READING IN THE REFECTORY

MONASTIC PRACTICE IN ENGLAND, c. 1000-c. 1300

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Frontispiece: London, British Library, MS Add. 25042, fol. 22v. Illustration from a late fifteenth-century Netherlandish copy of an account in Dutch of the origin and regulations of the Carthusian order.
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Monastic Practice in England, c. 1000-c. 1300

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The subject of this lecture was inspired by a paper given by the late Father Leonard Boyle, medieval scholar, palaeographer and Vatican Librarian, in which he drew attention to the presence in a wide variety of medieval books of an oblique hairline stroke, written above a syllable by the scribe or supplied subsequently. These simple traces are rarely commented upon in descriptions and discussions of manuscripts, but, he argued, they are worthy of attention since they may provide precious evidence of the use made of the books in which they are found. Their principal application in copies of Latin texts was to indicate a stressed syllable in cases of uncertainty for a reader, either because

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1 This article represents a revised and expanded version of the lecture delivered on 18 February 2010. I am very grateful to the following for permission to reproduce manuscripts in their collections: frontispiece (London, British Library, MS Add. 25042, fol. 22v): © British Library Board; figs 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7: the Master and Fellows, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. I am also grateful to Dr Geoffrey Webber and Dr Åslaug Ommundsen for providing the photographs for figs 2 and 3 respectively. The lecture represents the first stage in a larger project on lectio publica in medieval English monastic practice to be delivered as the J.P.R. Lyell Lectures in the University of Oxford in 2016.

Abbreviations

CBMLC Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues
CCCM Corpus christianorum continuatio medievalis
CCM Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum
HBS Henry Bradshaw Society
PL Patrologia latina cursus completus, pr. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols (Paris, 1844-55); Index, 4 vols (Paris, 1864)

2 A version of this paper was published posthumously, without footnotes, as Vox paginae: an oral dimension of texts (Rome, 1999). His observations were also published in two articles: ‘Tonic Accent, Codicology and Literacy’, in The Centre and its Compass: studies in medieval literature in honour of Professor John Leyerle, ed. R. A. Taylor et al. (Kalamazoo, MI, 1993), pp. 1-10, and ‘The Friars and Reading in Public’, in Le vocabulaire des écoles des Mendians au moyen âge, ed. M. C. Pacheco, CIVICIMA, Études sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du moyen âge, 9 (Turnhout, 1999), 8-15;
of the unfamiliarity of the word or because the word was known to be one that might be accented incorrectly. For example: on the opening page of an early twelfth-century copy of Bede’s commentary on the Catholic Epistles from the abbey of Peterborough, a stroke was traced above the ante-penultimate syllable of the word ‘catálago’ (fig. 1, column a, line 10), presumably to prevent the incorrect accentuation of the penultimate syllable.3

1. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 160, fol. 1r.

Such strokes might be applied in the context of the teaching of grammar (which included instruction in pronunciation and accentuation),4 but they also had a practical application

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3 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 160, fol. 1ra, line 10.
4 On the problems of syllabic length and accentuation that confronted medieval readers, and for two eleventh-century treatises that address the issue, see Aimericus, Ars lectoria, ed. Harry F. Reijnder, Vivarium, 9 (1971), 119-137; 10 (1972), 41-101, 124-176; Magister Siguinus, Ars lectoria: un art de lecture à haute voix du onzième siècle. Édition critique sous la direction de Joseph Engels, ed. C. H.
in assisting readers in, or preparing for, the task of public reading (lectio publica)—that is, the oral delivery of a text to the assembled community in the choir, chapterhouse or refectory.

One of the major achievements of those engaged in British medieval studies over the past century has been the systematic assembly and description of the evidence for institutional book ownership, most notably in two complementary collaborative projects: Medieval Libraries of Great Britain (comprising lists of surviving manuscripts that contain evidence of their medieval institutional ownership) and The Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues (editions of medieval lists of books from ecclesiastical and academic institutions). In the Autumn of 2009 a Mellon-funded project was launched in Oxford, under the leadership of Richard Sharpe, to combine and supplement in searchable electronic form all the material from these two indispensable reference tools.

Handlists and catalogues of particular categories of surviving books that can be shown to have been written or owned in England have also been published through individual initiative, such as N. R. Ker’s Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon and

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Kneepkens and H. F. Reijnders (Leiden, 1979). The strokes supplied to indicate syllabic stress should be distinguished from the set of prosodic accents described by Donatus and quoted and commented upon by early-medieval writers on grammar, which transmitted the Greek concept of accentuation marked by pitch (or tonic) inflection. Potential confusion is caused by the inclusion of a discussion of the latter alongside reference to the need for correct syllabic accentuation (i.e. accentuation by stress) by the ninth-century monastic author, Hildemar, in his Epistola ad Ursam: see Anne-Véronique Gilles, ‘La ponctuation dans les manuscrits liturgiques au moyen âge’, in Grafia e interpunzione del latino nel medioevo, ed. A. Maiérê (Rome, 1987), 113-133, at 123-9. See also M. B. Parkes, Pause and Effect: an introduction to the history of punctuation in the West (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 35-7, 128-9, esp. n. 13. Hildemar’s letter was incorporated within his commentary on Chapter 38 of the Rule of St Benedict (on the weekly reader), which concludes with a lengthy excursus on how to read aloud correctly (Expositio Regulae ab Hildemaro tradita, ed. R. Mittermüller [Regensburg, 1880]) 421-34, omitting certain passages; these are supplied in the ongoing Hildemar Project online at http://hildemar.org [accessed October 2013]).

Helmut Gneuss’s *Handlist of books written or owned in England before 1100*. The scholarship that has exploited these resources, however, has tended to focus more upon the contents of institutional book collections and what may be inferred from them about intellectual interests and endeavor than upon the manuscript and other evidence for how and in what contexts the books were used. The particular use made of a book cannot always be safely inferred from the contents alone. There is a further danger that any such inferences may be informed by anachronistic assumptions. Leonard Boyle’s paper exposed a misapprehension that had influenced my own understanding of the book collections formed in England after the Norman Conquest. Among the manuscripts that contain strokes marking stressed syllables are a significant number of large- or medium-format late-eleventh- and twelfth-century copies of major works by the Church Fathers, such as Augustine’s commentary on the Psalms and on the Gospel of John, or Jerome’s on Isaiah. These volumes have generally been studied within the context of the history of personal study and devotion (*lectio divina*), and have been interpreted primarily as witnesses to the intellectual impact of the Norman Conquest. Father Boyle’s paper findings prompt further investigation of the use of such books for communal public

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reading, in order to identify the particular occasions for their oral delivery as well as the range of texts and volumes that were involved in such reading within monastic communities during the central middle ages. Since the practice of scoring a copy of a text to indicate stressed syllables was not confined to providing an aid to public reading, the presence of such strokes in a manuscript cannot be taken on its own as evidence that the volume in question was used for public reading. Additional evidence must therefore be sought.

Few studies of medieval monastic libraries have examined the books in detail from the perspective of their use in the oral delivery of texts to an assembled community. One important exception, however, is Nigel Palmer’s study of the medieval books of the Rhineland Cistercian abbey of Eberbach. The reading practices that Professor Palmer identifies and analyses from these books can be shown to correspond in broad outline with those of other traditions of communal religious life by the twelfth century and to share a common origin in the elaborations of, and accretions to, the

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liturgical practices and other daily routines of the Rule of St Benedict that were
introduced in the late eighth and ninth centuries and that were variously further
developed or adapted between the tenth and twelfth centuries. Communities of monks
and regular canons listened to readings delivered aloud not only during the liturgy of the
Mass and the Night Office of Matins but also during the Chapter meeting held daily each
morning, the evening meeting of the community before compline known as Collation,
and at mealtimes in the refectory.11 Although much remains to be discovered (and much
may remain unknowable through an insufficiency of evidence), it is possible to establish
a broad framework of norms for the readings delivered during each of these occasions,
and sometimes to identify the books that were used.

The readings delivered during the Chapter office and Collation were drawn from
two distinct groups of texts. Core ingredients of the Chapter office (a Carolingian
accretion to the horarium of the Rule of St Benedict) were a reading from the
martyrology and a chapter of the Rule, followed by a homily on that chapter.12 By at least
the late tenth century the custom had been adapted to incorporate the reading of the
Gospel pericope and a gospel homily in place of a chapter from the Rule and its homily

11 There is evidence of a custom within the Cluniac tradition of reading during the periods assigned for
manual labour, but very little evidence survives of its content: see Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis abbatis, ed.
P. Dinter, CCM, 10 (Siegburg, 1980), Lxvi; IL.149 (pp. 200-201, 213-4); The Monastic Constitutions of
refers only to the conduct of the reading not its content, but the former prescribes for the morning period a
reading from the refectory lection (provided that it was suitably edifying), and a reading from the Collation
lection when the monks returned to the cloister after the period of manual labour that followed the office of
None; on both occasions the reading was to be followed by a sermon upon it by the prior or a deputy. So far
as I am aware, no medieval lists of texts to be read or books set aside for this purpose are known to survive,
nor have any indications of such use yet been found in extant manuscripts.
J. Semmler, in Initia consuetudinis Benedictinae: consuetudines saeculi octavi et noni, CCM, 1 (Siegburg,
1963), no. 10, pp. 234-8, esp. 235 and notes; no. 21, ch. 36, p. 480. On the origins and early history of the
Chapter office, see P. Schepens, ‘L’office du chapitre à Prime’, Recherches de sciences religieuses, 2
(1921), 222-7; C. Morgand, ‘Discipline pénitentielle et officium capituli d’après le Memoriale qualiter’,
Revue bénédictine, 72 (1962), 22-60.
on Sundays and major feastdays.\(^{13}\) The texts that recur in lists of books for Collation comprise patristic and early medieval texts that advocate or exemplify the monastic life and virtues, including those recommended by St Benedict in the final chapter of the Rule (Cassian’s *Collationes* and *De institutis coenobiorum*, and the *Vitas patrum*),\(^{14}\) as well as Gregory’s *Dialogi*, Isidore’s *Sententiae* and Smaragdus’s *Diadema monachorum*—an early-ninth-century patristic florilegium compiled largely from works of Cassian and Gregory specifically to provide readings for Collation.\(^{15}\)

The programme of reading in the refectory, however, was far more extensive and complex. To gain an impression of its full scope, evidence has to be pieced together from a number of different kinds of source: descriptions (often only partial) of norms included in custumals; records of books or texts assigned for the purpose, and annotations in surviving books. Detailed evidence of the full programme of reading from any single


community is rare before the thirteenth century (and especially so from England), and each individual source can be difficult to interpret in isolation. From the late nineteenth century onwards, scholarship on the practice has focused primarily upon the publication and analysis of individual lists or groups of lists, but this material has never been brought together and analyzed in conjunction with the other forms of evidence that survive. As a result, references to refectory reading in modern studies of medieval books and reading are sometimes lacking in precision or betray an incomplete understanding of the practice. There has been, for example, a tendency to conflate and confuse the customs for the reading in the refectory at the mealtimes of the community, those for the reading during the meal of the servers that followed the conventual meal, and those for the reading at Collation. What follows will, I hope, provide some clarification.


