibid., p. 128.} The centrifugal effect was lasting. In 1427, the General Chapter heard that every one of the English houses was badly in need of visitation and reform.\footnote{ibid., pp. 11–12.}
An investigation of Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII gives us a fresh perspective on these developments. All the more revealing for the fact that it represents a minority trend, what our manuscript shows is that if a Cistercian monk could get financial support and had the will to do so, he could study the full range of subjects on the arts curriculum at Oxford in the early fifteenth century. There is very little evidence of the detail of Cistercian studies in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Oxford; no Cistercian monk produced work of any speculative importance. Although Fulgens sicut stella suggested that Cistercians study both theology and the scientiae primitiae (meaning grammar, rhetoric and logic), there would in theory be nothing to stop a monk from studying the range of the quadrivium and the ‘three philosophies’ in addition if he wanted to, as our scribe seems to have done, except the cost of an extra few years’ study.

It is true that of surviving manuscripts identifiably of Cistercian provenance a slim minority contain works of a purely logical or natural philosophical content; Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII contains the only identifiably Cistercian surviving copies of the Parvi flores, the Tractatus de anima et eius potenticiis, the Termini naturales and, finally, the De proportionibus (in any of its forms). However, ours is far from the only extant manuscript which betrays English Cistercian interest in these two main pillars Oxford’s arts curriculum. The strongest evidence for interest in a specifically Scholastic kind of reading in the arts comes from the library at Swineshead, Lincolnshire, which possessed (in the field of logic) notes on Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics, and Prae dicamenta and Porphyry’s Isagoge, a copy of Giles of Rome’s commentary on the Praedicamenta, a Tractatus de insolubilibus attributed to William of Sherwood, a Tractatus de universalibus by Roger of Belawe and a selection of fourteenth-century commentaries by Walter Burley on Aristotelian logical works, and (in the field of natural philosophy) the commentary of the same scholar on Aristotle’s Physics.

These manuscripts between them confirm the conclusion that when English Cistercian monks were able to take advantage of the provisions of Fulgens sicut stella that they attend university, they developed interests in the full range of subjects on the arts curriculum; there seems to have been no widespread high-minded belief in the superiority of intuitive and affective over scientific knowledge preventing them from doing so: memories of the basis of St Bernard’s visceral reaction to Abelard had long since faded.

The intriguing fact is that in light of the provisions of Fulgens sicut stella, the legal tracts which the scribe includes, the very contents of which permit him to be identified as a Cistercian, seem to be the more controversial element in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII. Whereas the Bull promoted Cistercian learning in the arts and theology, it renewed the traditional...
strict prohibition on the study of canon law for members of the Order. This negative Cistercian attitude towards the study of law stemmed from the time of the Second Lateran Council and was based on the notion that knowledge of the law would invite the temptation to employ advocates in defence of dishonesty. The General Chapter of 1188 banned books on canon law, including the Decretum, from monastic libraries. Yet our scribe shows a thorough and specialized knowledge of law. His legal tracts are peppered with references to the Decretum and its glosses and he provides a detailed summary of the content of the decretal Cum post petitiam insofar as it pertains to procedures for the elections of prelates. He copies whole tracts on canonical procedure in general, on rescripts and delegated authority and on excommunication, in short he provides a basic compendium of all the most significant elements of the medieval canon law system. How is his detailed knowledge of law to be explained? The answer is a straightforward one: despite the provision of the Bull, and despite the ‘official’ weight of anti-legal feeling in the Cistercian intellectual tradition, Cistercians did in fact study at the higher faculty of canon law at Oxford in the early fifteenth century. Our scholar’s study would have covered the entire official corpus of law then available: the Decretum, Decretales, Sext, Clementines, and Extravagantes. What statistical evidence there is permits such a conclusion to be drawn: of fifty-four Cistercian scholars recorded as proceeding to study in one of the higher faculties before 1500, five did not go on to study theology. Canon law, above medicine, music and civil law, would have been the obvious alternative choice for a Cistercian. Theoretical Cistercian negativity on the matter did not stop scholars taking courses in canon law; all a prospective canon lawyer would need was a dispensation, and these seem to have been granted freely. Cistercians could have access to the Corpus Iuris Canonici in their libraries. Two copies of the Decretum feature among the manuscripts which can be traced to English Cistercian libraries, one at Fountains, the other at Rievaulx. As daughter houses of Clairvaux, these were both houses of high authority in the Cistercian chain of command, so it is hardly surprising that they held the Decretum, but the number of copies of this fundamental legal text in Cistercian houses in England was certainly far larger. The library at Clairvaux would of course have been an exceptional case, but it does offer fuller statistics: it held 143 books on both Roman and canon law of its total of 1714 books in 1472. These texts must have been much in demand among the monks.

Legalism was central to Cistercian intellectual culture, ironically in spite of the hostility articulated towards it in Fulgens sicut stella. If anything more than the most cursory of examinations is made of the legal tracts in Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, the necessity of this conclusion seems absolutely manifest. The scribe has compiled a full range of formulae, covering all the information required for the visitation and reform of a monastery in the diocese of Lincoln: the election, resignation and deposition of an abbot, the processes involved in the accusation, defence or purgation of a monk, and the various exceptions that can be entered by the defendant during the procedure; on close reading the list seems almost endless. These formulae embody the essence of Cistercian procedural law and they demonstrate the exhaustive extent to which Cistercian social life was structured by rules and

87 See below, item 8, p. 25.
88 See below, items 7-9 on pp. 25-6.
92 Bell, Index of Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries, p. 67.
One tract on the election procedure of abbots details the precise movements to be made by all involved and includes a range of relevant formulae to be used by the electing monks. This demonstrates, quite simply, that the growing legal formalism which was led (at the very least chronologically) by papal developments from the late twelfth century and came to pervade every aspect of ecclesiastical and secular government in western Europe of course penetrated the Cistercian order as well.

