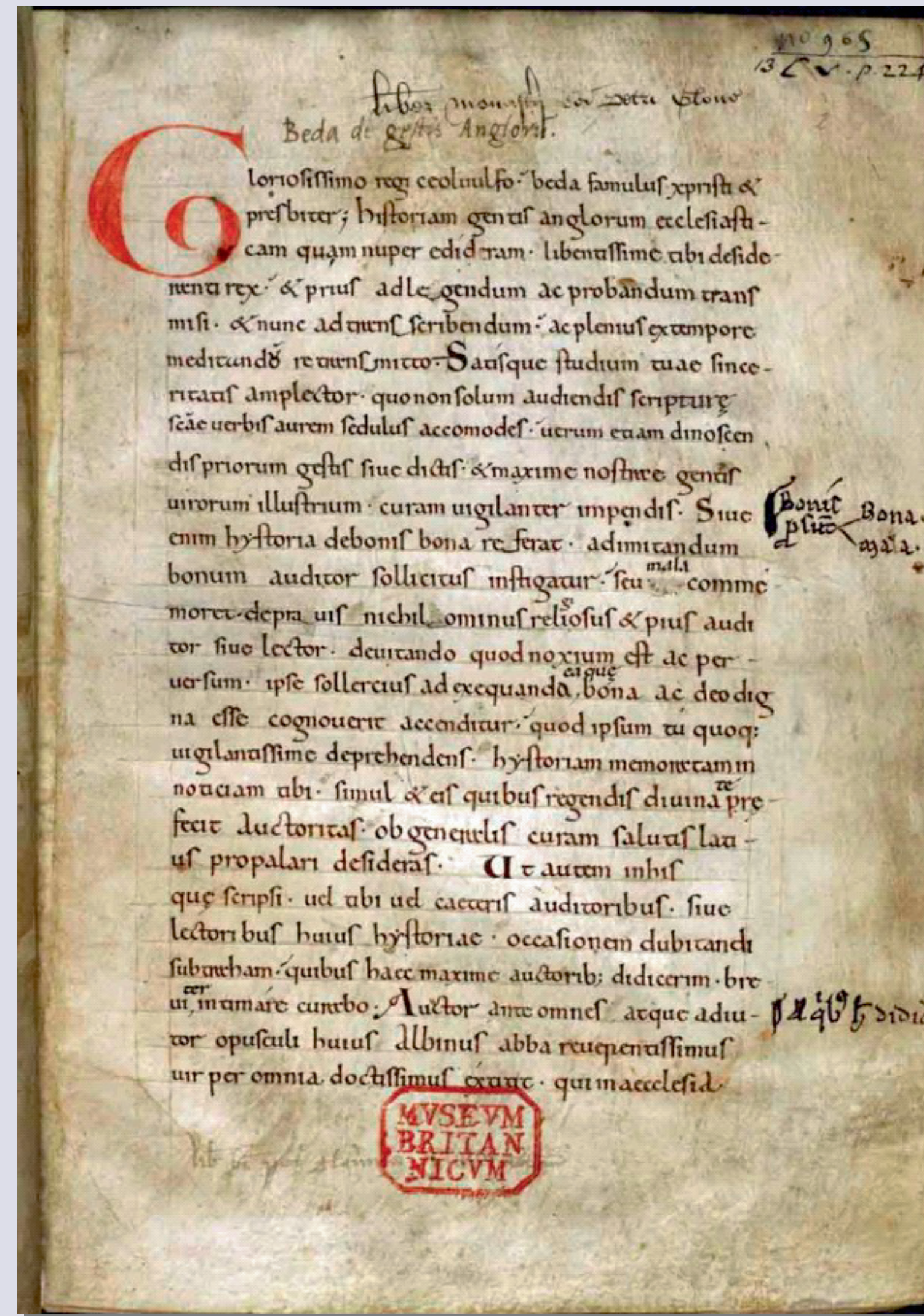


The Monastic Library (1)

Until 1540 the Cathedral was a major English abbey (St Peter's, Gloucester) occupied by monks following the order of St Benedict.

In 1066 a small Anglo-Saxon monastery stood here, but it was only after the Norman Conquest that Gloucester Abbey became one of the most important monasteries in England. Books were a vital part of monastic life and from the twelfth century onwards the monastery's library grew rapidly.

At this time there was not a separate library room. Manuscripts (hand written books) were stored in chests in the south walk of the cloister next to the church. The monks themselves made every new book by copying an existing manuscript. This work took place in the cloister.

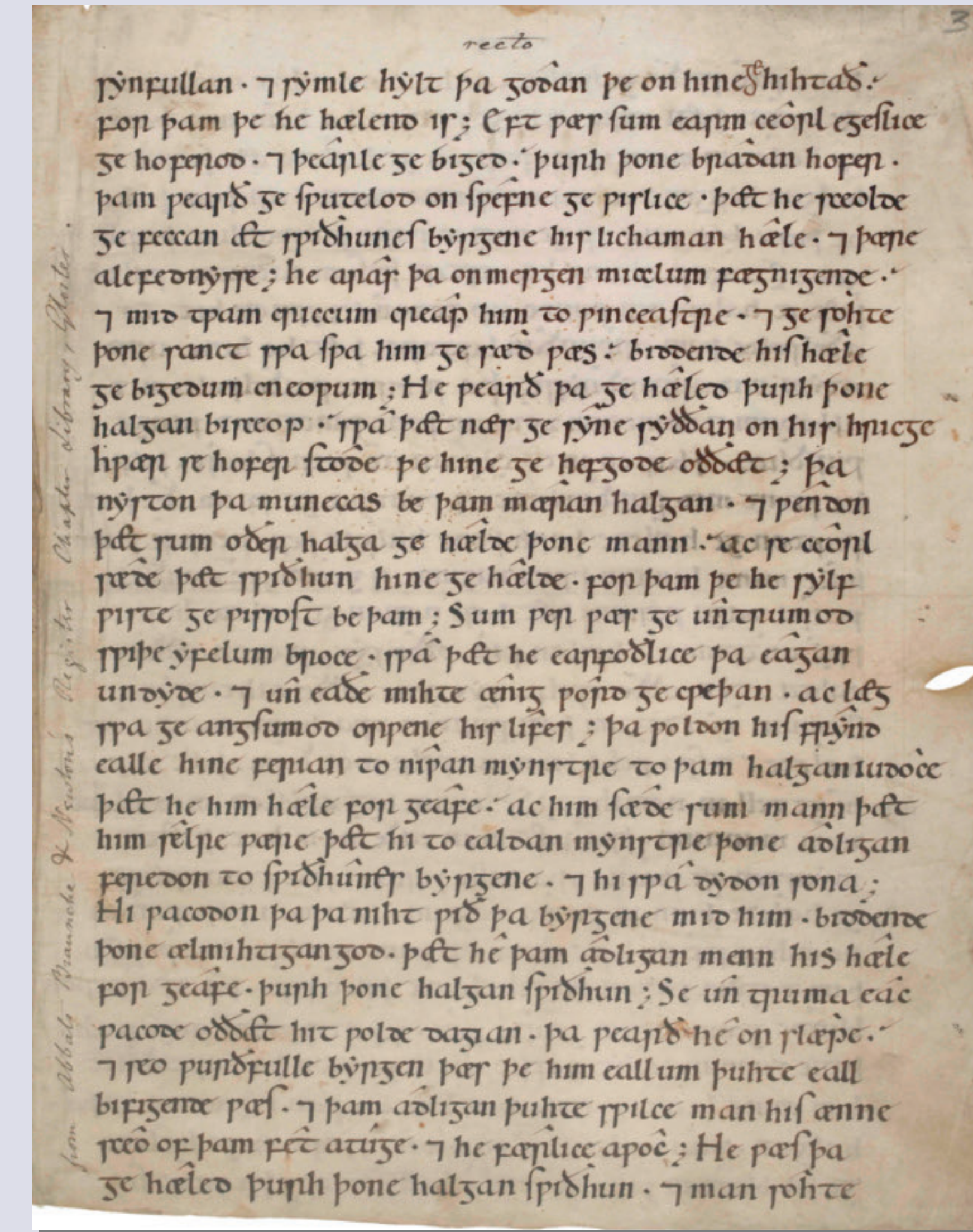


A page from Bede's Ecclesiastical History (British Library, Royal 13 C V)

None of these manuscripts remain in the library today. They were dispersed or destroyed when King Henry VIII closed all monasteries and other religious houses ("the Dissolution", 1536-41). However, around fifty manuscripts, now held in other libraries, are known to have once been at Gloucester.

The oldest of these is a copy of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, made in the second half of the 11th Century. It was written in Latin and is now in the British Library.

Before 1066, some monastic manuscripts were written in Anglo-Saxon. The Cathedral library holds a rare survival from this time in the form of seven manuscript fragments dated about 1040. The parchment pages were discovered in the 19th century, having been preserved in the bindings of a medieval Abbot's register.