17 Such conflation and confusion has arisen, for example, in the interpretation of a fourteenth-century list from the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds entitled ‘Ordo legendi in mensa seruitorum in refectorio et ad collationem conuentus per totum annum’: *English Benedictine Libraries: the shorter catalogues*, ed. R. Sharpe et al., CBMLC, 4 (London, 1996), B14, pp. 87-9 (where it is dated to the thirteenth century; the later dating arises from the identification of its scribe as Henry of Kirkstead: see Henry of Kirkstede, *Catalogus de libris autenticis et apocrifis*, ed. Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, CBMLC, 11 [London, 2004], xlii, pl. 3a). Because of the reference to the refectory, the list has hitherto been misidentified as a list of refectory reading for the monastic community. The meal referred to in the rubric, however, is not the main sitting of the community but that of the servers; ‘in refectorio’ refers to the location for this meal, as opposed to that of Collation, which took place in the chapterhouse (in Cistercian practice, however, collation was held in the cloister). The texts specified correspond closely with those of other lists of...
Reading in the refectory in late antiquity and the early middle ages

The practice of listening to sacred readings during mealtimes is advocated in several early texts on the communal life. Chapter 38 of the Rule of St Benedict stipulates that

‘Reading will always accompany the meals of the brothers. The reader should not be the one who just happens to pick up the book, but someone who will read for a whole week, beginning on Sunday. ... Let there be complete silence. No whispering, no speaking – only the reader’s voice should be heard there. … Brothers will read and sing, not according to rank, but according to their ability to benefit their hearers.’

The importance of the role of the weekly reader at meals was given ritual expression each week, when, after the principal mass on Sunday the incoming reader would intone Psalm 50 (51):17, ‘Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise’, a verse that was then repeated thrice by the community, after which he received a blessing.

The emphasis in the Rule’s prescriptions for the refectory reading, as in the practices and writings of the early desert fathers (especially as described and widely

Collation reading. The practice indicated here represents a change from the norm specified in the Carolingian reform legislation and recorded in earlier customals, which prescribe the same reading at the meal for the servers as that for the meal of the brethren that preceded it: see, for example, Legislatio Aquigranensis, ed. J. Semmler, CCM 1, 435 (Synodi primae Aquisgranensis acta preliminaria, ch. 10); ibid., 465 (Synodi primae Aquisgranensis decreta authentica, ch. 26); ibid. 522 (Regula sancti Benedicti abbatis Anianensis sive Collectio capitularis, ch. 22). This earlier custom was apparently still being practised at Eynsham Abbey in the thirteenth century: The Customary of the Benedictine Abbey of Eynsham in Oxfordshire, ed. Antonia Gransden, CCM, 2 (Siegburg, 1963), 183.

18 ‘Mensis fratrum lectio deesse non debet, nec fortuito casu qui arripuerit codicem legere ibi, sed lecturus tota hebdomada dominica ingrediatur. ... Et summum fiat silentium, ut nullius mussitatio vel vox nisi solius legentis ibi audiatur. ... Fratres autem non per ordinem legant aut cantent, sed qui aedificant audientes.’ RB 1980, ed. Fry, pp. 236-7.

19 ‘Qui ingrediens post missas et communionem petat ab omnibus pro se orari, ut avertat ab ipso Deus spiritus elationis, et dicatur hic versus in oratorio tercio ab omnibus, ipso tamen incipiente: Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum adnuntiabit laudem tuam; et sic accepta benedictione ingrediatur ad legendum.’ RB 1980, p. 236. Formulae for the blessing are found in a number of monastic customals and missals: see Anselm Strittmatter, ‘The Monastic Blessing of the Weekly Reader in Missal W. 11 of the Walters Art Gallery’, Traditio, 3 (1945), 392-4.
disseminated by Cassian in his De institutis coenobiorum, is upon the monastic discipline of silence. According to Cassian, readings were introduced by the Cappadocian monks not so much as a spiritual discipline for its own sake but as a means of curbing superfluous idle chatter and the almost inevitable quarreling that would otherwise arise. In the chapter from the Rule of St Benedict, the edification provided by the reading is mentioned only obliquely in relation to the abilities required of those chosen to read. Other early monastic rules, however, are more explicit in advocating reading not simply as an ascetic discipline but also for its positive benefit in providing a spiritual counterpart to the bodily nourishment of the meal. Caesarius of Arles (d. 542), Aurelian of Arles (d. 551), and the sixth-century author of the Regula magistri adduced in support the Gospel precept: ‘man does not live by bread alone but on every word of God’ (Luke 4: 4).

Carolingian monastic reformers likewise combined the teachings of both those who advocated reading as a means towards the ascetic ideal of silence and those

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22 Cassian, De institutis coenobiorum, IV, xvii: ‘Quos nulli dubium est non tam spiritualis exercitationis causa, quam compescendae superflue, otiosaeque confabulationis gratia, et maxime contentionum, quae plerumque solent in convivii generari, hoc statuere voluisse’ (pr. PL, 49, col. 175).
23 For example, Isidore of Seville, Regula monachorum: ‘caeteri vescentes tacebunt, lectionem attentiissime audientes, ut sicut illis corporalis cibus refectionem carnis praestat, ita mentem eorum spiritualis sermonem reficiat’ (pr. PL 83, col. 878).
who expressed its positive benefits in providing spiritual nourishment.\textsuperscript{25} Hildemar, for example, acknowledged that reading at mealtimes had originally been introduced as a preventative measure but asserted that its purpose now was both to prevent story-telling or scandal and to edify: ‘nunc autem non solum debet esse lectio causa vitandi fabulas vel scandalum, verum etiam causa aedificationis’.\textsuperscript{26}

The discipline and spiritual benefits of sacred reading were also advocated by the more ascetically-minded bishops for communities of clergy, and especially for the bishop’s dinner-table. At the Third Council of Toledo (589), such teaching was articulated as canon law: canon 7 (repeated in later canon law collections) prescribed the reading of Scripture and forbad the recitation of secular tales.\textsuperscript{27} In similar vein Alcuin reprimanded an Anglo-Saxon bishop for the inappropriately secular conduct of his community of clergy, urging the replacement of secular music and heroic poetry with readings from Scripture and the Fathers: ‘Let God’s words be read at the episcopal dinner-table. It is right that a reader should be heard, not a harpist; patristic discourse, not pagan song. What has Hinield to do with Christ?’\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[25] See, for example, the catena of quotations in Benedict of Aniane’s \textit{Concordia regularum}, ch. xlvii (pr. \textit{PL}, 103, 1101-1112). Smaragdus of St-Mihiel presented a more selective synthesis of these patristic authorities in his commentary on ch. 38 of the Rule (\textit{Smaragdi abbatis Expositio in Regulam S. Benedicti}, ed. Alfred Spannagel and Pius Engelbert, CCM, 8 (Siegburg, 1974), 252-4), which was itself cited and commented upon by Hildemar in his commentary upon this chapter of the Rule: \textit{Expositio Regulae ed. Mittermüller} (Regensburg, 1880), 421-34; \textit{The Hildemar Project} at http://hildemar.org.
\item[26] Ibíd., 422.
\item[27] ‘Pro reverentia dei et sacerdotum id universa sancta constituit synodus; ut quia solent crebro mensis otiosae fabulae interponi, in omni sacerdotali convivio lectio scriptura(ru)m divinarum misceatur. Per hoc enim et animae aedificantur ad bonum et fabulae non necessariae prohibentur.’ (\textit{Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos}, ed. José Vives, with Tomàs Marín Martínez and Gonzalo Martínez Díez (Barcelona/Madrid, 1963), p. 127
\item[28] ‘Verba Dei in sacerdotali convivio: ibi decret lectorem audiri audiri, non citharistam, sermones patrum, non carmina gentilium. Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?’ (\textit{Epistola Karolini Aevi}, 2, ed. E. Dümmler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae, 4 (Berlin, 1895), 183 [no. 124]). On the letter and the identification of its addressee as a bishop with a secular \textit{familia} (and not the bishop of Lindisfarne, as previously assumed), see Donald A. Bullough, ‘What has Ingeld to do with Lindisfarne’, \textit{Anglo-Saxon England}, 22 (1993), 93-125.
\end{footnotes}
Refectories and refectory rituals

The earliest surviving detailed description of the ritual and other arrangements involved in the mealtime reading is found in an early-medieval Roman ordo, *Ordo Romanus XIX*, which survives in a single manuscript from the second half of the century (St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 349), introduced by the rubric ‘De conuiuo siue prandio atque cenis monachorum qualiter in monastiria Romane ecclesie constitutis est consuetudo’. The meal itself began with a prayer (‘Oculi omnium’, Ps. 144: 15) and blessing (‘Benedicantur nobis domine dona tua’). Before beginning to read, the reader sought a blessing (‘Iube domini benedicere’) and, as with the lections of the Night Office, terminated the reading with the formula ‘Tu autem domine miserere nobis’, practices