The Cistercians’ own body of law in fact had its basis in the *Carta Caritatis*, composed in 1118, which had first outlined the distinctive Cistercian system for the election of abbots (our scribe is, of course, familiar with this book: he mentions it by name in full in his section entitled *Forma eleccionis abbatum*). The following year, confirmation of the *Carta* by Calixtus II effectively eliminated episcopal rights of visitation of individual abbeys and (concurrently) involvement in Cistercian abbatial elections. Papal bulls were added to this legal corpus, the most significant being Clement IV’s *Parvus fons* (1265) and *Fulgens sicut stella*. The former provided mainly for constitutional reform, with the purpose of bolstering the authority of the General Chapter whilst cutting back the powers of ‘father abbots’ and visitors: abbatial elections were to be decided exclusively by the votes of local communities. Aside from its provisions with respect to monastic education, the latter bull set down instructions for reform in monastic financial administration. In addition General Chapter legislation, which tended to emerge in a rather piecemeal manner, was codified. In 1220 the *Book of Definitions* started to circulate. This included fifteen chapters, systematically arranged to analyse legislation on all aspects of monastic life. There were separate chapters on the foundation of abbeys and admittance of novices, for example, as well as the visitations and powers of abbots and food and clothing. The *New Book of Definitions* updated this body of law in 1350, retaining the structure of the old book; the two were, in practice, used side by side. Developments in Rome are an important indication of the growing legalism of the Order. At some point during the fourteenth century Cistercian monks started to deal with their order’s growing volume of business at the Curia (secular canons, salaried by the General Chapter, had previously performed this function). The first Cistercian Procurator to be mentioned by name was in office in 1390.

Our scribe’s formulary is typical of a fifteenth-century formulary inasmuch as it is essentially a collection of procedural documents acquired and copied over time, passed on by each owner to be augmented by the next. In the sixteenth century, such compendia tended to be formally arranged in alphabetical order. Two of the forms he includes bear dates: item 10 on the defence of subjects is dated within 1336–7, and item 14 on visitation is dated in the 1380s or afterwards by its reference to an English General Chapter ‘apud Norhampton’, three were held there during the Schism. Even without the dating clues, the nature of the content of the series of tracts, the fact that key topics such as election are continually revisited and endlessly clarified would confirm that this is a cumulative product and not a once-and-for-all composition. It is interesting therefore that this entire set of

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94 On the debate surrounding the authorship of this work, see Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 156.
95 See the description of the manuscript, below, contents item 13, p. 29.
97 Ibid., pp. 72-3.
98 Ibid., pp. 75-6.
99 Ibid., p. 76.
100 Ibid., p. 74.
102 Ibid., p. 35.
103 See below, p. 28.
104 See below, p. 30.
105 See below, item 20, pp. 31-32 for a set of short tracts which have been cobbled together cumulatively into one item.
legal tracts is copied into Royal MS. 11 A. XIV alongside a famous compendium of local synodal legislation, William Lyndwoode’s *Provinciale* (written 1422-30), which was so highly regarded that it was studied at the universities as an authority in English local law. Our scholar’s collection of tracts seems to have been considered a definitive handbook of local Cistercian law by at least one other scribe.

If there is a general sense from the statistics that our Cistercian scribe was playing against type in the career that he pursued at Oxford (the full-blown arts programme followed by higher study in canon law), his book, now Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, can nevertheless be situated firmly within contemporary Cistercian intellectual culture. The White Monks were clearly interested in both the arts and canon law.

6. Provenance

The last problem presented by Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII is that of its provenance. Bell tentatively suggests that it was once in Rewley’s library but his reference for this is Talbot’s claim that the manuscript was written one hundred years earlier than it in fact was. In the early fifteenth century, Rewley certainly did not accommodate scholars. Unfortunately none of the different initials used in the legal formulae in the relevant places match the initials of the names of any of known Cistercian monasteries in the diocese of Lincoln (though certainly on the basis of the surviving evidence, our scribe’s intellectual home in Lincolnshire would have been Swineshead). What is known, on the other hand, is that the book was later owned by the cleric William Cheryte (from the inscription on flyleaf f. 146v, where his name is spelled ‘Charyte’). Where might he have encountered our manuscript? The most likely place seems to be back at Oxford, where he rented a room at Exeter college in the 1490s. Perhaps our book (having presumably been in use in the diocese of Lincoln for a time, though we cannot of course know this for sure) was passed on by our scribe to another Cistercian scholar returning to Oxford. It might afterwards have entered the University’s flourishing second-hand book trade. The book might simply have been bought from a Cistercian abbey; there is evidence that from the mid-fourteenth century abbeys were selling books to students. Whatever the circumstances, by the end of the fifteenth century the book was out of Cistercian hands. William then passed the book on to a monk, John Cheryte (also known from the inscription on f. 146v where his name, too, is spelled ‘Charyte’) at which time the former is identified as ‘vicarius Sancti Bartholomei’. William was the vicar of St Bartholomew in the precincts of the Benedictine Hyde Abbey in Winchester from 1502 until his death in 1516. At some point afterwards, our book then passed into the hands of the cleric John Powre (known from an inscription on f. 2r). It then somehow travelled to the Augustinian priory at Llanthony Secunda in Gloucestershire. This much is known since it was indirectly by the bequest of Richard Hart, the last prior of that abbey, that our manuscript ended up in the collection of the antiquary John Theyer. That it was precisely from this source that Theyer acquired the manuscript was determined by cross-referencing the Theyer sale catalogue number for Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII (238).