Surviving Anglo-Saxon page: part of Life of St Swithun (Gloucester Cathedral)

2000

1850

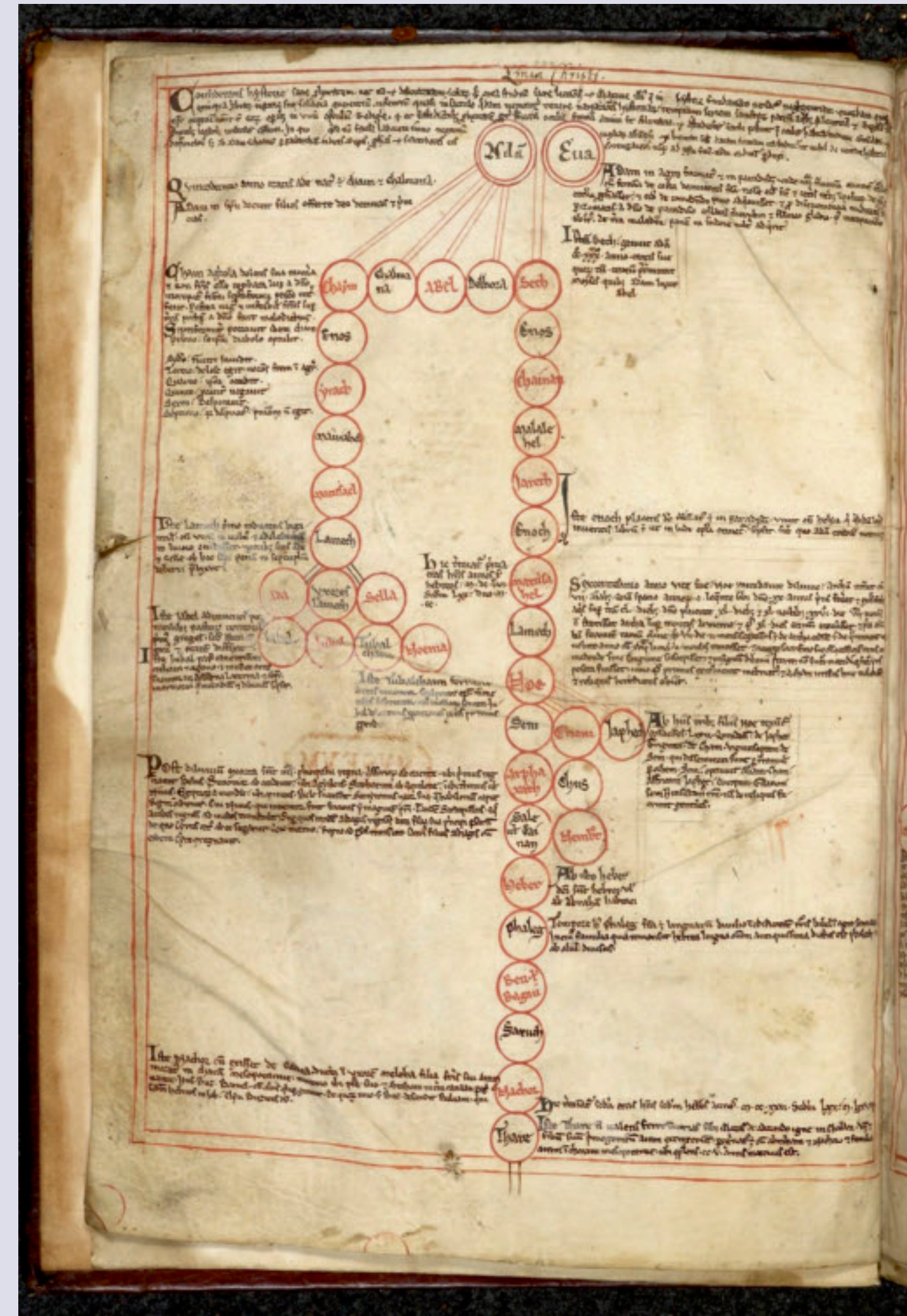
1550

1040

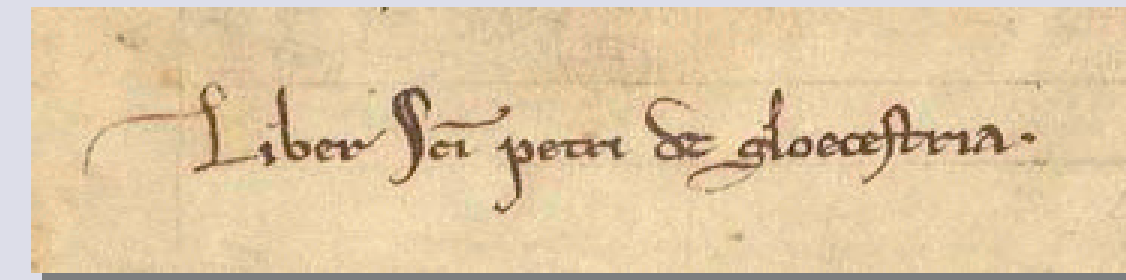
The Monastic Library (2)

Surviving manuscripts made at Gloucester have limited decoration. Lavish decoration and illumination was normally reserved for Bibles and service books used in the Church itself. Library books were practical books for study and their decoration was not just for aesthetic purposes. Coloured capital letters usually in red ("rubricated") mark the beginning of chapters, enabling a reader to find the place easily.

By 1300 most Benedictine monasteries had acquired a core collection of important theological works such as those by Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome. Their libraries were now expanding into other areas of study. Manuscripts by classical authors such as Aristotle, and on subjects such as history, law, medicine, and the natural world were added to the collection.



Genealogical diagram showing descent of Christ, contained in British Library manuscript Harley 627, given by Richard of Stowa to Gloucester Abbey in the 13th century



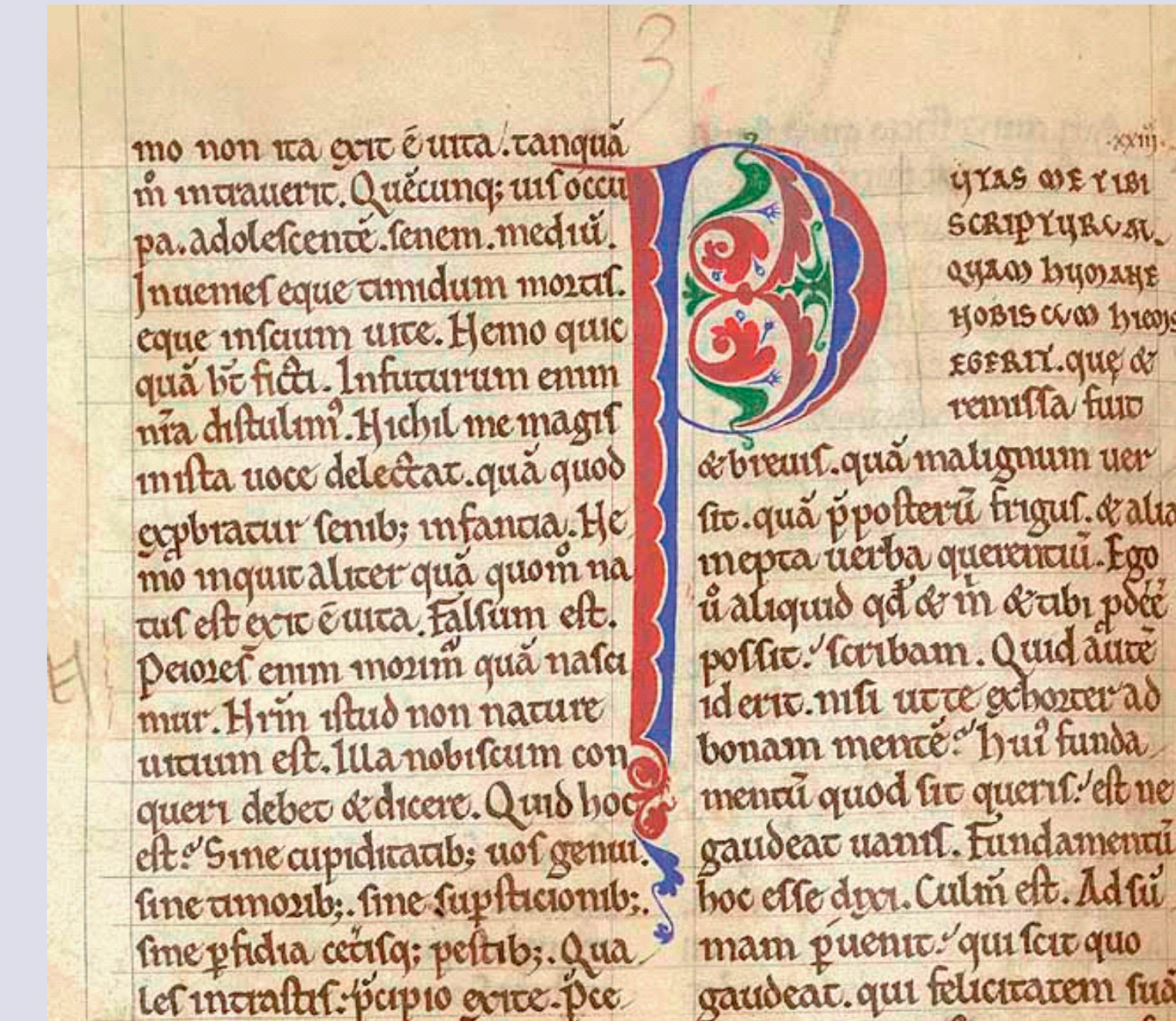
Book (Liber) belonging to St Peter's Gloucester

By c.1400 a substantial collection must have been built up and it was around this time that the present library room was built. No early descriptions exist, but the 19th century restoration did not alter the basic structure. So the room itself is probably still very similar, although with different bookcases (or "book presses") and furniture.



Illuminated capital from British Library Harley 2659, once at St Peter's Abbey

The south walk of the cloister was also remodelled around this time and includes 22 study booths (carrels). This shows that this area retained its original function for writing and reading even though the Abbey's main collection of manuscripts was presumably now housed in the Library.