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30 For identification of, and references to, earlier precedents and Carolingian practice, see *Ordines aevi regulae mixtae*, ed. Semmler, notes on pp. 53-6.
31 C. Callewaert, ‘Tu autem domine miserere nobis’, *Sacris erudiri* (Steenbrugge, 1940), pp. 185-8.
that were to become the norm in subsequent monastic traditions.\textsuperscript{32} The \textit{ordo} also describes the presence of a seat and lectern for the reader, located in a raised position near the abbot’s table: ‘Habent autem prope mensa abbatis cathedra tale ex alto stabilita cum annologio ubi librum ponitur et sedeunt cum legunt’. The ninth-century so-called ‘Plan of St Gall’ likewise depicts a lectern, labelled ‘analogium’, on what appears to be some form of raised platform, located at the centre of one of the long walls of the refectory.\textsuperscript{33} By at least the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, readers’ pulpits had become or were becoming an integral part of the refectory building, built as a recess in one of the two long walls, with large windows behind to maximize the available light, and approached by stairs in the thickness of the wall, typically arcaded on the near-side. More-or-less well-preserved late-twelth- and thirteenth-century examples (albeit sometimes subsequently modified, or partially ruined) survive from England at the Cistercian abbeys of Beaulieu (where it is now used as the parish church, see fig. 2), Fountains (including a recessed cupboard for books at the foot of the stairs, see fig. 3; traces of a similar cupboard also survive in what remains of the refectory at Rievaulx), and Kirkstall;\textsuperscript{34} at the Benedictine abbey of St Werburgh, Chester (now Chester

\textsuperscript{32} Not all monastic customals describe the customs observed at mealtimes (they are not included, for example, in the late-tenth-century \textit{Regularis Concordia} or Lanfranc’s \textit{Monastic constitutions}). The fullest accounts are found in late-medieval customals, such as those of St Augustine’s, Canterbury and Westminster Abbey (see \textit{Customary of the Benedictine Monasteries of Saint Augustine, Canterbury and Saint Peter, Westminster}, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson, 2 vols, HBS, 23, 28 (London, 1902-4), 1. 161-82; 2. 99-137) and St Mary’s Abbey, York (\textit{The Ordinal and Customary of the Abbey of Saint Mary, York [St John’s College, Cambridge, MS D. 27]}, ed. [Laurentia McLachlan] and J. B. L. Tolhurst, 3 vols, HBS, 73-5 (London, 1936-7), 1. 142-50.

\textsuperscript{33} W. Horn and E. Born, \textit{The Plan of St Gall}, 3 vols (Berkeley, CA, 1979), 1. 263-84. For full discussion of the early development of monastic refectories and their architecture and forms of decoration up to the mid-thirteenth century, see Irene Kabala, ‘Medieval Decorated Refectories in France, Italy and England until 1250’ (unpublished PhD. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2001).

Cathedral) and Worcester Cathedral Priory (now the hall of the King’s School, Worcester), at the Premonstratensian abbeys of Tupholme and Easby, and the Augustinian abbey of Haughmond and priory of Norton.

The content of the refectory readings

Of the monastic rules of late antiquity and the early middle ages, only the Regula magistri prescribed a specific text to be read during meals—namely the rule itself, which was to be read through in sequence. Each day the weekly reader was to commence to read at the point where he or the previous week’s reader had left off the day before, except when lay guests were present, when a different text was to be selected, unless the abbot deemed a guest to be sufficiently devout to benefit from hearing the rule. No single text or category of texts is prescribed in the Benedictine rule or in the Carolingian customs that elaborated upon it. Isidore’s Regula monachorum echoes the Third Council of Toledo’s requirements for the episcopal mensa in specifying Scripture, to which

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35 A refectory pulpit, but little else, also survives from Shrewsbury Abbey.
37 ‘Legat namque cottiide regulam hanc, posito ad diem signo hucusque legerit, ut sequenter cottiide, tamen omnia perlegantur, ut per urches eudomadum et finiri possit et recapitari legendo. … Nam si superuemerint forte mensae monasterii laici, propter detractationem futuram in saeculo, cum secreta Dei saecularis agnoverit, si placuerit abbati, iam lectionem cuiuscumque codicis legat, ut secretum monasterii vel mensuras uita sanctae constitutes in disciplinam ab inrisoribus non sciatur. Legat namque aliam lectionem, posito tamen in regula signo. Nam si talis laicus ad mensam monasterio detineatur, de quo certus sit abbas quod non solum admirari possit constituta diuina, sed etiam huius religiositatis sit, quod in conversione possit esse pedesequus et ad mores possit trahi diuinus, in huius lector aduentu ad mensam regulam subsequatur. Nam illi debent monasterii regulam audire, qui illam possunt merito obseruare.’ (Ch. 24, 15-25, ed. De Vogüé, 1. 126-8).
Alcuin, in his letter to the bishop whom he nicknames Speratus, added the writings of the Fathers. The substance of the mealtime reading in Carolingian monastic houses, however, remains obscure, although one might speculate that Alcuin’s expectations for episcopal practice are likely to reflect those also considered appropriate for monastic communities. Late-medieval inscriptions on the bindings of three ninth-century St Gallen manuscripts (St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MSS 116-118, containing Jerome on Isaiah and, in two volumes, Gregory on Ezekiel) designate them as books for the refectory (‘ad’ or ‘pro mensa’), but from what date they had been used for this purpose has not yet been determined. The mid-ninth-century Vita Aegili provides rare evidence of monastic refectory reading more certainly datable to the Carolingian period, but extrapolating from it poses certain difficulties. According to the author, Candidus, Eigil (abbot of Fulda, 818-822) ordered that the Vita Sturmi be read at mealtime on Sturmi’s anniversary, as part of the liturgical commemoration of his predecessor. It might be unwise to infer from this requirement a more general introduction of hagiographical texts to the refectory reading, paralleling the increasing use of hagiographical readings in the Office at this time, since it is unclear whether or not the commemorations introduced by Eigil represented ‘the first cautious steps towards establishing a saint’s cult’, and thus whether this vita would have been regarded as a saint’s life.

38 Isidore, Regula monachorum: ‘Unus tamen in medio residens, benediction accepta, de Scripturis aliquid legat’ (pr. PL 83, col. 878).
39 I am grateful to Professor David Ganz for drawing these volumes to my attention.
41 Raaijmakers, Making of the Monastic Community, p. 164. She notes that Pius Engelbert has argued that Eigil was simply putting into practice Carolingian reform legislation requiring that the death of an abbot be commemorated liturgically each year, but suggests that Eigil’s Vita Sturmi presents Sturmi, nevertheless, as ‘saunt-like’: as a powerful patron and also, by analogy with a similar description of Boniface earlier in the
More detailed evidence of the content of refectory reading begins to accumulate from the eleventh century onwards, largely in the form of prescriptions or recommendations for refectory reading which are sometimes included in monastic customals and ordinals. Such evidence can be supplemented and clarified by later medieval lists of the books used in the refectory, individual entries in booklists that identify the item in question as a refectory book, and inscriptions and annotations in surviving manuscripts. Despite the incomplete and sometimes seemingly opaque nature of this evidence, it is possible, if one sets what survives from England within the context of the material extant from the continent, to discern the emergence of an outline framework for an annual cycle of readings in the refectory, whose general parameters were shared by the various traditions of communal life, whether of monks or regular canons, throughout the Western Church. The effect by at least the end of the twelfth century was a programme of reading that operated in dialogue with the liturgical calendar and readings. First, it provided a means of fulfilling (in principle if not wholly in practice) the prescriptions for the reading the Bible in the Night Office by delivering (if only partially) in the refectory whatever, for reasons of time, could not be read within the Office. Second, it allowed further reflection on the liturgical lessons of the Office and the Mass by means of readings from patristic biblical commentary and gospel homilies, and third, it could be used to extend the observance of a saint’s feast beyond the liturgy with additional readings from the lives, miracles and translation of the saint, or permit the commemoration at mealtime of a saint whose feast was recorded in the martyrology but was not celebrated liturgically by that particular community. A more precise
understanding of the relationship between refectory and office readings in individual houses must await more detailed examination of the content of the Night Office readings. Nevertheless, the general framework that structured both Office and refectory readings, and some details of practice at the local level are already discernible.

The liturgical readings of the Night Office by the eleventh century drew variously upon three principal components: an annual cycle of reading of the books of the Bible, sometimes in conjunction with corresponding patristic exegesis; patristic homilies upon the Gospel pericope assigned for Mass, and hagiographical texts appropriate to a given feast. Although certain shared principles shaped the cycle of readings, and is most evident in the order in which the biblical books were read, the surviving evidence from the central middle ages indicates considerable variation in the choice of readings from house to house, even those from within the same monastic tradition. The Cistercians were the first to introduce a single office lectionary as part of a uniform observance of the divine office; the earliest surviving evidence for its content is Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 114, datable to the 1180s, which, according to the elaborate frontispiece on fol. 1v, contains ‘the books pertaining to the Divine Office which, in our Order, ought not to admit of diversity’, including the Night Office lectionary (here called breuiarium’). This precedent was subsequently followed by the Dominicans, but the

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43 ‘In hoc volumine continentur libri ad diuinum officium pertinentes. quos utique non decet in ordine nostro diuersos haberi’: *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Citeaux*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell (Citeaux, 1999), pp. 37-8, and also pp. 457-8; *Les Ecclesiastica officia cisterciens du xième siècle: texte latin selon les manuscrits édités de Trente 1711, Ljubljana 31 et Dijon 114…*, ed. Danièle Choissete and Placide Vernet (Reiningue, 1989); R. Grégoire, ‘L’Homéliaire cistercien du manuscript 114(82) de Dijon’,
black monks (including the Cluniacs) never adopted a single, uniform lectionary for the Night Office.\textsuperscript{45}

\textit{Biblical readings}\textsuperscript{46}

Surviving eleventh- and twelfth-century monastic customals reflect a special concern for the organization of the biblical readings, incorporating directions for an annual cycle of continuous reading of the Bible in the Night Office (with the exception of the Psalms and the Gospels which had their own liturgical cycles).\textsuperscript{47} The order in which the books were to be read, and in what season, drew upon the framework of annual cycles of reading of the Old and New Testaments practised in seventh- and eighth-century Rome, records of which had become more widely disseminated during the Carolingian ecclesiastical
reforms of the late eighth and early ninth centuries, and were frequently copied in various manuscript contexts between the ninth and twelfth centuries, sometimes augmented with further directions for readings and chants.\textsuperscript{48} Surviving evidence from eleventh- and twelfth-century England corresponds most closely with the text designated by Michel Andrieu as \textit{Ordo Romanus} XIII A (although as far as the sequence of biblical books is concerned, there was little variation between the different \textit{ordines} identified by Andrieu).\textsuperscript{49} The Heptateuch (Genesis to Judges; sometimes expanded to the Octateuch by the inclusion of Ruth) was assigned to the weeks between Septuagesima and Passion Sunday; Jeremiah and Lamentations to Passiontide; Acts, the Canonical Epistles and Revelation to the period between Easter and the octave of Pentecost; Kings and Chronicles from thence to the beginning of August; the Wisdom books in August; Job, Tobit, Judith, Esther and Ezra in September; Maccabees in October; Ezekiel, Daniel and the Minor Prophets in November; Isaiah in December, and the Pauline Epistles between Epiphany and Septuagesima.