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107 Bell, *An Index of Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries*, p. 4.
108 See n. 14 above.
111 Emden, *A Bibliographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, vol. i, p. 405. Royal 8 A. XVIII is attributed to Hyde in N. R. Ker (ed.), *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edn (London, 1964), p. 104. It should be made clear that the book is known to have been Cheryte’s personal possession, and not communal property.
112 Warner and Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King’s Collections in the British Museum*, vol. i, p. 216.
7. Final conclusions

With respect to the first major development outlined at the outset, an investigation into Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII reveals not only a continuity in basic education at Oxford from the thirteenth century through to the early fifteenth century but also that the learning experience of the average scholar in Oxford was not as different from that of his continental counterparts as some have supposed. The conclusion was drawn that our manuscript was situated firmly within a majority trend in medieval learning. In the consideration of the second major development, the initial broad conclusion was turned on its head: the manuscript seems to represent, in respect of its Scholastic content at least, a minority trend in English Cistercian intellectual culture. The provenance of Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII is complicated. It passed through at least seven pairs of hands before coming to rest in the Royal collection; it was owned by members of three different religious orders as well as two clerics. It may have been traded second-hand in Oxford. Were it not for the manuscript’s legal content, it could not have been identified as Cistercian. This raises the important question: how many more manuscripts of English Cistercian origin betraying similar interests and intellectual tendencies are now lost or, owing to complicated provenance, have not yet been correctly traced back to their origins? The loss rate, judging solely on the basis of the fact that only two copies of such a monumentally important text as the Decretum can now be traced to English Cistercian libraries, must be huge. It is a striking fact about the survival of English Cistercian manuscripts that almost all of those which have been found belong to the Order’s pre-university period. Nevertheless, the fruits of the effort that has been made to set Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII in its intellectual context highlight the fact that any assumption of outright antipathy on the part of English Cistercians towards Scholastic learning in the arts and law during the Order’s first hundred years at Oxford is in desperate need of revision.

Part 2: Description of London, BL, Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII

Shelfmark: British Library Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII.

Title: Various Scholastic and legal texts composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: a philosophical florilegium, short philosophical tracts, and short legal tracts. Some of the legal tracts contain forms framed for use in a Cistercian monastery in the diocese of Lincoln.

Language: Latin.
Date and Origin: Early fifteenth century, University of Oxford.

Provenance: Acquired for the Royal library from the collection of antiquary John Theyer.116 Later owners are identified in inscriptions on the flyleaves: the cleric William Cheryte and the monk John Cheryte respectively (f. 146v, where the surname in both cases is spelled ‘Charyte’); the cleric John Powre (f. 2r). It was later also owned by John Hart at Llanthony Secunda in Gloucestershire.

Contents: The catalogue for the Royal collection gives some indication of the contents, but conflates items 12 to 17, and items 18 to 20 of the scribe’s own contents list into two items: 12 and 13 respectively.117 The following contents description follows the scribe’s original itemized list on f. 3r. Items 7 through to 20 are reproduced in BL, Royal MS. 11 A. XIV, ff. 1r-60v.

J. ff. 4r-11r Auctoritates librorum logice

Johannes de Fonte, Parvi flores. Excerpts from logical works in the following order: Porphyry’s Isagoge, Aristotle’s Predicamenta, Peri hermeneias, the anonymous Liber sex principiorum, Aristotle’s Prior analytics (the scribe’s subheading for these excerpts, stating their origin in Boethius’s Topics, is incorrect); Aristotle’s Posterior analytics, Topics118 and De sophistis elenchis. There is a ‘Porphyrian Tree’ on f. 3v; text begins on f. 4r. Folio 11v is blank.

Incipit: ‘Neque genus neque species videtur simpliciter dici’.

Explicit: ‘sed invento facile est addere relickum et arguere [sic augere?] explicit etc. Explicitiunt auctoritates librorum logice’.

Printed editions:


See also


A facsimile of the ‘Porphyrian Tree’ is printed in

Murdoch, J. E., Album of Science: Antiquity and the Middle Ages (New York, 1984), no. 43, p. 50.

116 Warner and Gilson, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King’s Collections in the British Museum, vol. i, p. 216; the complete version of the entire contents is on pp. 215-16.