Illuminated capital from British Library Harley 2659, once at St Peter's Abbey

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The Monastic Archives

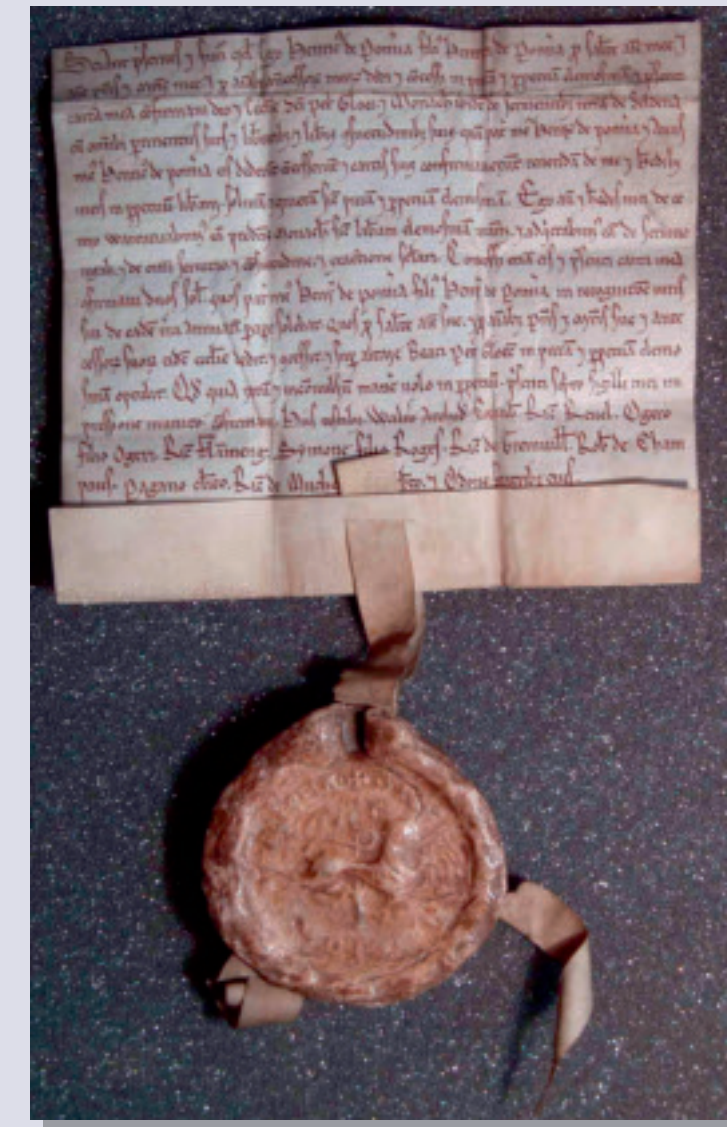


Illuminated capital showing King Henry II giving the Abbot of St Peter's, Gloucester, a charter (National Archives C 150/1)

The archives are records of any sort that were made and kept in the normal course of business. The Abbey was one of the most important institutions in the area, both as an employer and as a landowner. This gave rise to many legal, financial, and administrative transactions that required recording and storage.

Sadly, only a small number of records survived the Dissolution but study of those deeds that have survived reveals that the Abbey had both a distinctive style of writing and an efficient system of storage and filing.

Today, we have here about 400 deeds dating from the early 12th century to the closure of the Abbey in the mid-16th century. Some have the original seals still attached. There are also deeds from the Abbey at Hereford Cathedral and a few in The National Archives at Kew.



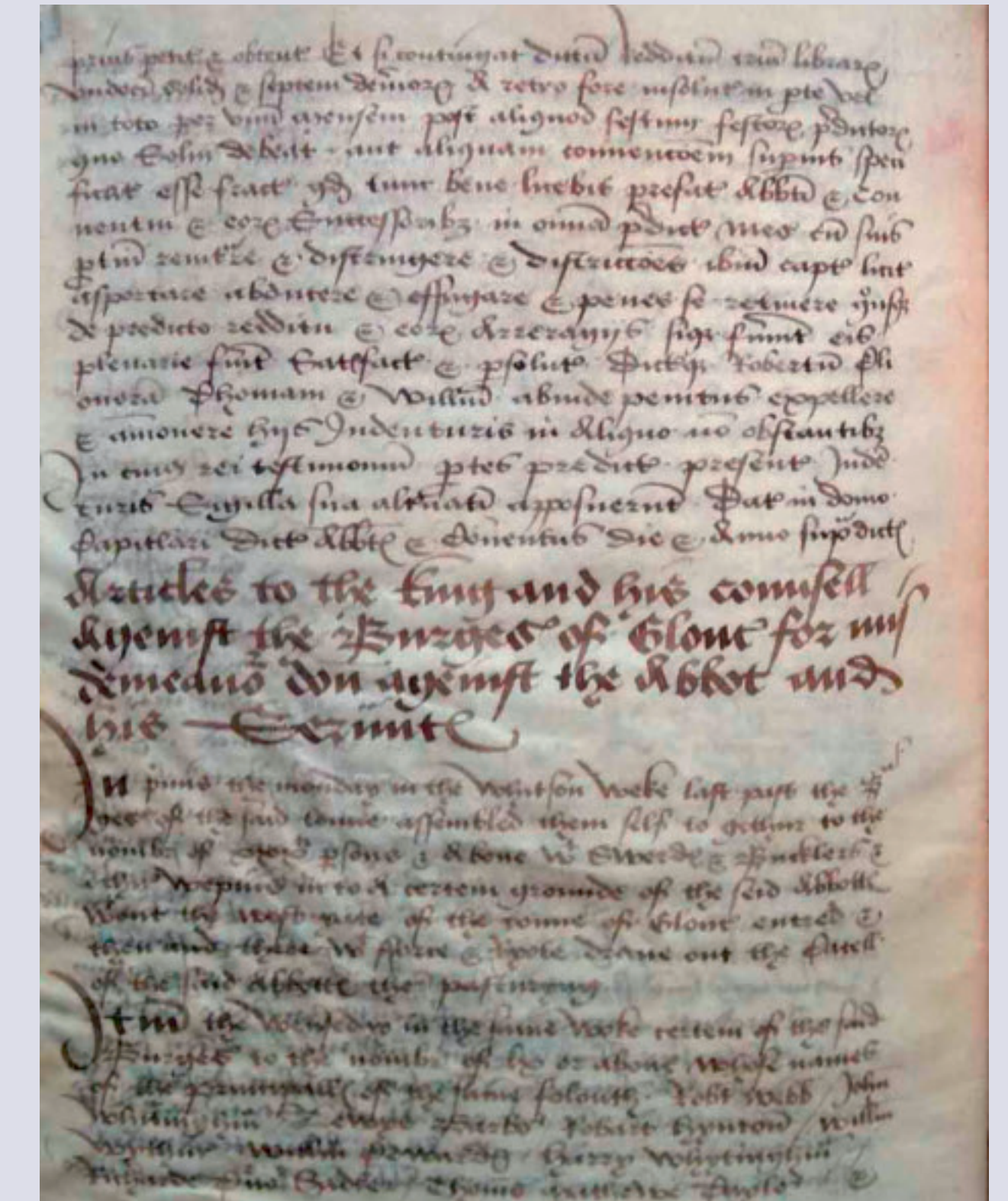
Deed c.1140. Henry de Pomeroy confirms a grant to the Abbey of land in Selden, Devon



The Arms of Abbot Parker from his Register

Deeds were also frequently copied into books called cartularies, thus creating a "back-up" to the originals. We possess two such cartularies for Gloucester Abbey, made in 1393 and 1397. There is an older one, dated about 1300, in the National Archives.

Abbots often kept a register for recording important administrative and legal matters. Three such registers survive in our archives covering the years 1500-38 when Abbots Braunche, Newton and Parker were in office.

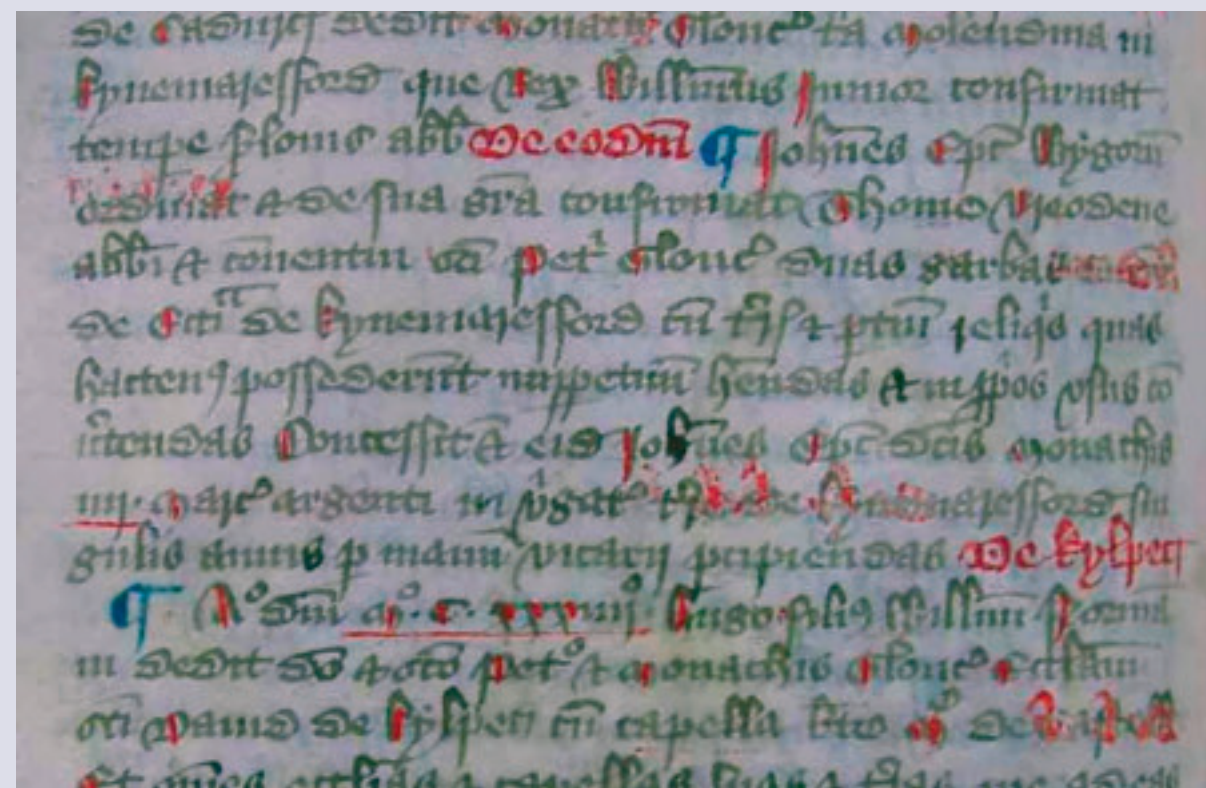


A page from Register C (1500-1514). The second part concerns a dispute between the Abbey and the City authorities

The Historia

Many medieval religious houses compiled a history or chronicle of their own house. These works were primarily a record of benefactors and their gifts but they also recorded the appointment of abbots, building works and important events in the life of the community as well as other local and sometimes national events.

St Peter's Gloucester was no exception and its chronicle is known as the Historia. There are three known manuscripts, one of which is in the Library here. It was written c. 1400 and must have been based on earlier records that have not survived. It is the primary source for the history of the Abbey from its foundation in c. 679 until the time it was written.