The extent to which, in practice, individual communities implemented the cycle in full, and the various means by which the principle of continuous reading was fulfilled at least in spirit have yet to be fully explored.\textsuperscript{50} A number of practical difficulties stood in the way, such as the variable length of time between Epiphany and Septuagesima and between Pentecost and the beginning of August (depending upon the date of Easter), the

\textsuperscript{50} For important preliminary observations and a detailed examination of evidence from Freising, St Gallen and Constance, see Henry Parkes, ‘Biblical Readings for the Night Office in Eleventh-Century Germany: reconciling theory and practice’ (forthcoming).
variable hours of darkness, and the frequent intrusion into the liturgy of specially-designated readings for the major feasts of the temporale and of saints’ feasts with their own proper readings or readings from the common of saints. A number of eleventh-century monastic writers acknowledged such difficulties and identified as one solution the allowance for some of the biblical reading to take place in the refectory. The earliest known evidence for this solution is found in customs drawn up in the early eleventh century for Eynsham Abbey by its first abbot, the homilist, Ælfric. After setting out a cycle of reading closely corresponding to that of Ordo Romanus XIII A, including not the full Heptateuch but only Genesis and Exodus, he wrote: ‘And be it known that, in the course of a year, the entire canon [of Scripture] ought to be read in church, but because we are lazy and slothful, we read in the refectory whatever we do not cover in church.’

From this one might infer that the remainder of the books of the Heptateuch would be read in the refectory. This is unlikely to have been a solution personally devised by Ælfric; it may well already have been introduced at other reformed monastic houses in England and on the Continent since evidence of the practice can also be found in three eleventh-century Cluniac customals: the mid-eleventh-century Liber tramitis (surviving from Farfa), and the late-eleventh-century customs compiled by Bernard of Cluny and by Ulrich of Zell (for Hirsau). These three customals also provide directions for how the division between church and refectory was (or should be) applied (albeit only in very

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general terms and to differing extents), including directions for reading part of the Heptateuch in the refectory. Ulrich provides the most detail, set out as a response to his interlocutor, William of Hirsau, who had heard of the exceptional length of the Night Office readings at Cluny and had inquired how the reading of the Old and New Testaments was organised there. Ulrich explains that, as elsewhere, the reading of the Octateuch commenced at Septuagesima, but that at Cluny the book of Genesis was read in its entirety in the Night Office in the space of a week, with Exodus and the other remaining books being read in full in continuous sequence between Sexagesima and the beginning of Lent (except on Sundays) but split between the Night Office and the refectory. Ulrich also observed that, because of the short length of the hours of darkness in the Summer, much of the books of Acts, Revelation and the Canonical Epistles was read in the refectory, and that the books of Kings, the Wisdom books, Job, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Ezra and Maccabees were hardly read in the Office at all, apart from the extracts read in the Night Office on Sunday.

53 Ulrich, Consuetudines, col. 643. Notwithstanding Ulrich’s claim that Genesis was read in its entirety in the course of a single week, the Cluny lectionary of c. 1100 (Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. lat. 2246) assigns readings from Genesis not only to Septuagesima Sunday (where the first reading is indeed the entire prologue, as specified by Ulrich) but also to the Sundays of Sexagesima and Quinquagesima: Raymond Étaix, ‘Le lectionnaire de l’office à Cluny’, Recherches Augustiniennes, 11 (1976), 91-143, at 100-101. These may be the Sunday exceptions to which Ulrich himself refers. Cf. Liber tramitis, ed. Dinter, p. 48: ‘Liber genesis legatur ad officium nocturnale tandem quoque sit expletus; ac deinde ali [i.e. the other books of the Heptateuch] qui post ipsum restant tam in refectorio quam in ecclesiis, ut sint exacti in Capite Ieiunii quod fit feria quarta.’ Bernard’s custumal provides the greatest level of specificity concerning the division of the biblical books into Office lections (see Reilly, ‘Cluniac Giant Bible’, pp. 174-5). Taken together, the various Cluniac sources indicate a degree of fluidity in the passages chosen for the biblical lections: see Candida Elvert, ‘Die Nokturnen lesungen Klunys im 10.-12. Jahrhundert’, in Clavis voluminum CCM VIII/1-3, CCM, 7/4 (Siegburg, 1986), 37-126.

54 Ulrich, Consuetudines, col. 644, and, in closely similar wording, Bernard, ‘Ordo cluniacensis’, p. 325.
manuscript, suggests that some form of dovetailing of Office and refectory reading of the bible became the norm not only in communities that followed the Benedictine rule (including the Cistercians)\textsuperscript{55} but also among the Carthusians and communities of regular canons.\textsuperscript{56}

The mid-twelfth-century \textit{Liber ordinis} of the Augustinian house of St-Victor in Paris (ch. 48) is, to my knowledge, the earliest extant custumal to set out an entire annual cycle of reading in the refectory as a discrete text, the biblical cycle interspersed with directions for readings from corresponding biblical commentary and from gospel homilies appropriate to the liturgical season.\textsuperscript{57} Thus, from Septuagesima until Passion Sunday (referred to by the \textit{incipit} of the first responsory of the Night Office), not only the Octateuch was to be read but also Origen’s homilies on the Old Testament and commentaries and homilies on the Gospels appropriate for Lent.\textsuperscript{58} The earliest surviving detailed records of cycles of refectory reading from English religious houses are in sources that date from no earlier than the late thirteenth century. They comprise three late-thirteenth-century custumals, two from Benedictine houses: Norwich Cathedral

\textsuperscript{55} The custumal that forms part of the compilation of texts that were to be observed uniformly by the Cistercians (as set out in Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 114) directs which books of the Bible might be divided between the Night Office and the refectory, as time permitted. See, for example, on the reading of Isaiah during Advent: ‘In adventu domini dominica prima ysaias incipiatur ad uigilias. et deinceps totus legatur per adventum. Non solum ad uigilias. sed et in refectorio prout tempus expetierit.’ \textit{Ecclesiastica officia}, ed. Choiselet and Vernet, p. 66. For special directions concerning how Lamentations, Proverbs 31:10-31 and the Song of Songs were to be delivered in the refectory, see Waddell, \textit{Twelfth-Century Statutes}, pp. 647-8.


\textit{Liber ordinis}, ed. Milis, pp. 211-215, where it forms part of chapter 48, \textit{De lectione mensae}.

\textsuperscript{57} ‘A Septuagesima usque ad Isti sunt dies legantur quinque Libri Moysi et cetera quae sequuntur, usque ad Librum Regum et omiliae Origenis super Vetus Testamentum et expositiones euangeliorum et sermones ad Quadragesimam pertinentes.’ Ibid., p. 212.
Priory (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 465) and Peterborough Abbey (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 459), and one from the Augustinian priory of Barnwell, near Cambridge (BL, MS Harley 3601). Taken together, they correspond with other such lists from the Continent in broadly sharing the same framework but each exhibiting certain differences in matters of detail. Thus, although some passages in the Barnwell customal reflect the influence of the *Liber ordinis*, the biblical content of its prescriptions for the annual cycle of refectory reading is a little less full than that specified for St-Victor: only Genesis, not the full Octateuch, is set for the period from Septuagesima to Passion Sunday; the four books of Kings but not Chronicles between the Octave of Pentecost and the beginning of August, and there is no mention of the book of Ezra. Minor differences also distinguish the number and order of the biblical books included in the cycles from the Benedictine abbeys of Peterborough and Norwich. The latter specifies the full Octateuch, the former just the Pentateuch (with the book of Judges being read in between Chronicles and the Wisdom books); the latter (like St-Victor) assigns the Pauline Epistles to the period after Easter, whereas the former (in common with the sequence in *Ordo Romanus* XIII A, Ælfric’s customs and those of Barnwell) assigns them to the period of variable length between the Epiphany and Septuagesima; and finally, the Peterborough cycle (like that from Barnwell) omits any mention of the


book of Ezra, whereas in the cycle from Norwich it is positioned before the reading of Job rather than (as was more usual) after the book of Esther.