117 Ibid., p. 215.

118 Extracts from book VI of the Topics on f. 9v are mistakenly headed ‘libri politicorum’.

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London, British Library Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII: A Unique Insight into the Career of a Cistercian Monk at the University of Oxford in the Early Fifteenth Century
London, British Library Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII: A Unique Insight into the Career of a Cistercian Monk at the University of Oxford in the Early Fifteenth Century

2. ff. 12r-48v Auctoritates diversorum philosophorum

Johannes de Fonte, Parvi Flores. A prologue on the division of the sciences followed by excerpts from works on natural philosophy (primarily), ethics and metaphysics in the following order: Aristotle’s Physics, Metaphysics, De caelo et mundo and De generatione et corruptione, all with commentary from Averroes; Aristotle’s Meteora; Aristotle’s De anima with commentary from Themistius and Averroes; Aristotle’s De sensu et sensato with commentary from Averroes and Alexander of Aphrodisias; Aristotle’s De memoria et reminiscencia with commentary from Averroes; Averroes’s commentary on Aristotle’s De longitudine et brevitate vitae (incomplete); Aristotle’s De inventute et senectute, De inspiratione et respiratione, De morte et vita, De motibus animalium, De animalibus; Averroes De substantia orbis; the anonymous Liber de causis; Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, Economics (incomplete), Politics and Rhetoric (incomplete); Seneca Epistulae ad Lucilium; Pseudo-Seneca De moribus and De fortuna; Seneca De beneficiis and De remediis fortuitorum; Boethius De consolatione philosophiae (incomplete) and De disciplina scholarium (incomplete); Plato Timaeus and finally, Apuleius Africanus De deo Socratis (the last two are the only complete sets of excerpts not identified by a subheading).

Incipit: ‘Cum omne movens nostrum appetitum racionem boni habere debeat’.

Explicit: ‘tercio ad amborum compendiosam adopcionem nichil est efficacius. Expliciunt auctoritates diversorum philosophorum’.

Printed editions:


3. ff 49r-56v Tractatus de anima et eius potenciis

An abridgment of the De potenciis anime which is ascribed to Albertus Magnus.

Incipit: ‘Sicut dicit Damascenus impossibile est substanciam’.

Explicit: ‘potencias et operationes igitur esse ipsius est in omni parte. Explicit tractatus de anima et eius potenciis’.

Printed edition:


119 The umbrella title under which Aristotle’s Historia animalium, De generatione animalium and De partibus animalium circulated in the Middle Ages. The scribe’s subheadings for this series of excerpts are confused, identifying the excerpts from the nineteen books variously as from books II-XX of ‘De motu animalium’ or simply ‘Libri animalium’.
4. ff. 56v–69r *Tractatus de spera*

John of Sacrobosco, *De spera*.

Incipit: ‘Incipit tractatus de spera. Tractatum de spera in 4 capitulis distinguimus’.

Explicit: ‘Aut deus nature patitur aut mundi machina dissolvetur. Explicit etc’.

Printed edition:


5. ff. 69v–75r *Termini naturales*

William Heytesbury, *Termini naturales*, with diagrams: one showing the terrestrial elements, on f. 73r; others, of geometrical figures, on ff. 74v–75r.

Incipit: ‘Natura est principium motus et quietis eius in quo est’.

Explicit (of the main text, on f. 74v): ‘sed prime sunt per se et tercia per accidens’. A list of descriptive definitions of geometrical figures follows on ff. 74v–75r: ‘corpus columnare est corpus longum […] superficies est plana nullatenus declinans ut tabula’; and afterwards, on the same page: ‘Explicunt termini naturales’.

6. ff. 75r–80v *Proporciones*

An abridgment of Thomas Bradwardine’s *De proportionibus*. The following folio, f. 81, is blank.

Incipit: ‘Omnis proportion aut est communiter dicta vel proprie dicta’.

Explicit: ‘igitur tota conclusio est vera pro utraque eius parte’.

Printed edition:


7. ff. 82r–91v *De officio iudicis contra inquisicionem faciendam*

An anonymous canon law tract on procedure, containing cross-references to Gratian’s *Decretum* and its glosses. The nature of the subheadings (‘Quid sit litiscontestacio’ on f. 84v, for instance), suggests that this is an elementary informative tract, designed to lead the reader through the general points of procedure.

Incipit: ‘Videamus qualiter et quando debet iudex iustus procedere’.

Explicit: ‘De inquisitione facienda et de accusatione admittenda de conditione testium et de purgatione canonica indicenda et facienda explicunt’.
8. ff. 91v-97r Tractatus de rescriptis

Another anonymous tract on canon law in general, with cross-references to the Corpus Iuris Canonici. The core of the tract is a discussion of appeals and rescripts; there is a discussion of papal delegated and sub-delegated jurisdiction spanning ff. 92rv. It ends with a section entitled ‘Contra elecciones prelatorum’ on f. 96r, a discussion of the election of prelates (the quality of suitable candidates and the nature of the elections to be conducted) which the scribe bases on the decretal Cum post petitionem.

Incipit: ‘Rescriptum non valet si tacita veritate’.

Explicit: ‘et capitulum cum post peticiam’.

9. ff. 97r-101r De causibus tocius iuris in quibus quis excommunicatus est (title taken from contents on f. 3r)

An abridgement of part of Chapter II.1 (‘De excommunicatione’) of Cardinal Berengarius of Fredoli’s Liber de excommunicatione et interdicto which he wrote c. 1315. Berengarius was an influential canon lawyer. He helped edit the Sext (1298). This treatise provides practical clarification of general issues surrounding the enforcement of excommunication. ‘Casus in quibus abbates dispensant’, f. 101r, is not taken from Berengarius’s tract and seems to have been added as a subsection specifically relevant to the monastic setting, outlining cases in which an abbot can give dispensation. The tract in full or in part survives in over forty-four manuscripts. BL, Cotton MS. Julius D. XI contains the full tract; Royal MS. 8 A. IX, Harley MS. 3603 and Arundel MS. 466, like this manuscript, contain parts.

Incipit: ‘Cum excommunicationis [sic excommunicatis] non vitare tam communicantibus’.

Explicit: ‘ex parte in glossa qui incipit singularis cura’.