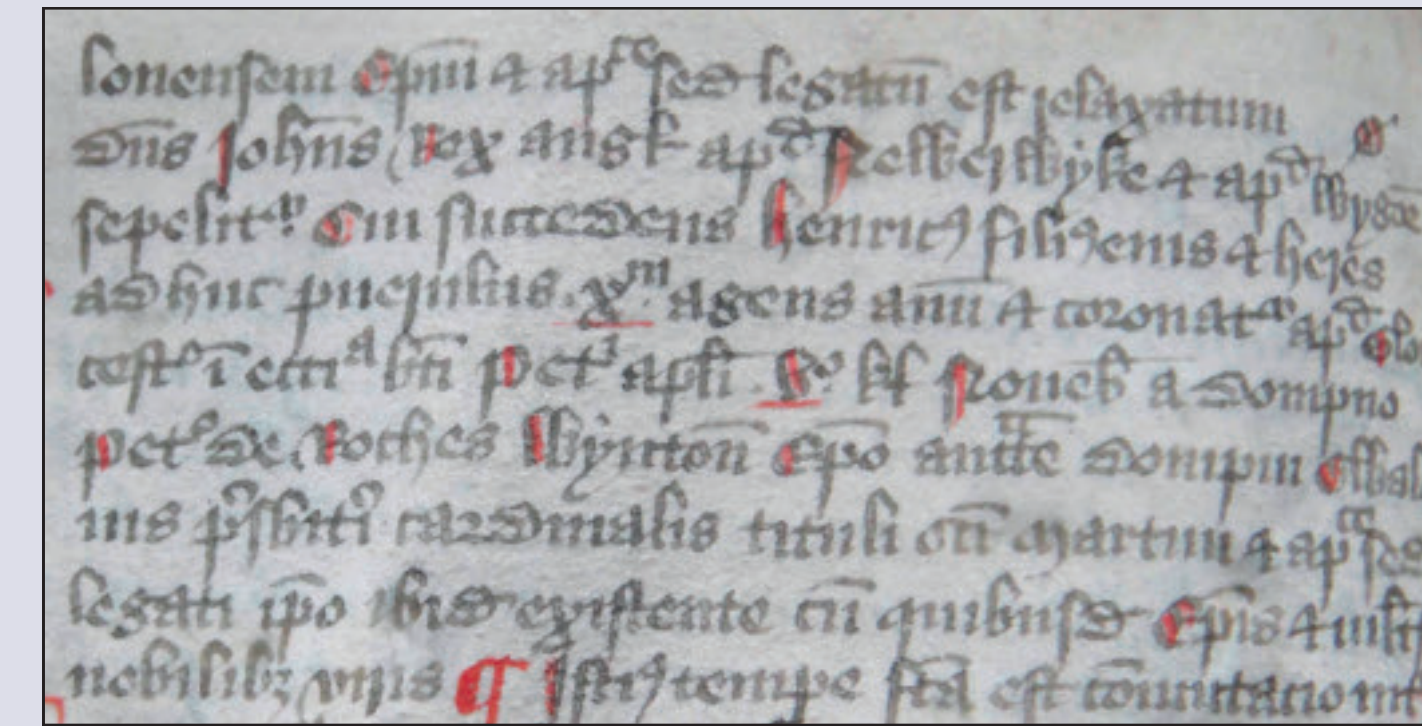


Gifts to the Abbey including that of Kilpeck Church (end of 5th line from bottom)

Major events include the burial in the Abbey in 1134 of Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy and eldest son of William the Conqueror. He had died in Cardiff Castle whilst imprisoned by his brother Henry I.

There is a short account of the burial in 1327 of Edward II who had been murdered at Berkeley Castle nearby and, also, a record of the coronation of Henry III in 1216. Henry, aged 9, was crowned in Gloucester because the rebellion of barons against his father, King John, made it impossible for the event to take place in London. At the insistence of the Pope he was later re-crowned at Westminster.

The photograph to the right shows the account in the Historia of Henry III's coronation. It is written in abbreviated Latin and the expanded text is also given along with a modern translation. The original text begins with the "O" at the end of the first line



Obiit dominus Johannes rex Anglie apud Newerwyke et apud Wygorniam sepelitur. Cui succedens Henricus filius eius et heres adhuc puerulus decimum agens annum et coronatur apud Gloucestriam in ecclesia sancti Petri apostoli quinto kalendas Novembris a dompno Petro de Roches Wyntoniensi episcopo auctoritate dompni Gwalonis presbiteri cardinalis tituli sancti Martini et apostolice sedis legati ipso ibidem existente cum quibusdam episcopis et multis nobilibus viris

His son Henry who had been [named] his heir since he was a boy of ten [sic] succeeded him and was crowned at Gloucester in the church of Saint Peter the Apostle on October 28 by Lord Peter de Roches Bishop of Winchester by authority of Cardinal Gwalo titular priest of Saint Martin and Legate of the Apostolic See, being present himself with certain bishops and many noblemen

The second part of the Historia is an alphabetically ordered schedule of gifts of property to the abbey. Each entry briefly records the donors and the details of the land, buildings or rights that the Abbey received. The page shown on the far left includes the entry for Kilpeck ["Kylpec"] church in Herefordshire which is now best known for its unusual carvings.



Kilpeck Church, showing carvings

2000

1850

1550

1040

The Dissolution

St Peter's Abbey was surrendered to King Henry VIII's Commissioners in January 1540. Everything then became the property of the Crown. The monastery's possessions were very considerable. A financial survey of 1535, known as the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, shows that Gloucester had the 13th highest income of all English monasteries.

The books and archives had little or no financial value at the time. There is no contemporary report of what happened at Gloucester but John Bale, writing on the general fate of monastic manuscripts, described pages being used in lavatories; for cleaning candlesticks and boots; sold to grocers and soap sellers, and sent in vast numbers to book-binders overseas.

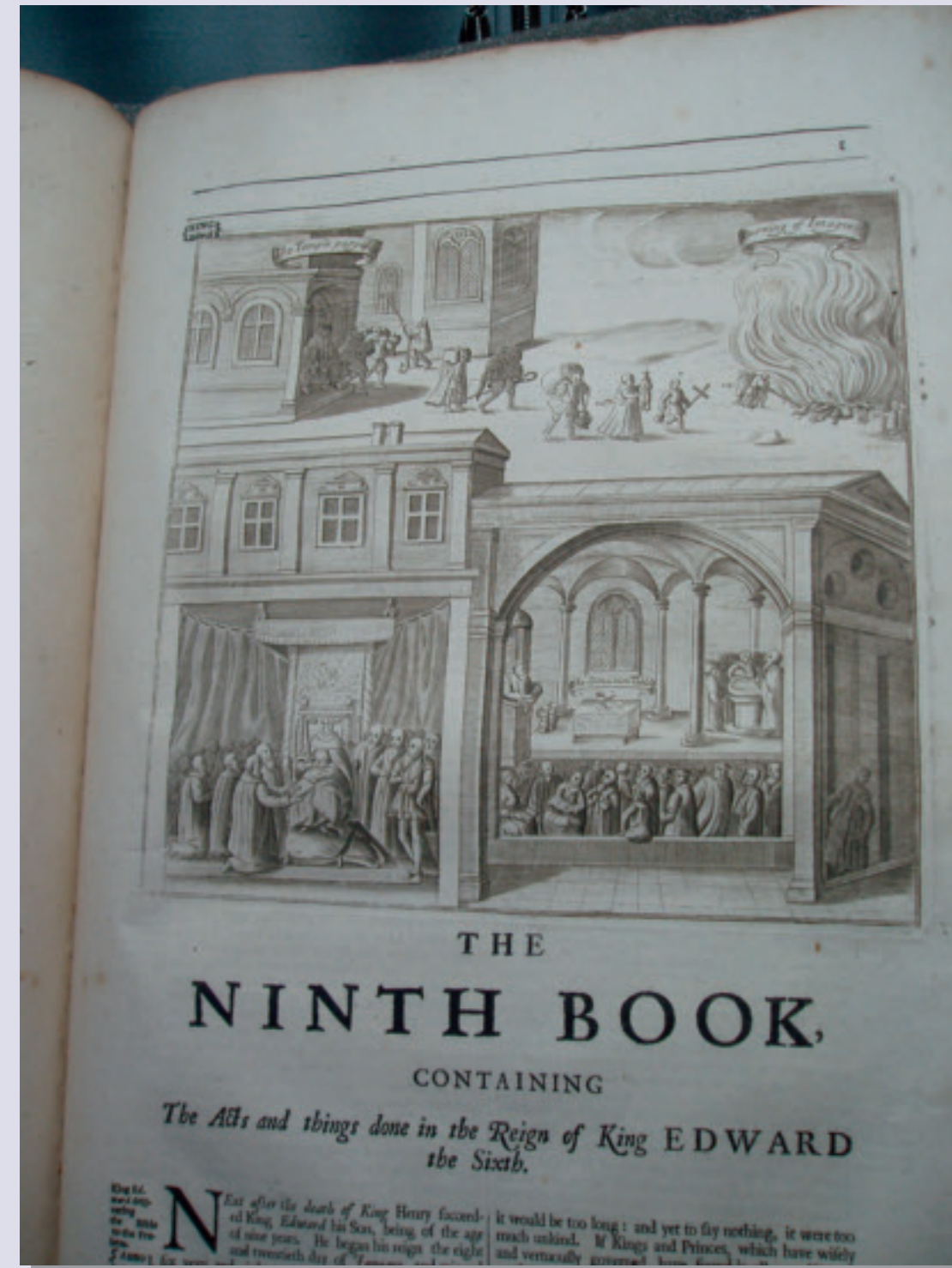


Illustration from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, showing removal of items from a church