The focus of all three of these English lists of refectory reading, as with that in the Liber ordinis, is the biblical cycle, albeit interspersed with provision for the reading of patristic commentary and prefaced by directions for the reading of homilies on the Mass readings on Sundays. A record of the annual cycle of refectory reading included in the early-thirteenth-century Fécamp ordinal, however, not only integrates patristic commentary and gospel homilies within the biblical cycle but provides in addition a full calendar (from January to the end of December) of hagiographical readings and homilies for saints’ and other feasts, with over 180 days in the year being assigned such readings.61 The Liber ordinis had made a general allowance that on saints’ feast days their lives or passions might be read,62 but the number of possible days that, at the cantor’s discretion, might be given over to such reading evident from the Fécamp ordinal, as well as from similarly detailed lists from the abbey of Sainte-Rictrude, Marchiennes, and from Saint-Wandrille (dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively)63 had serious implications for achieving the ideal of the annual cycle of biblical readings. It was the responsibility of the cantor to make sure that sufficient priority was given to the biblical readings and to adjust the assignment of both hagiography readings and biblical commentary accordingly, whilst also ensuring that the commencement of the biblical books between Easter and Advent dovetailed with the Night Office responsories that

corresponded with them. In the Norwich custumal, for example, an allowance for the inclusion in the refectory of readings from the letters and commentaries of the Fathers is immediately qualified by the proviso that ‘the specified reading may never be omitted, and may the reading of the Bible especially be delivered in its season, with the exception of the books of the prophets which are read more fully at Matins, and are sometimes omitted in the refectory so that their commentaries may be read.’ A partial cycle of refectory reading (running from the first Sunday in November to the end of Christmas week), added in the late fourteenth century to a twelfth-century book from Reading Abbey (St John’s College, Oxford, MS 11), but probably deriving from an earlier custumal, includes the observation that the sheer number and prolixity of some of the saints’ lives that might be assigned during November was such that the armarius be permitted to omit the ‘less useful’ lives, such as Sulpicius Severus’s Life of St Martin, so that the specified biblical books (Ezekiel, Daniel and the Twelve Minor Prophets) might be read through in their entirety.

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64 In the lists of refectory reading from Norwich, Peterborough, Fécamp, Saint-Wandrille and also a thirteenth-century list from Saint-Denis, Paris, some or all of the books of the Bible assigned between Easter and Advant are cued to the incipits of the first responsory of the Sunday Night Office rather than, or as well as, to a particular month, to bring out the textual correspondences between the content of the responsories (the chants that accompanied the Office readings), the biblical component of the Office readings themselves, and the biblical reading in the refectory. For the list from Saint-Denis, see P. Schmitz, ‘Les lectures de table à l’abbaye de Saint-Denis vers la fin de moyen âge’, Revue bénédictine, 42 (1930), 163-7; Nebbiai-dalla Guarda, ‘Les listes médiévales’, 299-301.

65 ‘Ita tamen quod statuta lectio nunquam omittatur et precipue lectio bibliotece quin legatur in tempore suo. exceptis libris prophetarum qui plenius ad matutinas leguntur . et ad mensam aliquando omituntur ut eorum expositiones legantur.’ Customary of Norwich, ed. Tolhurst, 199.


67 ‘In refectorio leguntur Ezechiel, Daniel et xii prophete. Sed quia uite sanctorum multe et prolixe infra hoc temporis spacium eueniunt prouidendum est armario ut que minus utiles fuerint omitantur sicut est dialogus Sulpicius Severi de uita sancti Martini et si que sunt similes ut libri prefati ante Adventum domini perlegi possint.’ Coates, English Medieval Books, p. 84 (with minor variations in punctuation); the note was also printed by J. R. Liddell, ‘Some Notes on the Library of Reading Abbey’, Bodleian Quarterly Record, 8 (1935), 47-54.
Although detailed descriptions of cycles of refectory reading survive from England from no earlier than the late thirteenth century, manuscripts that were used for such reading survive from an earlier date, including at least one twelfth-century bible demonstrably made for use in the refectory. Adam of Eynsham’s Life of St Hugh of Lincoln (c. 1140-1200) describes an especially fine, decorated bible that had been made by the monks of Winchester Cathedral Priory to be read during meals. King Henry II, who had promised to obtain a copy of the Old and New Testament for Hugh’s newly-founded Carthusian priory of Witham, and having been informed of the refectory bible from Winchester, pressed the prior of Winchester to give him the book, and he did so. St Hugh and his monks were delighted—especially, so the narrative goes, because of the elegance of the hand and the beauty of the book, but most of all because the care with which it had been corrected. On subsequently learning of how the book had been obtained by Henry, Hugh insisted that it be returned. The bible has been shown to have survived and now forms Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Auct. E inf. 1-2, a two-volume bible of disputed origin but certainly completed and corrected at Winchester during the second half of the twelfth century. Its scale, clarity and quality of script, and the attention paid to the correction of the text throughout, correspond well with both the description in the Vita and the requirements of a book to be read aloud from a lectern.

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69 ‘in eo potissimum gauisi quod stili elegantium, totiusque operis uenustatem, operosior emendation sublimius commendaret.’ Ibid., p. 85.

How many of the other surviving large-format bibles produced or acquired in England during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries were used for the refectory readings from the outset cannot be ascertained with certainty, but evidence survives that at least two came to be used in such as way. The magnificent late-eleventh-century bible donated to Durham Cathedral Priory by Bishop William of Saint-Calais (of which the second volume only survives as Durham Cathedral, MS A.II.4) is recorded in a late-fourteenth-century Durham list of refectory books, and a fifteenth-century benefaction list from Bury St Edmunds refers to the twelfth-century Bury Bible (one volume of which survives complete as Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 2), as a ‘magna biblia refectorii’.

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71 Dual use of large-format bibles such as these in the choir during the Night Office and in the refectory during the eleventh century and twelfth centuries may perhaps be inferred from the provisions made by both Bernard of Cluny and William of Hirsau for an assistant to help the weekly reader carry the book to-and-fro between the refectory and the choir, if required: Bernard, ‘Ordo cluniacensis’, p. 252: ‘libros autem in quibus legendum est, in refectorium portat et reportat; tamen Lector adjuvat eum, si fuerat nimium pondus : qui legit ad Servitores’; William of Hirsau, Consuetudines Hirsauensis, pr. PL 150, col. 1028: ‘Librum in quo legendum est, in reectorium portat et reportat is qui legit ad servitores, adjuvante eum ipso, si opus est, mensae lectore.’ Passionals and homiliaries may have been of sufficient size and weight to require such assistance, but the provision more plausibly applies to volumes of the dimensions of the so-called ‘giant bibles’: see Reilly, ‘Cluniac Giant Bible’, pp. 175-6, and eadem, ‘French Giant Bibles and their English Relatives: blood relatives or adopted children?’ Scriptorium, 16 (2002), 294-311. For the use by the Cistercians of a single bible to serve both functions, see Placide Vernet, ‘“Historia”: la lecture de la Bible en communauté dans les monastères cisterciens au xiiie siècle’, Liturgie: Revue monastique de la lecture du Bible, 60-3 (1988), 295-318, at 298-9.


73 Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 553, fol. 16v; English Benedictine Libraries, ed. Sharpe, p.94, B15.17. More recent scholarship by Diane J. Reilly and others on the significance of the biblical readings in the refectory in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and on the bibles produced for that purpose, give reason to dismiss the reservations expressed here in the note on B15.17 and earlier in the note on B15.1 (p. 90) that the Bury Bible could have had such a function from the outset. See also the revised opinion given by R. M. Thomson in his The Bury Bible (Woodbridge and Tokyo, 2001), pp. 25-8 (but where the refectory readings are conflated and confused with those of Collation). A fragment (in private ownership) has been identified as part of a leaf from the lost second volume of the Bury Bible: ibid., p. 9, pl. 49. Other bibles designated for use in the refectory but which are not known to have survived are recorded in at least two more late-medieval English library catalogues. A two-volume ‘biblia mensalis’ is recorded in the late-fourteenth- or early-fifteenth-century catalogue from St Augustine’s, Canterbury (the catalogue survives in a late fifteenth-century copy, now Dublin, Trinity College, MS 360): see St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, ed. B. C. Barker-Benfield, 3 vols, CBMLC, 13 (London, 2008), 1. 373, BA1.3-4. A two-volume bible was
The presence of stress-marks in the Bury Bible provides further evidence of its use for public reading in the refectory and/or the choir. For example, in the passage illustrated

from the opening of the book of Exodus in fig. 4, the scribe noticed that he had made an error of word separation in column b, line 11, one that might also have caused a reader to accentuate the syllables incorrectly. Therefore, in addition to tracing a tie-mark between what had been written as two words—‘inter ea’—he traced an oblique hairline stroke over the second syllable in order to indicate the correct accentuation ‘intérea’. Biblical names were widely recognized to present particular problems of accentuation, and for

located in the refectory at the Augustinian abbey of Leicester when a catalogue of all the abbey’s books was compiled in the late fifteenth century, the first item being ‘Biblia per se in iibus voluminibus et iacet in Refectorio’ (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 623, fol. 4r): The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons, ed. T. Webber and A. G. Watson, CBMLC, 6 (London, 1998), 121, A20.1.
this reason a stress-mark was supplied, perhaps by a different hand, above the final syllable of ‘ioséph’ (line 12). Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MSS 3-4 (the Dover Bible), produced at Christ Church, Canterbury in the mid-twelfth century, would also appear to have been produced with the annual cycle of biblical reading in mind, since the first volume opens with a version of *Ordo Romanus* XIII A, immediately preceding and in the same hand as that of Jerome’s preface to Genesis (MS 3, fol. 1r).74

Use in the Night Office sometimes left traces in the books from which the readings were taken in the form of a sequence of roman numerals in the margins demarcating the passages to be read for each of the readings: three readings on ferial nights, and one, two or three groups of either four readings per group (for the monastic *cursus*, numbered from i-xii) or three (in the case of the secular *cursus*, numbered from i-ix), comprising the readings for each of the three nocturns of the Night Office on Sundays and major feasts. The passage read in the refectory, however, was a single reading of variable length (in part because the length of the meal was not pre-determined and in part to permit the cantor a degree of flexibility in negotiating the competing requirements of the annual cycle of biblical readings and the proper commemoration of saints’ feasts and other festivals), and was therefore less likely to attract such annotation. Nevertheless, some bibles were occasionally annotated to indicate where the mealtime reading was to

begin in relation to what was prescribed for reading in the choir. The multi-volume twelfth-century Bible from the Cistercian abbey of Clairvaux (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MSS A20-22, 24-25), contains not only several sequences of marginal numerals in sets of three to indicate the prescribed Office ferial readings from the books of Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel but also marginal notes directing where and when the refectory reading of the books of Tobit and I Maccabees should commence, and directions to omit the Passion narratives from the reading of the four gospels at mealtimes.\textsuperscript{75} At the end of the fourth book of Kings in the second volume of a twelfth-century five-volume bible from the abbey of Saint-Amand (in which Kings is followed directly by Isaiah), a rubric (perhaps contemporary, or a little later) states that the books of Kings is to be followed in the refectory by Chronicles, for which the text is to be found in the fourth volume.\textsuperscript{76} I have yet to discover similar evidence concerning the refectory readings in surviving English large-format bibles from before the thirteenth century, but sequences of late-medieval Office lection-numbers are not uncommon.\textsuperscript{77} References to the refectory were, however, added in the fifteenth century to a thirteenth-century bible from an English Charthouse, already marked up throughout in accordance with the

\textsuperscript{75} For details, see J.-P. Bouhot and J.-F. Genest, \textit{La bibliothèque de l’abbaye de Clairvaux du xiie au xviiie siècle} (Paris, 1997), pp. 72-5. I am grateful to Michael Gullick for this reference. On the Cistercian practice of reading the Gospels as part of the annual biblical cycle, see above, note 47.