Printed edition:


10. ff. 101v-111v Quidam tractatus pro defensione subditorum (title on f. 101r)

Another anonymous canon law tract, describing in detail each stage (the libellus, dilatory and peremptory exceptions, appeals, witnesses, etc.) of the bishop’s procedure if accusations reach him that a criminal offence has been committed by one of his ecclesiastical subjects. There are cross-references to the Corpus Iuris Canonici. At appropriate points in the discussion, the tract includes relevant formulae, which are framed for a Cistercian monastery in the diocese of Lincoln. A form on f. 105r, ll. 30-31, is dated in the third year of the pontificate of Benedict XII, that is, 1336-7.

Incipit: ‘cum ad prelatum contra subditum validus clamor ascendit’

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120 Corpus Iuris Canonici, ed. A. Friedberg (Leipzig, 1879-81), X.1.6.46.
121 Identified on a pasted insert on one of the modern flyleaves at the beginning of the manuscript.
122 This was identified in Warner and Gilson, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Royal and King’s Collections, vol i. p. 215.
Explicit: ‘contra bonos mores maledictio super caput eius amen’.

11. ff. 112r–117r De eleccionibus prelatorum et de qualitate eligendorum et electoribus (title on f. 111v)

A Cistercian tract thoroughly describing the procedure for electing a new abbot in the presence of a visiting abbot, with the formulae used for the election.

Incipit: ‘cum ecclesie dei nil tantum officiat ut viciousus ingressus prelatorum’.

Explicit: ‘materiam et causam periculose inbrigandi etc. Explicit.’

12. ff. 117r–118v Item alius tractatus de eleccionibus

Another tract on the procedure for electing a new abbot, with formulae, again for a Cistercian monastery in the diocese of Lincoln. The formulae concern the withdrawing abbot.

Incipit: ‘Quia sepe tam patres abbates quam alii vocati’.

Explicit: ‘in manus nostras factas privatias admittentes’.

13. ff. 118v–121v Forma eleccionis abbatum

Another tract on election procedure with a form, on f. 121r, framed for a monastery in the diocese of Lincoln. There is a reference on f. 118v, l. 12, to the rules in the Carta Caritatis on election procedure.

Incipit: ‘In novi abbatis creacione ad mandatum’.

Explicit: ‘nostrum in nomine domini et recedant etc.’

14. ff. 121v–125r De translocationibus abbatum

A tract on visitation procedure, focusing on the initial stages of the procedure, with form letters framed for a monastery in the diocese of Lincoln. There is a reference in one of the formulae to a General Chapter ‘apud Norhampton’ (f. 121v, ll. 26–7);123 three chapters were held at Northampton during the Schism, all in the 1380s.

Incipit: ‘Caveat quiscumque presidens sine pater abbas’.

Explicit (the end of a form): ‘Datum in tali loco sub sigillo officii nostri die tali anno domini etc’.

15. ff. 125r–127r Forma visitandi

Another tract on the visitation procedure, detailing what should happen on each day of the visitation.

Incipit: ‘In visitatione facienda primo debet visitator’.

Explicit: ‘et maneat super vos in eternum amen’.

123 This was identified in Warner and Gilson, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Royal and King’s Collections, vol. i, p. 215.
Another Cistercian legal tract, detailing how an abbot chosen to impose reforms on an abbey should proceed. There are formulae, including one for the election of a new abbot.

Incipit: ‘Forma reformacionis ordinis nostri secundum quam reformator institutus per capitulum generale debeat procedere’.

Explicit: ‘Et libro osculato ducatur ab eisdem abbatibus ad cameram predecessorum sui’.

Another tract on election of an abbot, including a list of criteria to be met by the incoming abbot before his position is confirmed.

Incipit: ‘Domo aliqua nostri ordinis abbate destituta’

Explicit (main text): ‘Et incipit capitulum. Quia prefatus ordo’; (the end of the list of criteria): ‘volens et consenciens extra de eleccionibus’.

A tract on visitation, the bulk of which consists in a series of formulae (again framed for Cistercian monastery in the diocese of Lincoln) for stages of the legal procedure, and concerns the submitting and admitting of exceptions. It ends with a brief tract on inquisition procedure: ‘Inquisitio iudicis’, f. 133v.

Incipit: ‘Cum facienda fuerit visitatio videndum est’.

Explicit: ‘et non ut promoveretur ad statum dignitatis’.

A tract on simony with specific reference to the monastic setting.

Incipit: ‘Est autem simonia studiosa cupiditas’.

Explicit: ‘et proteclacione visitacionis quere in cle [sic] capitula 5, 6 et 7’.

A tract on how the expenses of a visiting abbot are to be raised. To this, as the scribe’s contents list on f. 3r indicates (‘cum multis aliis’), are appended a number of short tracts on various elements of legal procedure, the last of which is a series of formulae for appeals framed, again, specifically for a Cistercian monastery in the diocese of Lincoln, to be drafted by a notary: ‘Copia appellationis facienda per notarium’ (f. 142r).

Incipit: ‘In virtute obedientie precipitur abbatibus filiis’.

Explicit: ‘Unde ex hoc senciens me indebite etc ut supra’.

This item is followed on f. 143v by a table of punishments under Cistercian statutes: ‘Pena fraccionis silencii habetur in antiquis d. 7 c. 5 [...] arbitrarie sunt ad voluntatem presidentis iuxta demerita delinquencium quorumcumque etc’.
London, British Library Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII: A Unique Insight into the Career of a Cistercian Monk at the University of Oxford in the Early Fifteenth Century

Flyleaves: ff. 1v, 144r and 145r.