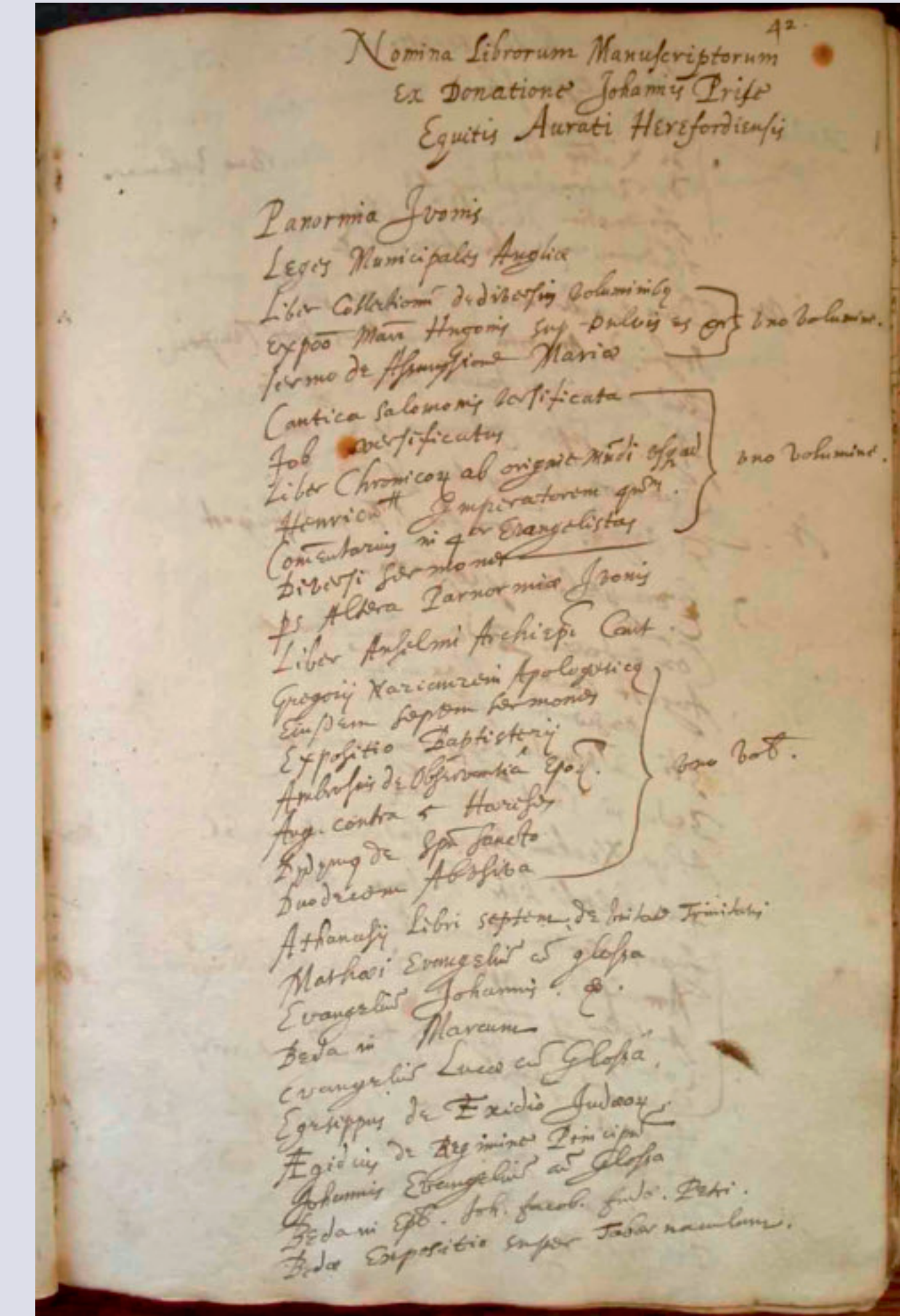


Thomas Cromwell

Nevertheless, some Gloucester manuscript books did survive such destruction and around fifty still exist. In most cases we do not know how this happened, but fifteen owe their survival to an unlikely saviour. These were taken by one of the Commissioners, Sir John Prise.

Prise worked for the principal architect of the fall of the monasteries, Thomas Cromwell, to whom he was related by marriage. He used his position to build up a personal library of manuscripts taken from monasteries. Some of these are now to be found at Hereford Cathedral and Jesus College, Oxford.

The few archives that survived (the deeds and registers) were preserved separately, probably as evidence of title for the Abbey lands that the King then re-distributed, mostly to the new Cathedral and Diocese.



Register of Jesus College, Oxford c. 1621: part of a list of Sir John Prise's manuscripts held there. (RE.1, shown by permission of the College)

2000

1850

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Archives After 1541

2000

The new diocese of Gloucester was created on 3rd September 1541 and the old Abbey church became the new Cathedral.

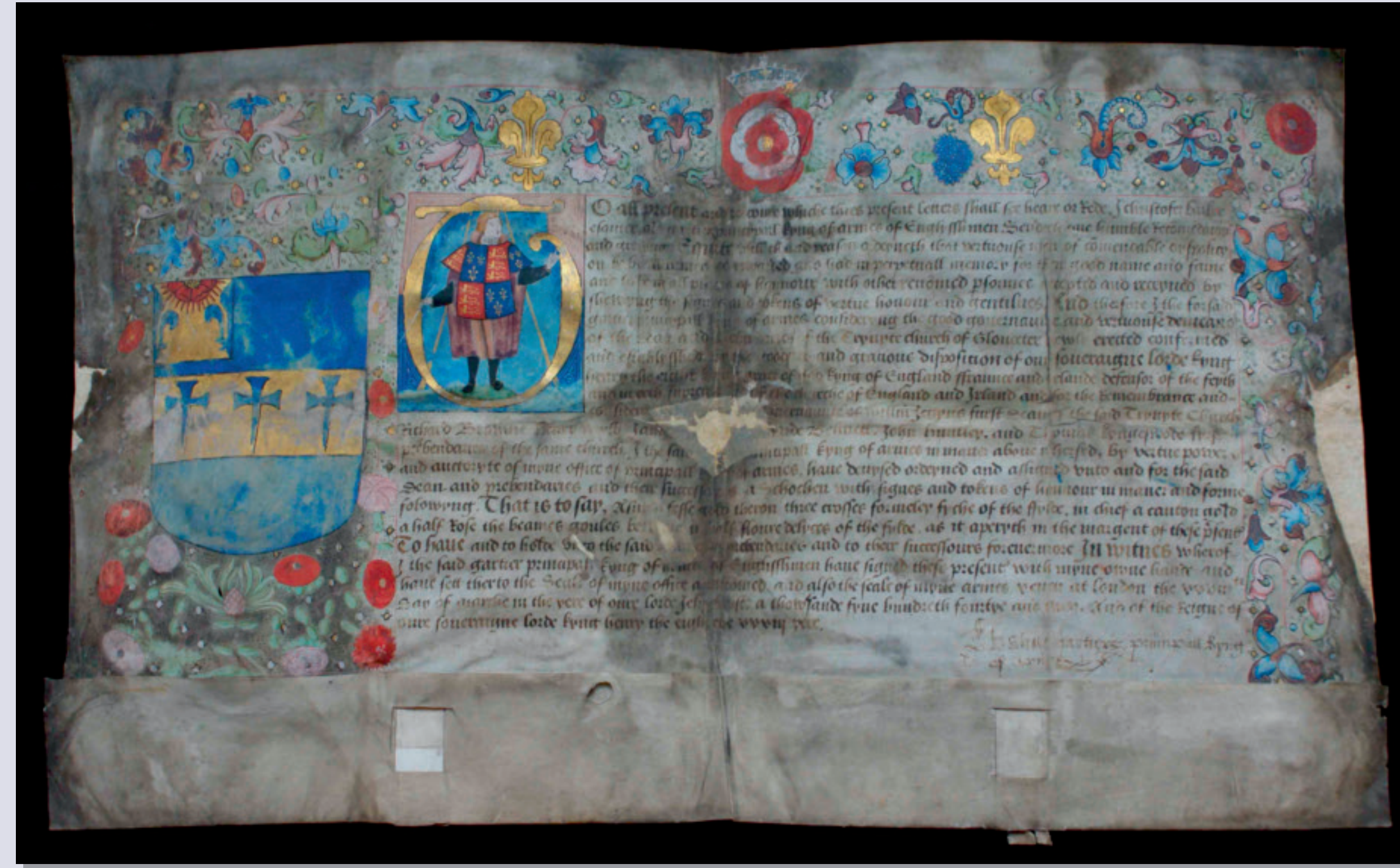
1850

We have only two original documents from this early period: the Grant of Endowment to the Dean and Chapter, dated 5th September, 1541, and the Grant of Arms to the Dean and Chapter, dated 28th March, 1542.

1550

More records survive from the next century and in increasing numbers thereafter, including a large quantity of estate records which are now on deposit at Gloucestershire Archives.

1040



Grant of Arms to the Dean and Chapter 1541. Sir Christopher Barker, Garter King of Arms is pictured in the illuminated capital