\textsuperscript{76} ‘Post libros Regum legitur ad mensam Paralipomenon. Require in Quarto Volumine’: Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 2, fol. 78v. The bible is now Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MSS 1-5, and was described in the mid-twelfth-century list of books of Saint-Amand as ‘Vetus et novum testamentum in quinque voluminibus quae leguntur ad mensam’: see Walter Cahn, \textit{Romanesque Manuscripts: the twelfth century}, 2 vols, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in France (London, 1996), 2. 142-4.

\textsuperscript{77} Late-medieval Office lection marks are present, for example, in a twelfth-century large-format, single-volume bible perhaps from St Albans, now Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.5.1, e.g. on fol. 5r (lections for Quinquagesima beginning at Genesis 12.1).
Carthusian annual cycle of biblical reading. Further evidence might emerge from a systematic examination of all large-format English bibles dating from between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

_The Church Fathers: gospel homilies and biblical exegesis_

The Benedictine Rule states that ‘Besides the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments, the works read at Vigils (i.e. the Night Office) should include explanations of Scripture by reputable and orthodox catholic Fathers (ch. 9).’ This injunction came to be fulfilled in two ways: (1) through readings from patristic gospel homilies corresponding to the cycle of gospel readings at Mass on Sundays and major feast days and (2) through readings taken from patristic commentary on Scripture corresponding with the annual cycle of biblical readings. Both became integrated within the annual cycle of refectory readings.

From the Carolingian period onwards, it became common for the readings for the final nocturn on many Sundays and great feast days throughout the year to be taken from a patristic gospel homily. The practice is mentioned by Aelfric, who comments at the end of his outline of the cycle of biblical reading that, whilst on the feasts of saints throughout the year, the office readings could be taken from the lives or passions of the saints, for the third nocturn they should be ‘from a homily on the Gospel as we do always and

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78 Cambridge, University Library, MS Ee.2.23: see Paul Binski and Patrick Zutshi, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: a catalogue of the collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge, 2011), 90-91, no. 97. I am grateful to Michael Gullick for drawing this entry to my attention.
79 ‘Codices autem legantur in vigiliis divinae auctoritatis, tam veteris testament quam novi, sed et expositiones earum, quae a nominatis et orthodoxis catholicis patribus factae sunt.’ *RB* 1980, ed. Fry, pp. 204-5.
everywhere’. By the time Ælfric wrote, the most common source for these readings was the great homiliary compiled specifically for this purpose at Charlemagne’s request by Paul the Deacon and variously expanded in the centuries that followed. The Carthusians and Cistercians, however, compiled new homiliaries by returning directly to the works of the Fathers as their sources. By the twelfth century, if not earlier, this element of the Night Office readings was also being paralleled in the refectory. Nearly all the surviving lists of refectory reading from England and the continent, including the earliest-surviving such list from St-Victor, Paris, integrate gospel homilies within the annual cycle of readings, specifying their use on Sundays and/or at the major festivals, such as Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter. Homiliaries set aside for use in the refectory are recorded in the late twelfth-century booklists of Reading Abbey and its daughter

81 ‘et tertiam sedem de tractu euangelii sicut et ubique semper sumimus.’ Ælfric’s Letter to the Monks of Eynsham, ed. Jones, pp. 146-7. See also the similarly-worded comment on the readings of the final nocturn on Holy Saturday: ibid., pp. 144-5.
84 Liber ordinis, ed. Milis, 211: ‘In illis dieibus, quibus ad missam euangelium legitur de quo expositione habitur, si expositio illa ad matutinas tota lecta non fuerit aut fere tota, legatur in refectorio.’ See also, Observances of Barnwell, ed. Clark, pp. 66-7; Customary of Norwich, ed. Tolhurst, p. 199. The list from Peterborough specifies only the seasonal homilies that were to be read during the festal seasons of the temporale, for example, from Easter Sunday until the beginning of the week after Easter week: ‘A pascha dominica usque ad feriam ij. ann. post octauam eiusdem, legi debent Euuangelia et sermones de pascha.’ (Peterborough Abbey, ed. Friis-Jensen, p. 47). For Carthusian practice, see Étaix, ‘Le lectionnaire cartusien pour le réfectoire’.
house at Leominster, and in the late-medieval lists from Durham and St Augustine’s, Canterbury.

Scholars have long recognised the importance of such homiliaries for the reception of patristic exegesis and theology in the early and central middle ages, but in some instances the gospel homilies for the refectory reading were read aloud directly from a copy of the full patristic text. For example, a late-tenth-century continental of Gregory’s Homiliae in Euangelia at Worcester by at least the late eleventh century (Worcester Cathedral, MS Q.21) contains early-twelfth-century marginal annotations specifying the feast for which that homily was to be assigned, while in another copy dating from the mid-twelfth century, of unknown English origin and medieval provenance (now Oxford, University College, MS 191), a fourteenth-century hand has annotated fols 12v, 31v, 40v, 54v, 103r and 112v to indicate where the reader in the refectory was to commence. Several lists of refectory reading from England and the Continent recommend that on weekdays during Lent, Augustine’s Tractatus in Euangelium Iohannis might read. In some, the text is referred to as De cena domini, a title that signified just the second part of Augustine’s commentary (on the passion narrative), in which case the text was probably read sequentially. In other houses, however, manuscript evidence indicates that text was read out of sequence as a gospel

85 English Benedictine Libraries, ed. Sharpe, pp. 443 (B71.147 ‘Sermones in refectorio in uno uolumine’) and 458 (B75.39 ‘Sermones in festis in refectorio legendi’).
86 Catalogi veteres Dunelm, ed. Raine, p. 81 (‘Omeliae de Tempore’ [two volumes], ‘Omeliae excerptae de diversis Tractatoribus’); St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, ed. Barker-Benfield, 1. 768 (BA1. 658 ‘Omeliarium nouum mensale per totum annum’, BA1. 659 ‘Omeliarium nouum mensale’).
89 For example, the list from Norwich: Customary of Norwich, ed. Tolhurst, p. 198 ‘In quadragesima, Augustinus super Iohannem silicet De cena domini.’
homily on those (many) days in Lent when the gospel pericope at Mass was taken from John’s Gospel, corresponding with a practice suggested by directions in a list of refectory reading from Saint-Denis, Paris, to the effect that during Lent expositions on the Gospels were to be read at Matins and in the refectory, a practice also perhaps indicated by the list from Peterborough which prescribes a gospel reading (and, by implication, its homily as well) only on those ferial days in Lent when the Gospel was from John. Since the sequence of gospel pericopes from John during Lent does not follow the *ordo narrationis* of John’s Gospel, the reader in the refectory needed some assistance to find both the relevant homily and where to commence reading, should the pericope began at a later verse than that with which the particular *tractatus* commenced.

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5. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 17, fol. 109v (detail).

90 Schmitz, ‘Lectures de table’, 164: ‘In quadragesima legantur expositiones de evangeliio ad matutinum et ad prandium’. After allowing for the reading of the Psalms also if required at mealtime, the list then specifies Augustine on John and the sermons of Peter of Ravenna.
91 *Peterborough Abbey*, ed. Friis-Jensen, p. 48, ‘A prima dominica quadragesime usque ad passionem dominicam non legentur Ewangelia diebus ferialibus nisi secundum Iohannem.’
This requirement has left a visible mark in several English twelfth-century copies in the form of marginal headings specifying the particular day and week in Lent when the adjacent passage was to be read, or, more simply, a cross in the margin against the relevant passages.\(^2\) Here (fig. 5), for example, in a copy of unknown English origin and provenance, a contemporary marginal heading has been supplied at the start of Augustine’s homily on the beginning of John 7 that specifies ‘Feria III\(^a\), ebdomadę .v. quadragesime’, the Tuesday of the fifth week of Lent, the day for which the Gospel pericope began at John 7: 1. The twelfth-century copy from Glastonbury (BL, MS Harley 1916) not only contains similarly-worded marginal headings but also an explanatory note for the ‘lector refectorii’ on the recto of the first leaf of the volume (now detached as BL, MS Harley 5958, fol. 87), in which an alphabetical reference system is deployed as a finding aid to link each day to the relevant passage in the manuscript. A similar system of reference was supplied in the thirteenth-century on a front endleaf of the copy from Great Missenden (Bodl. Libr., MS Auct. D.1.10, fol. ivr).

In order to observe the feast of Trinity Sunday in the refectory, some monastic communities turned not to gospel homilies but to treatises on the doctrine of the Trinity. At Peterborough, the treatise assigned was that of Alcuin,\(^3\) whereas at Norwich it was Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, which was to be read at both mealtime and at collation throughout the week following Trinity Sunday.\(^4\) The copies of Augustine’s *De trinitate*

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\(^2\) They are found in the following: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 17; Hereford Cathedral, MS P.ix.5 (perhaps from Winchcombe); London, British Library, MS Harley 1916 + Harley 5958, fol. 87 (from Glastonbury); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.1.10 (from the Arrouaisian abbey at Great Missenden), and Winchester Cathedral, MS 2 (from Winchester Cathedral: N. R. Ker and A. J. Piper, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, IV. Paisley-York* [Oxford, 1992], 579-80).