Inscribed on some of the flyleaves are verses and theological distinctions, not all of which are identifiable. The majority are in a fifteenth-century hand, the remainder are in a sixteenth-century hand. A note on f. 145r reads ‘precii vi s viii d’.

f. 1v: Eugenius of Toledo’s *Heptametrum de primordio mundi* (in a fifteenth-century hand) ‘Primus in orbe dies lucis primordia sumpsit [...] Septimus est domini requies iis rite peractis’ printed in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. lxxxvii, cols 365-6. There are two further lines added; the entire inscription ends ‘potatur felle secundus’.


Physical description

* A: Make-up of the manuscript

1. Foliation: 147 medieval leaves + 3 end-papers at each end.124


3. Dimensions of leaves:125 191x125 mm. Many leaves are irregularly cut: the height and width of any one folium can vary by up to 10 mm, depending on where measurement is taken. A significant part of f. 62 has been cut away before it was written upon; text is arranged on the remaining parchment. Most of the lower marginal area has been cut from f. 68.

4. Dimensions of written space: 136x81 mm (there is very little variation from page to page).

5. Margins: Upper margin, 17 mm; lower margin, 37 mm; inner margin, 12 mm; outer margin, 32 mm.

6. Ruling and pricking: Ruling in lead point; one pair of parallel vertical and one pair of parallel horizontal lines, extending to the edges of each written page, enclosing the written space (in addition f. 81r, though blank, is ruled). The lower boundary of the written space on f. 62 is ruled diagonally around its irregular edge. Line by line ruling in lead point is still visible in some places, for example on f. 15v, ll. 11-15. Some evidence of pricking, if not for every ruled line, is visible on most leaves.

7. Number of lines per page: 32-6.

8. Collation and arrangement of sheets: Tightly bound in gatherings of eight. The outer pages of regular quires use the flesh side of the parchment.

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124 The manuscript has been foliated in modern times, in pencil. The following description will use that numbering. In addition, the leaf before f. 1 will be referred to as ‘i’ and the leaf between f. 143 and f. 144, missed by the modern foliation, as f. 143a.

125 Measurements of the dimensions of leaves, written space and margins are mean averages of samples of fifteen pages, rounded to the nearest integer.
112 (ff. i-11); 2^8 wants 1 stub and 2 (ff. 12-17); 3^5 (ff. 18-25); 4^8 wants 6 partial stub (ff. 26-32); 5^8 wants 8 removed (ff. 33-39); 6^8 wants 4 and 5 removed (ff. 40-45); 7^8 wants; 3 removed, 5, 6 and 7 removed, all blank, and 8 partial stub, blank (ff. 46-48); 8^8.10^8 (ff. 49-72); 11 wants 2 removed (ff. 73-81); 12^9 wants 1 partial stub (ff. 82-88); 13^8-19^8 (ff. 89-143a). Flyleaves: f. 144 and f. 145 seem to be independent inserts; ff. 146-7 are a bifolium.

The first and second leaves have been removed from quire 2, possibly because they contained attractive decorative elements introducing the *Auctoritates diversorum philosophorum*. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that this work is taken from the same source as the preceding *Auctoritates librorum logice*, the first two pages of which are decorated with a scientific diagram and illuminated initials. It is also possible that the first leaf was removed from quire 12, at the beginning of the series of legal tracts, for the same reason. The leaves missing in quires 4, 5 and 11 seem simply to have been torn out. The same goes for the missing central bifolium in quire 6.\textsuperscript{126}

Quire 7 presents problems, though the hypothesis that it was originally a quire of eight leaves fits the general pattern of the manuscript. The first leaf, f. 46, seems to be paired with the partial stub after f. 48 and the visible stitching between f. 48 and the stub suggests that this is the centre of the quire. Since this quire is the last of the first portion of the manuscript, the end of the *Parvi Flores*, leaves 5, 6 and 7, and the most part of leaf 8 were presumably blank and probably removed for other use. Leaf 8 was written upon, and removed later.\textsuperscript{127}

Quire 11 has ten leaves rather than the usual eight. The scribe presumably decided to use a larger quire to end the second portion of the manuscript, having finished the penultimate quire of that portion, since he knew he could not fit the remaining desired content into a quire of eight. This fits the hypothesis that the *Termini naturales* and the *Proporciones* were deliberately copied together.\textsuperscript{128}

9. Quire signatures: Quire signatures appear in one form or another on eleven quires, but may have been cut from others when the manuscript was re-bound. Folios 89-92 show the remnants of quire signatures almost entirely cut away. If present, they appear on the recto side of the first four leaves of a quire, in the bottom right hand corner of the page. Three formats are discernible:

(a) In black ink, the same letter appears on each of the four pages, struck through with horizontal lines from 1-4 to indicate the position of the folium in the quire. The clearest example is on ff. 18-21, though the signature on f. 19 is half cut away.

(b) In brown ink, the same letter appears on each of the four pages with a Roman numeral (or perhaps simply a tally mark): I-IIII, to indicate positioning, for example ff. 121-24.

(c) In red ink, each of the four pages is numbered in Roman numerals (or a tally mark): I-IIII, to indicate positioning, for example ff. 137-40.