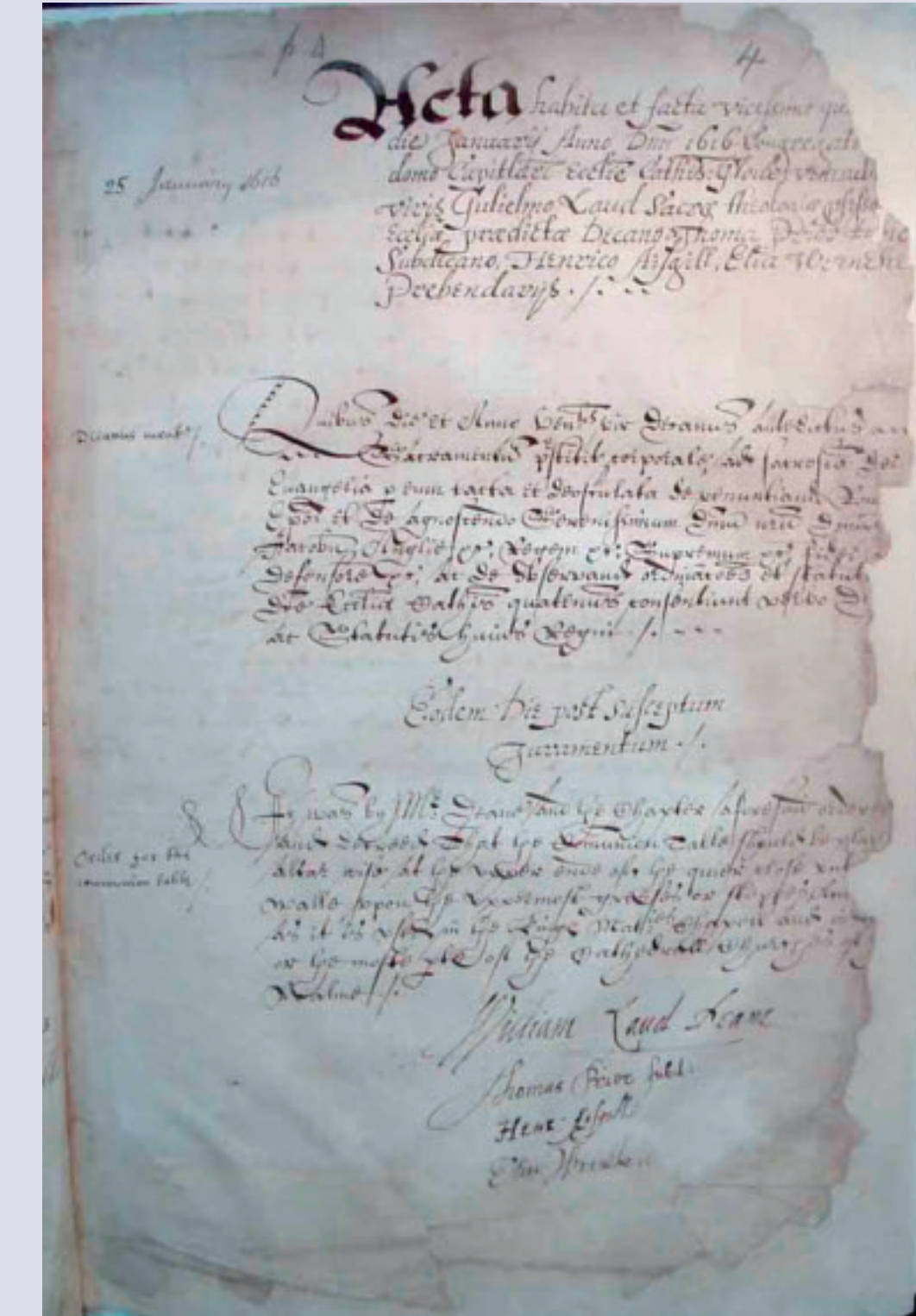
Amongst the Documents still in the library are the Chapter Act Books which begin in 1617 and are complete up to the present day. They record formal actions and decisions made by the Dean and Chapter when running the Cathedral.

The Dean in 1617 was William Laud, who went on to become Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I and was executed in 1645 by Parliament during the Civil War. The Chapter Acts record his instructions (provocative at the time) to move the communion table back to the east end of the Cathedral where it was to be realigned and railed off.

Portrait of William Laud which hangs in the Cathedral's Laud Room



Detailed annual Treasurer's Accounts survive for 1609 and from 1623 to 1915. The first Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials begins in 1662. It has relatively few entries as these events normally took place in a parish church.



Act Book, 1617. The bottom entry contains the instruction to move the communion table

The Cathedral Library's Early Benefactors

2000

There is no record of a library in the Cathedral until the end of the Civil War, when, in 1648, a local gentleman, Thomas Pury, organised the setting up of a library in the Chapter House for the benefit of the citizens of Gloucester. (The Dean and Chapter had been ejected from the Cathedral at the start of the war.)

1850

The books became the property of the city in 1657 when the Cathedral was transferred to the City Corporation by Parliament. At the Restoration of Charles II the Cathedral (now with a new library) was returned to the Dean and Chapter. The books remained in the Chapter House as the Library room was still being used as the schoolroom.

1550

1040



Title page of the Coverdale Bible, 1536

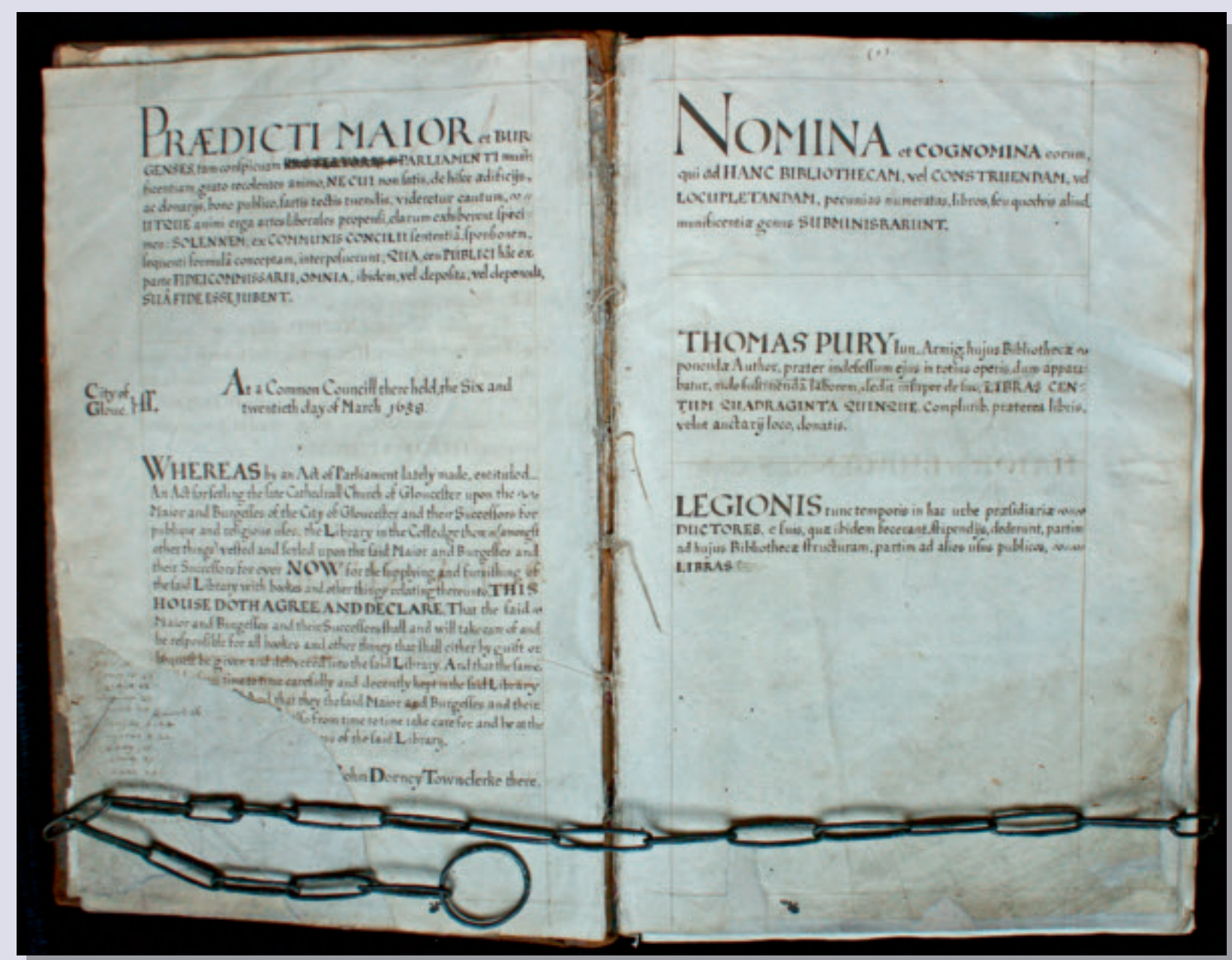
During the early years many people donated books. Their names and gifts were recorded in a Benefactors' Book which was secured by a chain.

Some of these books were medieval manuscripts, presumably once in monastic libraries (though none from Gloucester Abbey). There were also several very early printed books and the library now holds 45 works published before 1501 (known as "incunabula").

Decoration in a Latin Bible in the Library's collection. It was printed in Nuremberg in 1478

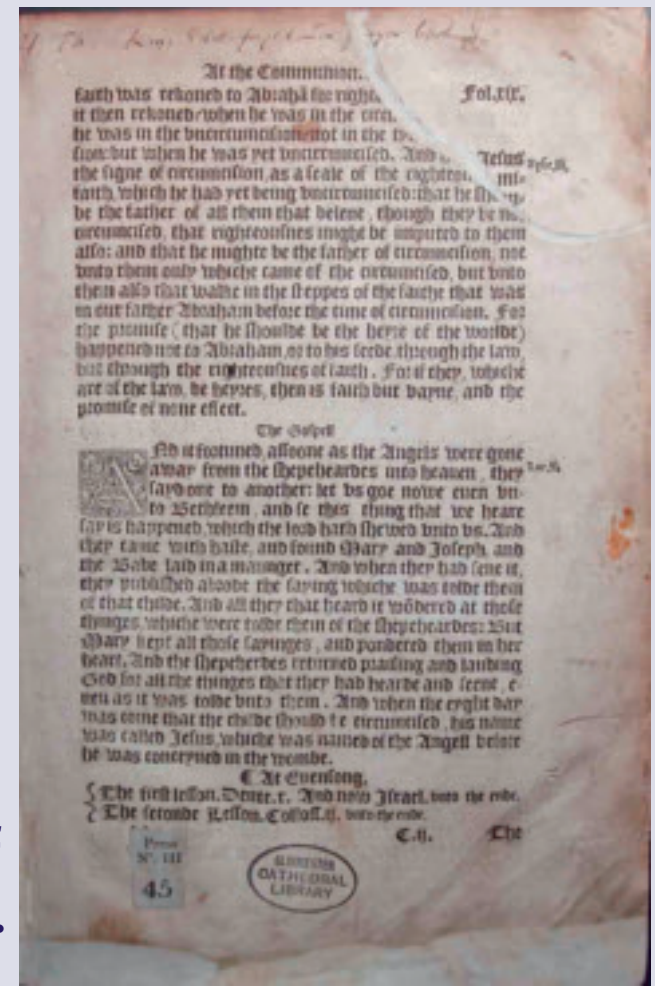


The Library Benefactors' Book. The left hand page records the Act of Parliament that established the Library