\(^4\) *Customary of Norwich*, ed. Tolhurst, p. 198: ‘In ebdomada sancte Trinitatis, Augustinus *De Trinitate* ad prandium et ad collacionem.’ The list of refectory reading in the early thirteenth-century Fécamp ordinal
and the De trinitate of Hilary recorded in a late-fourteenth-century list of books kept in the dormitory at Reading for use in the refectory were presumably also read during this week.95

In his commentary on Chapter 9 of the Rule, Hildemar of Corbie recommended that if a book of the Bible had been completed in the Office it should not be re-read, but that some corresponding exegesis by the Fathers should be read instead; thus, if the book of Isaiah had been completed (i.e. before Advent had come to an end), Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah should be read.96 As with the gospel homilies, the liturgical reading of patristic exegesis in parallel with the annual cycle of biblical reading had gained its counterpart in the refectory by at least the twelfth century. At St-Victor in Paris sermons of Origen on Isaiah, on the Old Testament and on the books of Kings accompanied the reading of the book of Isaiah in Advent, the Octateuch in the weeks between Septuagesima and the beginning of Lent, and Kings between the octave of Pentecost and the beginning of July respectively; Florus of Lyons’s compendium of Augustine’s exegesis on the Pauline epistles followed the reading of the Epistles themselves before Ascension; Gregory’s Moralia in Iob accompanied the reading of Job in August, and a commentary on Ezekiel (presumably that of Gregory) was read rogether
with the books of Daniel and Ezekiel in November. The late-thirteenth-century cycle of refectory reading from Peterborough assigned Gregory’s *Moralia in Iob* to follow the reading of the book of Job; Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah in Advent, and Haymo of Auxerre’s commentary on the Pauline Epistles after Epiphany (the period when the Epistles were read in the Office at Peterborough), while, in the weeks after Easter, the biblical books of Acts, the Seven Catholic Epistles and Revelation were followed (if required) by Bede’s Commentary on Acts and the Catholic Epistles, Berengaudus on the Apocalypse, and Augustine’s *In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus X.*

The various cycles of refectory reading from England and the Continent display a mixture of common practice and local differences in the particular commentaries specified: thus, while at Peterborough the reading of the book of Isaiah in December was complemented by Jerome’s commentary, the *Liber ordinis* of the Augustinian canons of St-Victor in Paris prescribed Origen, and the monks of Bury, to judge from the inscription in the surviving copy, the commentary of Haymo of Auxerre. Extant manuscripts that had been used for this purpose can be hard to identify, because, as with the reading of the Bible, such continuous reading of the texts did not usually prompt marginal annotation. Inscriptions labelling books for refectory use are also rare. The copy of Haymo on Isaiah is one of only two volumes from Bury St Edmunds to contain the inscription ‘de refectorio monachorum S. Edmundi’ (both written by the fourteenth-\[96\]th century).  

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98 *Peterborough Abbey*, ed. Friis-Jensen, pp. 47-9, BP20.35, 47, 58, 4, 6, 8 (where, in the note, the text is incorrectly identified as Augustine’s *Tractatus in euangelium Iohannes*) and 9 (surviving as Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 160).

century librarian, Henry of Kirkstead); the other is a copy of Gregory’s commentary on Ezekiel (Cambridge, St John’s College, MS B. 13).\textsuperscript{100} Likewise, just one of seven extant manuscripts from Durham that Alan Piper has observed bear some indication of use in the refectory now contains an inscription identifying the book as one that had been used there (Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, MS B.II.34, fol. 1).\textsuperscript{101} Of the two books that survive from Peterborough which contain texts listed in that abbey’s cycle of refectory reading (twelfth-century copies of the commentaries of Bede on the Catholic Epistles, now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 160, and Berengaudus on the Apocalypse, now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 134), neither currently bears an inscription, but M.R. James recorded the presence of an erased inscription at the left-hand of the upper margin of the first page of Corpus 160 (see fig. 1), which, when ‘revived’, could be made out to read ‘Liber refectorii Burg.’.\textsuperscript{102} The mere trace of this inscription is no longer visible, even under ultraviolet light, but in natural light it is possible to discern as a lighter colour the a stain of what may have been the reagent used by James. Evidence of this volume’s use in the refectory survives, however, in the form of marginal liturgical annotations analogous to those found in copies of Augustine’s \textit{Tractatus in euangelium Iohannis}. These indicate the days on which a passage might be read in the refectory to act as a commentary upon the corresponding epistle that had been read at the Mass that day, as, for example, on the fifth Sunday after Pentecost, indicated by the marginal reference on fol. 38r, ‘Dominica v. \textsuperscript{a} post pentecosten’ together with the incipit of the introit, ‘Exaudi domini’ (see fig. 6). The sequential reading of the text prescribed at

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Montague Rhodes James, \textit{A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge}, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1912), 1. 358 ‘at top of fol. 1 erased and revived’.
Peterborough in the period before the post-Easter rogation days, however, has left no obvious trace.

6. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 160, fol. 38r.

Hagiographical readings

The third component of the night office readings in all but the more austere monastic orders, such as the Cistercians, was hagiography. In some monastic houses, all twelve

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104 Aimé Georges Martimort, Les lectures liturgiques et leurs livres (Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental lxiv, 1992), 97-100; Eric Palazzo, A history of liturgical books from the beginning to the thirteenth century, tr. M. Beaumont, Collegeville, MN 1998, 156-7. The official Cistercian kalendar as it evolved over the twelfth century included only a very restricted number of feasts (many saints were included only with commemorations), and a correspondingly limited inclusion of hagiography within the standard lectionary as presented in the late twelfth-century Ecclesiastica officia: see Bernard Backaert, ‘L’évolution du calendrier cistercien’, Collectanea ordinis cisterciensium reformatorum xii (1950), 81-94, 302-316; xiii (1951), 108-127; Réginald Grégoire, ‘L’homéliaire cistercien du manuscrit 114(82) de Dijon’, Citeaux: Commentarii Cistercienses, 28 (1977), 133-207. But for evidence of allowances made by the General Chaper of the Cistercian order for limited local accretion to the festal observance, see Chadd, ‘Liturgy and Liturgical Music’, 307-314.
lessons (or nine, in the case of the regular canons) on a major feast could come from a saint’s life, in others, as Ælfric prescribed, just those of the first two nocturns, with the lessons of the final nocturn being taken from the gospel homily. ¹⁰⁵ The three readings of a lower-graded feast might also be taken from appropriate hagiography. Sequences of roman numerals from i-xii, i-viii (or i-vi and i-ix in books from houses of regular canons) or i-iii are not uncommon in the margins of eleventh- and twelfth-century copies of saints’ lives. The extent to which such hagiography was read in the refectory, and how this may have differed from house to house, is hard to determine from the available records of refectory reading, which variously either include no special provision for saints’ feasts (as is the case with the Norwich list), specify hagiographical readings for the entire festal kalendar, or provide only general or seemingly partial information. The Liber ordinis of the Augustinians of St-Victor in Paris, for example, simply includes the general provision that ‘on saints feasts their lives and passions may be read’, ¹⁰⁶ whereas the lists of refectory reading from the northern French monasteries of Fécamp, Marchiennes, St-Wandrille, and St-Vaast, Arras, provide details for all of days throughout the year on which a saint’s feast could be observed in such a way (including also saints’ that were not observed liturgically). ¹⁰⁷ The Peterborough list, however, only makes provision for the reading of saints’ lives in the periods from Septuagesima to

¹⁰⁵ ‘Omnibus uero festiuitatibus sanctorum in toto anno legimus uitas aut passiones ipsorum sanctorum siue sermones congruentes ipsi sollemnitati et responsoria propria, si habeantur. Sin alias, alia congruentia canimus et tertiam sedem de tractu euuangelii sicut et ubique sumimus.’ Ælfric’s Letter, ed. Jones, pp. 146-7; 222 n.344.
¹⁰⁶ ‘In festiuitatibus sanctorum legantur uitae uel passiones eorum.’ Liber ordinis, ed. Milis, 214.
¹⁰⁷ The Fécamp Ordinal, ed. Chadd, 2. 677-9; Grémont, ‘Lectiones ad prandium’, 7-15, 17-27 (for identifications of surviving manuscripts) and 30-8 for a concordance between the liturgical kalendar of Fécamp and the saints recorded in the refectory list; Nebbiai-dalla Guarda, ‘Les listes médiévales’, 290-9 (Sainte-Rictrude, Marchiennes); Laporte, ‘L’ordo lectionum Saint-Wandrille’; The Monastic Ordinale of St. Vedast’s Abbey Arras: Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 230 (907) of the beginning of the fourteenth century, ed. Louis Brou, 2 vols, HBS, 86-7 (London, 1955-7), 2. 363-5 (this list is comprised exclusively of readings for saints’ feasts, and is headed ‘Legende sanctorum per anni circuitum legende ad mensam’).
Passion Sunday; from Ascension to Pentecost, and from Advent to Epiphany. Whether this reflects an intention to ensure that the biblical reading was completed during the period from Pentecost to the beginning of Advent, or whether the person compiling the list did not set out to include a comprehensive record for the observance of saints’ feasts, cannot yet be known.

By the later eleventh and twelfth centuries, legendaries (compilations of saints’ lives, in two or more volumes, arranged in the order of the liturgical year, sometimes also referred to as passionals) were becoming widespread. The occasional presence of marginal numerals corresponding to the numbered lections of the Night Office may indicate that legendaries were sometimes used in the Office. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the lives of numerous saints who did not form part of the local observance of the individual houses that owned the volumes has led Guy Phillipart and others to argue that Office use was not the primary function of these great tomes, but that the principal place in which they were read aloud was the refectory, where it was permissible to observe not only the feast of a saint from the local calendar but that of another saint familiar to the community from the passage read from the martyrology during the Chapter office.