\textsuperscript{126} This question of precisely what text may be have been contained on the missing folia is addressed fully above, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{127} See above, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{128} See above, p. 12-13.
The quire signatures reflect no overarching system for the ordering of quires in the manuscript as a whole. In the second portion of the manuscript, ff. 49-81, only format (c) appears, so it might be conjectured that this format was used throughout the portion, but most of the evidence was obliterated at rebinding. However both formats (a) and (b) appear in the first portion (ff. i-48), and all three formats appear in the third portion, ff. 82-143a (format (a) is only just discernible on ff. 89-92).

10. Catchwords: Catchwords are a regular feature of the manuscript. They are present on fourteen quires including all regular gatherings of eight (except the final quire), in the lower margin, on the right hand side, each written on a line ruled in lead point parallel to and 20 mm beneath the horizontal line marking the foot of the main written space. The same simple, small line-and-dot motif is drawn in pen to the left and right of each catchword, in the same ink as the text. In addition a simple border decoration is sketched in pen, again in the same ink as the text, around the catchword on f. 96v: ‘eleccioni interesse debent’.

11. Other physical features of note: Holes, tears and stitching: Small holes either side of the tear in the lower marginal area of f. 20 suggest that it was stitched, but the stitches have since fallen out. Other tears are left open, for example in f. 111. Holes are left open; where contained within the written space the text continues on either side, for example, ff. 109, 118 and 134.

Damage: Considerable wear and tear (and perhaps water damage). Almost all folia are scuffed along their top edge. This is particularly bad on ff. 19-25, 80, 91 and 94. The top edges of both f. 91 and f. 94 are torn away, having stuck to adjacent ff. 92 and 93 respectively. There is smudging of decoration on some pages, for example ff. 18v and 19r, 46v and 47r. A triangular shape has been cut from the lower margin of f. 125, probably for use as scrap.

B: Handwriting

1. Script used for text: Anglica influenced by Secretary, early fifteenth century, in one hand; Textura Quadrata is used for the diagram on f. 3v.

2. Numerals: Arabic numerals are used throughout the text for numbering books in the Parvi Flores, in the mathematical treatises and for references to books of law (e.g. f. 9v).

3. Colophons: On f. 48v, f. 80v, and f. 143r, each backed onto the same scroll-motif decoration. All three begin ‘Iste liber constat’. The name of the original owner has been erased from all three, but was almost certainly ‘Thome’: the ‘h’ is still legible on f. 80v and the entire name ‘Thome’ is just legible in the first line of the contents page on f. 3r. The first colophon f. 48v identifies the owner’s location in Oxford at the time of production: ‘universitatis Oxonie’.

The colophon on f. 143r gives the names of two of the subsequent owners: ‘W. Cherite’ and ‘J Cherite’ (The ‘J’ is simply written over the ‘W’; the spelling of the surname here differs from that on f. 146v).

129 See above, p. 3, n. 11.
4. Corrections.

Marginal insertions (in the outer margin) are the most common form of correction found. They are marked in a uniform manner throughout the manuscript by a ‘^’ symbol in the main text at the point of insertion and an identical symbol in the margin with the word to be inserted, for example ‘dicitur’ f. 59r, l. 11. Interlinear insertions (for example ‘circa’ on f. 65v above l. 15) are far less frequent. Also:

f. 12r, l. 17: The replacement of ‘porphyrio’ by ‘prisciano’ is indicated by a symbol, a line and two points, inserted above the former in the text and the latter in the outer margin.

f. 12r, l. 15: The expunctuation of ‘dialectica sive’ is indicated by points penned beneath these words.

The scribe has erased almost two whole lines of text on f. 85r, ll. 30-31, by scraping, and has ruled over the erased portion in ink.

5. Marginal notes:

Usually in the outer margins of pages, they highlight key points in the text: ‘nota’, ‘nota bene’ and ‘nota diligenter’ appear frequently throughout, added by the scribe himself. Pen sketches of pointing fingers serve the same purpose either alone (for example f. 63v, l. 19) or in addition to marginal instructions (f. 13v, l. 11). On f. 22r pen sketches of faces in profile have been added as an alternative.

Marginal notes also serve to identify stages in an argument or discussion in general terms, for example to indicate the location of the seven ‘suppositiones’ in the Proporciones (f. 76rv). Examples of two further types of more specific use for marginal notes all appear in the Tractatus de spera (which is the only tract with extended annotation in later fifteenth-century hands): first, to flag up the use of authorities, for example ‘Virgilius’, ‘Ovidius’, ‘Lucanus’ on f. 65v (in a mixed Gothic-Secretary hand), secondly as reference points for a discussion of a particular topic, for example ‘de die naturali’ on f. 64r (in late fifteenth-century Humanist cursive; see ff. 62v–63r for further notation in this hand).

6. Pen trials:

These appear in the outer margins on ff. 46v and 105r and on flyleaf 145r.

C: Decoration

1. Illuminated initials:

f. 4r: Two initials slightly raised in gold leaf, each against a red and blue background with traces of white filigree pen–wash. The initials, one (‘n’) at the head, the other (‘e’) at the foot of the page, are connected in the left hand margin by a linear decorative element, also in red, blue and gold. Pen–flourishes in black ink extend from each initial into the upper and lower margins of the page. The first is a 5-line initial, marking the beginning of the first set of excerpts from the Isagoge, the second a 4-line initial (extending below the bottom line of main text) to mark the beginning of the excerpts from the Predicamenta.
2. Decorated initials:

These are of a uniform style throughout: blue, pen-flourished in red ink, with English ‘open continuous loop design’.\(^{130}\) This flourishing extends from each decorated initial into the left-hand margin of the page in such a way that if there is more than one initial on the same page, the length of the margin is decorated, these flourishes linking the initials together. If the decorated initial is on the first or last line of the page, decorative flourishing extends into the top or bottom margin respectively (examples on ff. 49r and 47v). Where a new item begins at the beginning of a new page for example on ff. 12r and 82r, red pen flourishing is more elaborate, extending across the width of the top and bottom margins as well as down the length of the left hand margin. The ‘t’ on f. 77v, with the scribe’s guide letter clearly visible, is the only unfinished decorated initial, lacking pen flourishing.