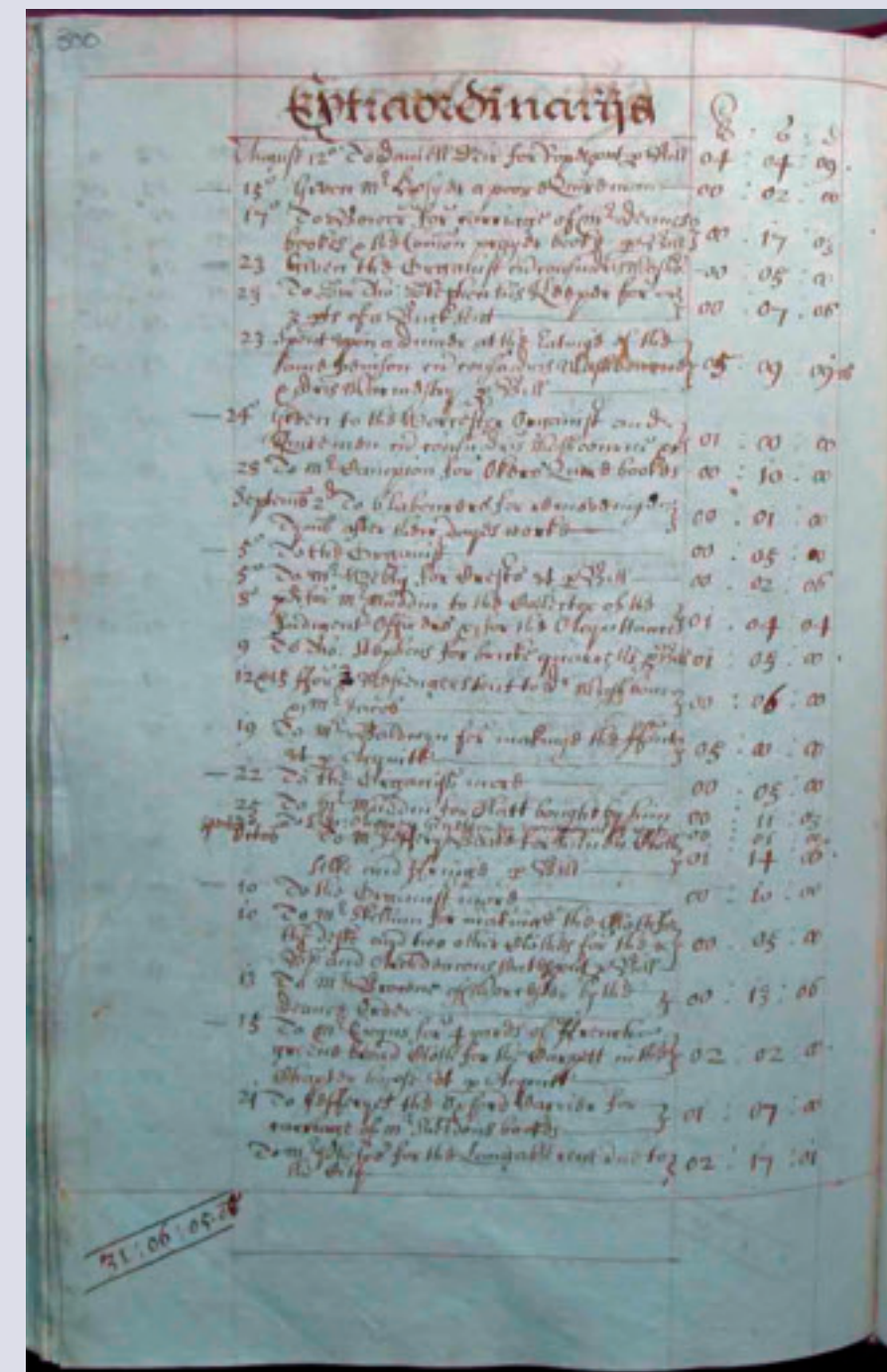
The Book of Common Prayer, probably the first edition (1549). Much damaged and incomplete.

A very special gift was the copy of the Coverdale Bible dated 1536. This was the first complete Bible published in English. Gloucester's copy was donated by the father of Thomas Pury. He had been given it by Oliver Cromwell. The book bears the royal arms of James I, suggesting that Cromwell himself acquired it from a royal library.



The Cathedral Library - Adding to the Collection

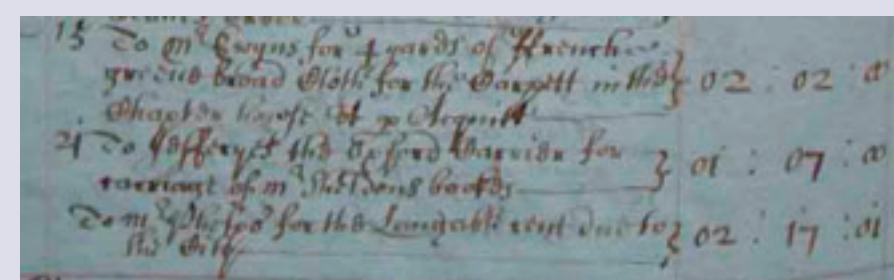
2000



1850

1550

1040



Treasurer's Accounts showing entry for transport of John Selden's books to Gloucester in 1663

A major addition was made to the library in 1663, when some 200 books were received from the Bodleian Library in Oxford. These were part of the collection of the lawyer and historian, John Selden, who had died in 1654. Selden had a personal library of over 8000 volumes, which he left to the Bodleian, where they gave their name to the "Selden End".

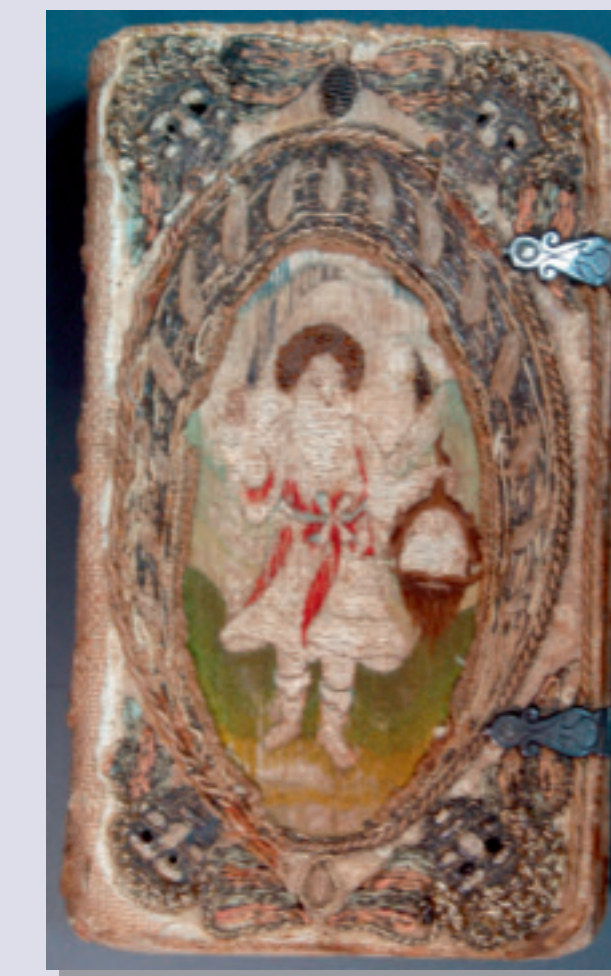
The Bodleian already held some of these books, and one of Selden's executors, Mathew Hale, a Gloucestershire man, arranged for duplicates to be donated to Gloucester Cathedral. Amongst these are a number of Hebrew works that reflect an important area of Selden's interests and scholarship.

John Selden



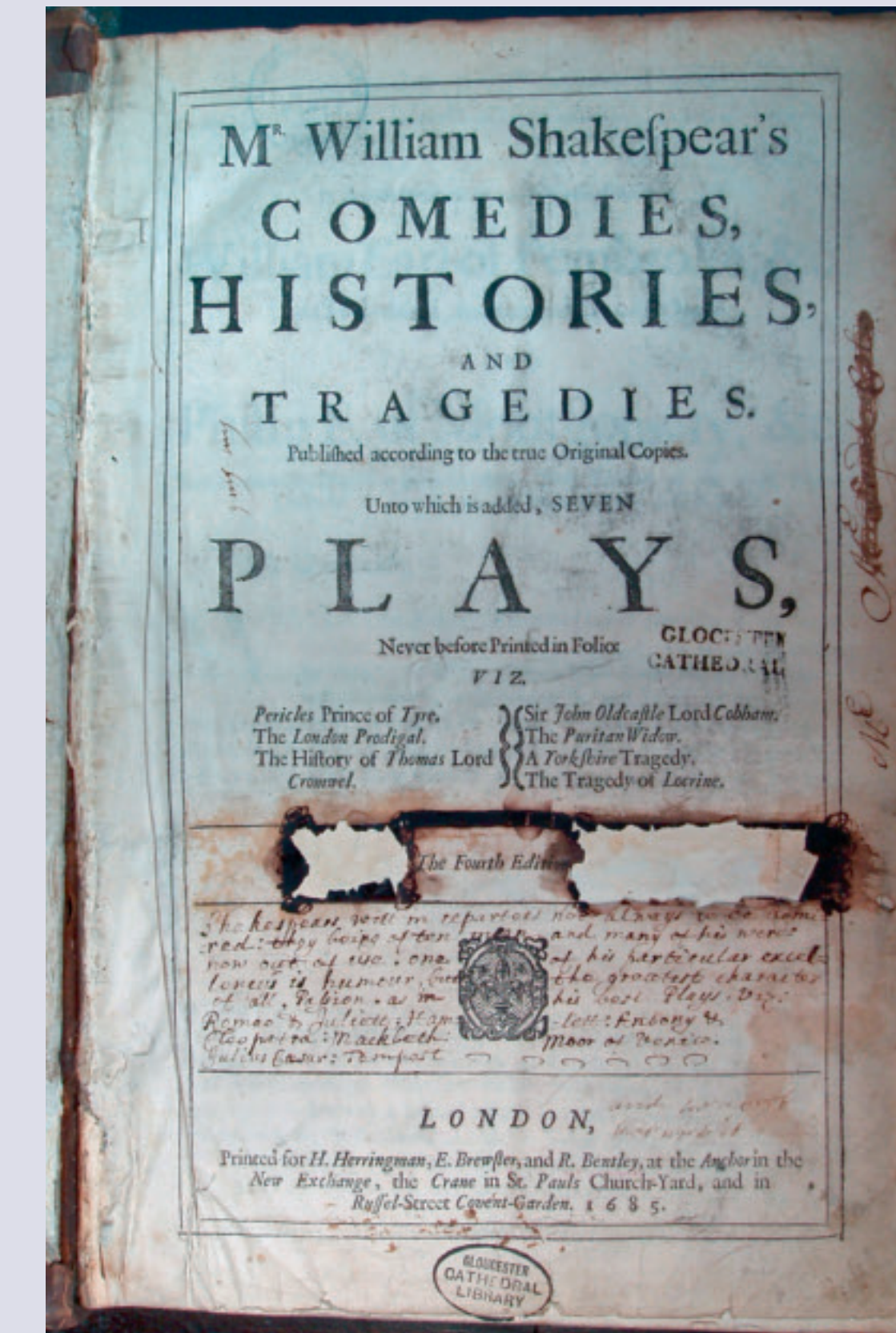
The Cathedral accounts record a payment of one pound and seven shillings for transporting Selden's books from Oxford to Gloucester. They are now separately catalogued.