Evidence for such practice is visible in surviving English legendaries, including the earliest surviving legendary from England: a pair of volumes from Worcester Cathedral

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108 Peterborough Abbey, ed. Friis-Jensen, 48 (BP20.61, 19, 51).
Priory, dating from the mid-eleventh century, now divided between the British Library (MS Cotton Nero E. I, vol. 1, vol. 2, fols 1-180, 187-88) and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (MS 9).\textsuperscript{111} The volumes contain evidence of their use for public reading from very shortly after they were produced.\textsuperscript{112} For example, on p. 356, in the account of the life of St Trudo by Donatus the Deacon, the Old English words ‘oferhef’ (fig. 7, col. a, line 19) and ‘foh’ (col. b, line 3) were supplied as tiny interlinear annotations, directing the reader to stop and then to resume, omitting the passage in between. The same or

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 9, p. 356 (detail).}
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7. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 9, p. 356 (detail).
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\textsuperscript{112} Ker, Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon, p. 41, no. 29; Love. \textit{Three Eleventh-Century Lives}, p. xxxi.
\end{flushleft}
similar annotations are found elsewhere in the volume in the lives of saints included in Worcester’s liturgical calendar, but here they were supplied in the account of a saint whose feast was not observed at Worcester. One may, therefore, infer that this life was read in the refectory on St Trudo’s feast day, 23rd November, whereas the feast of St Clement, recorded for that day in the liturgical calendar at the start of the volume, was observed liturgically in the cathedral. Medieval booklists provide further evidence of the use of legendaries in the refectory: a five-volume legendary and two further volumes are recorded under the heading ‘Passionalia mensalia’ in the thirteenth-century catalogue of Glastonbury Abbey;\footnote{English Benedictine Libraries, ed. Sharpe, 194-5 (B39.222-8).} another in five volumes is included in the late-fourteenth-century Durham list of refectory books,\footnote{Catalogi veteres Dunelm, ed. Raine, 80.} and a three-volume copy in that from Reading Abbey.\footnote{English Benedictine Libraries, ed. Sharpe, 452 (B74.4-6).}

For the commemoration of local saints not included in the legendary, a community would have recourse to smaller volumes of saints’ lives.\footnote{Four such volumes are included in the Durham refectory list: ibid, 80-81.} For example, in an early twelfth-century copy of the lives of Canterbury saints composed for the abbey of St Augustine’s by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin (London, BL, MS Cotton Vespasian B. XX), the text of his \emph{Historia maior S. Augustini} is accompanied on fol. 30r by a note in a late-thirteenth- or early-fourteenth-century hand instructing that the text be read in the refectory on the feast of St Augustine.\footnote{‘Hic incipiendum est in die sancti augustini ad prandium’: St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, ed. Barker-Benfield, 3. 1749. An All saints’ day reading on St Augustine of Canterbury in one volume of the abbey’s passion (London, British Library, MS Arundel 91, fol. 183v) was also assigned for mealtime reading: ‘Iste leccio legitur ad mensam’: ibid., 3. 1744-5.} Copies of Bede’s \emph{Historia ecclesiastica} were
also sometimes used for this purpose. A twelfth-century copy from the Augustinian abbey of Waltham was annotated to mark up for refectory reading on the feast of St Augustine of Canterbury the narrative of the Augustinian mission (Book i. 23-2.3, omitting the digression at 2.1); a similarly-worded note (but without specific reference to the refectory) was also supplied to accompany this same passage in a twelfth-century copy from the Augustinian priory of Plympton.

Responsibility for the day-to-day choice of refectory reading, within the broad parameters I have outlined, lay with the cantor-*armarius*, the person also responsible for oversight of the liturgical readings as well as for the chants. He saw to the provision of the books involved and to their correction. The number and range of volumes involved was considerable: not just the bible, homiliary and legendary, but several other volumes of saints’ lives and a significant number of patristic commentaries and other works that we more usually perceive as ‘library books’. A cumulative list compiled just from the incomplete evidence provided by English custumals and booklists includes Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Tractatus in Euangelium Iohannis*, *In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus X* and *De Trinitate*; Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah; Ambrose’s *De

119 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 211, fol. 13v: ‘Hic incipit ad legendum in refectorio de s. augstino anglorum apostolo’; fol. 23r: ‘va-’ (the corresponding ‘-cat’ is no longer visible at the end of the chapter); fol. 27v: ‘usque huc legitur in refectorio de sancto augustino anglorum apostolo’.
120 London, British Library, MS Add. 14250, fol. 18r: ‘Ab hoc loco debet legi in festiuitate sancti augustini anglorum apostoli usque ad capitulum quartum proximi libri quod sic incipit successit augustinus et cetera.’ It is possible that a number of narrative passages variously marked up for oral delivery in other copies of the *Historia ecclesiastica* were likewise intended as refectory readings on the feast-days of the saints concerned: see Webber, ‘Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica’.

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fide and his commentary on Psalm 118; Gregory’s commentaries on Ezekiel and on Job; Bede’s on Acts and on the Catholic Epistles; the histories of Josephus, Eusebius and Cassiodorus; Didimus on the Holy Spirit and Hilary on the Trinity, as well as a number of Carolingian commentaries. If we add to this list the patristic and later texts read in the Chapter office and at Collation, it comes to represent a significant proportion of the texts produced or acquired during that remarkable period of book production within religious communities in England and on the Continent between the late eleventh and late twelfth centuries. This was the period when it was becoming common for the cantor also to be the monastic armarius or librarian. His oversight of the public reading outside the choir as well as of the chant and readings within it may perhaps best explain why his custodianship of the monastic books extended beyond those volumes we would describe as liturgical to encompass the entire library.

The size and quality of many of these volumes not only had a practical purpose—to enhance their legibility when read aloud—but also reflected the importance of such public reading within monastic communities, providing a visible material counterpart to the emphasis placed by the Rule and monastic custumals upon the suitability of the weekly reader and upon correct pronunciation in the Rule. Some custumals

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121 Peterborough Abbey, ed. Friis-Jensen, 46-9 (BP20); Customary of Norwich, ed. Tolhurst, pp. 198-9; Observances in Use at Barnwell, ed. Clark, pp. 66-7; Catalogi vesteres Dunelm, ed. Raine, pp. 80-1 and Mynors, Durham Cathedral Manuscripts, p. 11; English Benedictine Libraries, ed. Sharpe, 451-3 (B74) and Coates, English Medieval Books, pp. 84-6. A comprehensive picture of the volumes used at a single monastic house is provided by the list of refectory reading in the early-thirteenth-century Fécamp ordinal, which records not only the texts to be read but the volumes in which they were to be found (a number of which have survived): see Grémont, ‘Lectiones ad prandium’.


123 RSB ch. 38: ‘nec fortuito casu qui arripuerit codicem legere ibi, sed lecturus tota hebdomada dominica inédiatur... Fratres autem non per ordinem legant aut cantent, sed qui aedificant audientes.’ (‘The reader should not be the one who just happens to pick up the book, but someone who will read for a whole week,
recommended that the abbot or prior who presided at mealtimes stop the reader if he made a mistake, and make him repeat the sentence correctly. For those monks sufficiently latinate and attentive to absorb the substance of the readings, the impact upon their knowledge and reception of these texts, heard year after year, must have been considerable.

A further, contemporary monastic perspective on the place and performance of the readings of the refectory within monastic practice in the central middle ages is offered by an anecdote from the anonymous life of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, written at the Norman abbey of Bec during the mid-twelfth century. The anecdote assumes the audience’s appreciation of the importance of such reading and the care with which it was to be delivered, and exploits this appreciation to exemplify the monastic virtues of humility and obedience. It concerns the period shortly after Lanfranc’s arrival at the Norman abbey of Bec when he was merely the grammar master. Despite the rapid fame that he acquired as a teacher, the Life emphasises the importance to Lanfranc of monastic humility. Expert latinist though he was, he still took pains to rehearse the readings with the cantor whenever it was his turn to be the weekly reader in the refectory. One day as he was reading, he pronounced a certain word, ‘docére’, correctly, with the stress upon

beginning on Sunday.... Brothers will read and sing, not according to rank, but according to their ability to benefit their hearers.’) RB 1980, ed. Fry, pp. 236-9.

124 See, for example, the customs of William of Hirsau, ch. xcv: pr. PL 150, col. 1027: ‘Inchoans lectionem, si submissa voce legerit, ab armario adveniente signum altius legendi accipit; si corrupse, prior ei, ut corrigat, vel signo aliquo, vel ipsum verbum emendando innotescit.’

125 Vita Lanfranci, ch. 2: pr. PL 150, col. 32: ‘Hic ergo Lanfrancus, qui pro Deo se abdicaverat sibi, omni vilitate et extremitate contentus, omni obedientia se submittere curabat majori. Denique, ut fertur, lectionem non volebat legere in ecclesia nisi prius eam cantor audisset. Quadam die dum ad mensam legeret, dixit quiddam inter legendum sicut dicere debuit, quod non placuit praesidenti, et aliter dicere jussit; velut si dixisset, docre, media producta, ut est; et iste eadem media emendasset doce, quod non est. Non enim prior ille litteratus erat. At vir sapiens sciens magis obedientiam Christo deberi quam Donato, dimisit quod bene pronuntiaverat, et dixit quod non recte dicere jubebat. Nam producere brevem, vel longam corripere syllabam, non capitale noverat crimen; verum jubenti ex parte Dei non parere, culpam non levet esse sciebat.’
the second syllable. The prior, however, who (according to the narrative) was not *litteratus*, stopped him (as custom permitted), and wrongly asserted that the correct pronunciation was ‘dócere’. Lanfranc, mindful of the Rule’s teaching, did not demur but repeated the word incorrectly with the stress on the first syllable, for he recognised that obedience to Christ, in the form of his superior, was more important than obedience to the grammatical rules of Donatus.