The illuminator has rendered two initials incorrectly: the ‘r’ on f. 24v should read ‘o’ for ‘Omnium’; the ‘f’ on f. 31r should read ‘s’ for ‘Sursum’.

3. Hierarchy of initials

A clear hierarchical system is discernible in the *Auctoritates diversorum philosophorum* (ff. 12r–48v) and is fitting for a text with so many subsections within subsections. As a rule, each initial marking the beginning of the first set of excerpts from any work which is not a commentary is three lines high. Considering the sheer number of the works included, there are few exceptions (Aristotle *Physics*, book I, on f. 14v; Pseudo–Seneca *De Moribus* on f. 44r; Seneca, *De remediis fortuitorum* on f. 45v and Plato *Timaeus* on f. 48r). Initials marking the beginning of subsequent books from the same work, and any commentaries, are headed with three-line initials. Exceptions to this rule occur where commentaries are so short that a three-line initial would be inappropriate: the commentary from Averroes on book III of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (f. 19v) and from Themistius on book III of Aristotle’s *De Anima* on f. 29v.

ff. 12r–48v is in fact the only section of the text where such a system is discernible. In the remainder of the manuscript the rule of thumb seems to be a three-line initial for each subsection, and a four- or five-line initial for each new major item listed in the contents on f. 3r. Exceptions occur in some of the shorter legal tracts towards the end of the manuscript. *De translacionibus abbatum* (ff. 121v–125r), for example, is headed with a three-line initial, with its subsections also beginning with three line initials.

4. Paragraph marks:

A typical feature of Scholastic texts from c. 1250, these appear throughout the manuscript, consecutively alternating between red and blue ink, separating each sentence from the next. In a few cases (for example f. 120r, l. 6 and f. 127v, bottom line) pairs of parallel lines are still visible where the scribe intended paragraph marks to be inserted but the illuminator neglected to do so.

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\(^{130}\) See above, p. 3, n. 11.
f. 3r: The contents page:

The scribe has provided an itemized contents. There is a four-line major initial, an ‘I’, beginning the preamble to the list of contents, in red ink, with decorative outline in thin red pen strokes. The name of the owner (‘Thome’), partially scraped away, was also in red ink. Flourished paraph marks, in red, head each item and where incipits for items are given, their initials are stroked in red (with the exception of the incipit of the eighteenth item: ‘Cum facienda’) and are underlined in red. The capital initials of ‘Senec’ and ‘Boici’ (l. 5) are also stroked in red ink.

6. Other uses of coloured ink:

f. 73r: The diagram of the four elements is decorated in red and blue with capitals stroked in red.

f. 111v: A decorated heading. There is a floral decoration in red attached to the large blue paraph mark.

7. Scientific diagrams:

f. 3v: The logical diagram known as the ‘Porphyrian tree’ in black pen, 160 mm high, 55 mm at its widest point. It illustrates the logical process by which the ‘species specialissima’, in this case the definition of man (at the foot of the tree) is reached from the ‘genus generalissimum’, substance (at the top of the tree). This process, to which there are six stages, is illustrated by the arrangement of three columns of words.131

f. 73r: A ‘square of opposition’ showing the Aristotelian theory of the four terrestrial elements, in black pen, decorated with red and blue ink, with capitals stroked in red. The square measures 50x50 mm and is at the bottom right hand corner of the page, within the ruled space. The names of the elements and primary qualities are inscribed in smaller squares occupying the corners of the diagram. Clockwise from top left are: ‘Ignis/ calditas’, ‘Aer/ humiditas’, ‘Aqua/ frigiditas’, ‘Terra/ siccitas’. These squares are linked by diagonal, horizontal and vertical bands, each band with an inscription denoting the relationship between the elements linked. Those linked by diagonal bands are contradictorie; other relationships identified are those between subcontrarie, contrarie and subalterne.132

ff. 74v–75r: A series of fourteen small drawings of geometrical figures, in black pen (their size varies from one to the next but none are as high as three lines of text), visual aids to illustrate a written list of definitions. Each is to the right hand side of its definition, within the ruled space.

8. Other decoration:

f. 111v: A decorative underlining of the end of the text in the middle of the page, presumably executed by the scribe himself.

131 See above p. 8, n. 33, for more detail about this diagram.
132 See pp. 11–12 above for more detail about this diagram.
Fig. 4. Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII, f. 74v. Small geometrical drawing.
London, British Library Royal MS. 8 A. XVIII: A Unique Insight into the Career of a Cistercian Monk at the University of Oxford in the Early Fifteenth Century

D: Binding

The manuscript was rebound after the Royal collection was transferred to the British Museum in 1757. The binding is a standard type of British Museum binding (with identifying initials ‘M.B.’ on the front) for books of this size. There is a gold-tooled summary of the contents on the spine. Markings from the original binding can be seen on f. ir.

E: Opening words of the second leaf

‘melior fiet vel modicum vel perfecte’ (f. 5r).