In 1743 dampness in the Chapter House caused the whole library collection to be moved into the main body of the Church. They were kept in the south choir aisle until 1764, before being returned to the Chapter House, which had undergone repair work.



Bible with embroidered binding, 1638. It shows David holding Goliath's head

Fourth folio Shakespeare, given by Bishop Benson. Not all the additional plays are in fact by Shakespeare.



There were a number of significant donors during the 18th century, many of them clergymen with a connection to the Cathedral. One of these was Martin Benson, Bishop of Gloucester 1734-52, who donated a Fourth Folio (1685) edition of Shakespeare and a collection of prints and engravings of Ancient Rome.

The King's School and the Library

2000

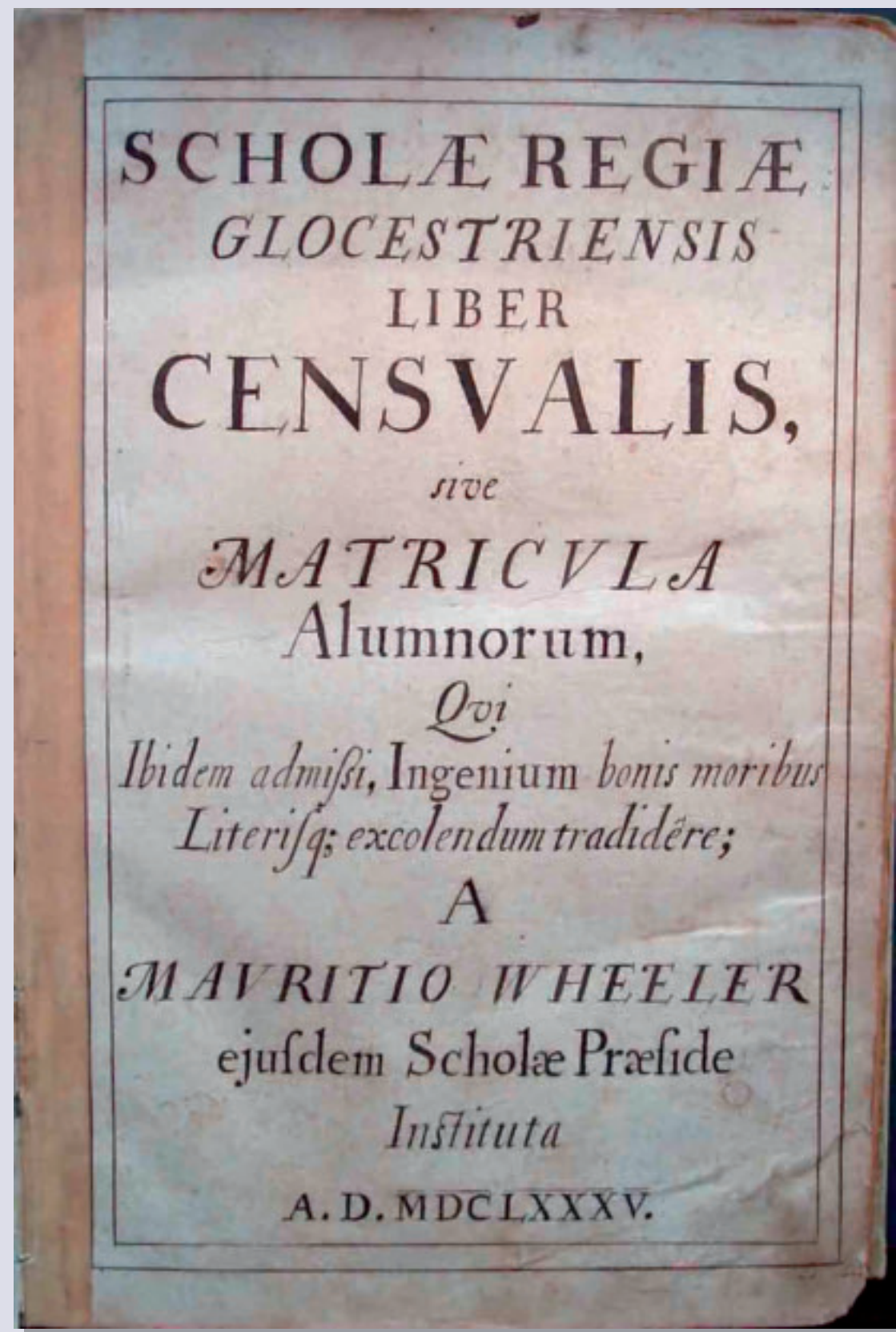
The Act establishing the Cathedral in 1541 also set up a new school, which was established in the old monastic library (the room you are now in). Little is known about the early years (although the Library staircases still bear a long succession of schoolboy graffiti).

1850

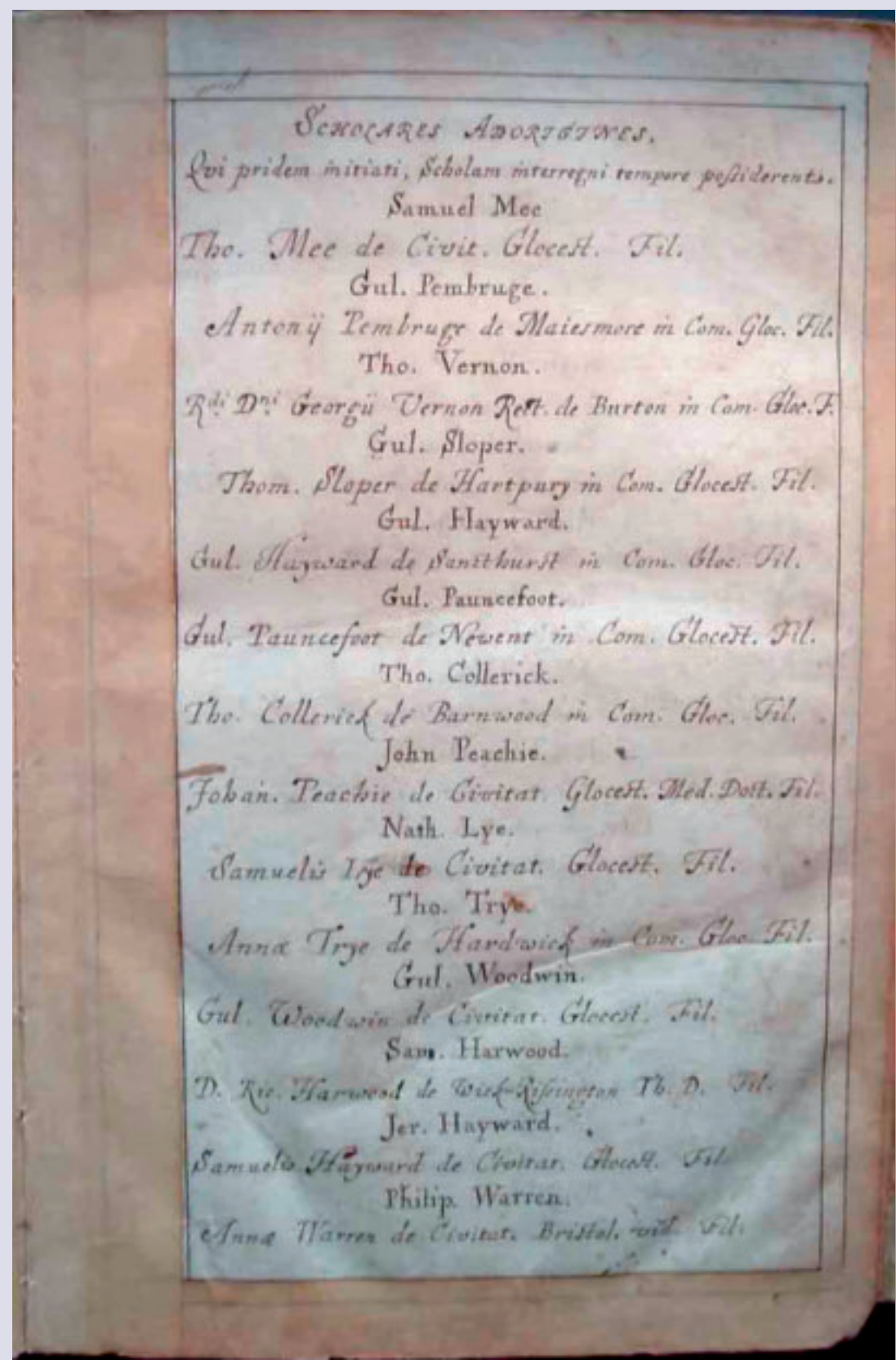
In 1684 Maurice Wheeler was appointed as Master of the College School (as it was then officially known). He remained in this post until 1712, and was also appointed Cathedral librarian in 1709. In 1685 Wheeler began an Admissions Register for the school and the same volume continued in use until 1923. It is now in the Cathedral Library. The title page has one of the earliest uses of the name "King's School" ("SCHOLÆ REGIÆ").

1550

1040

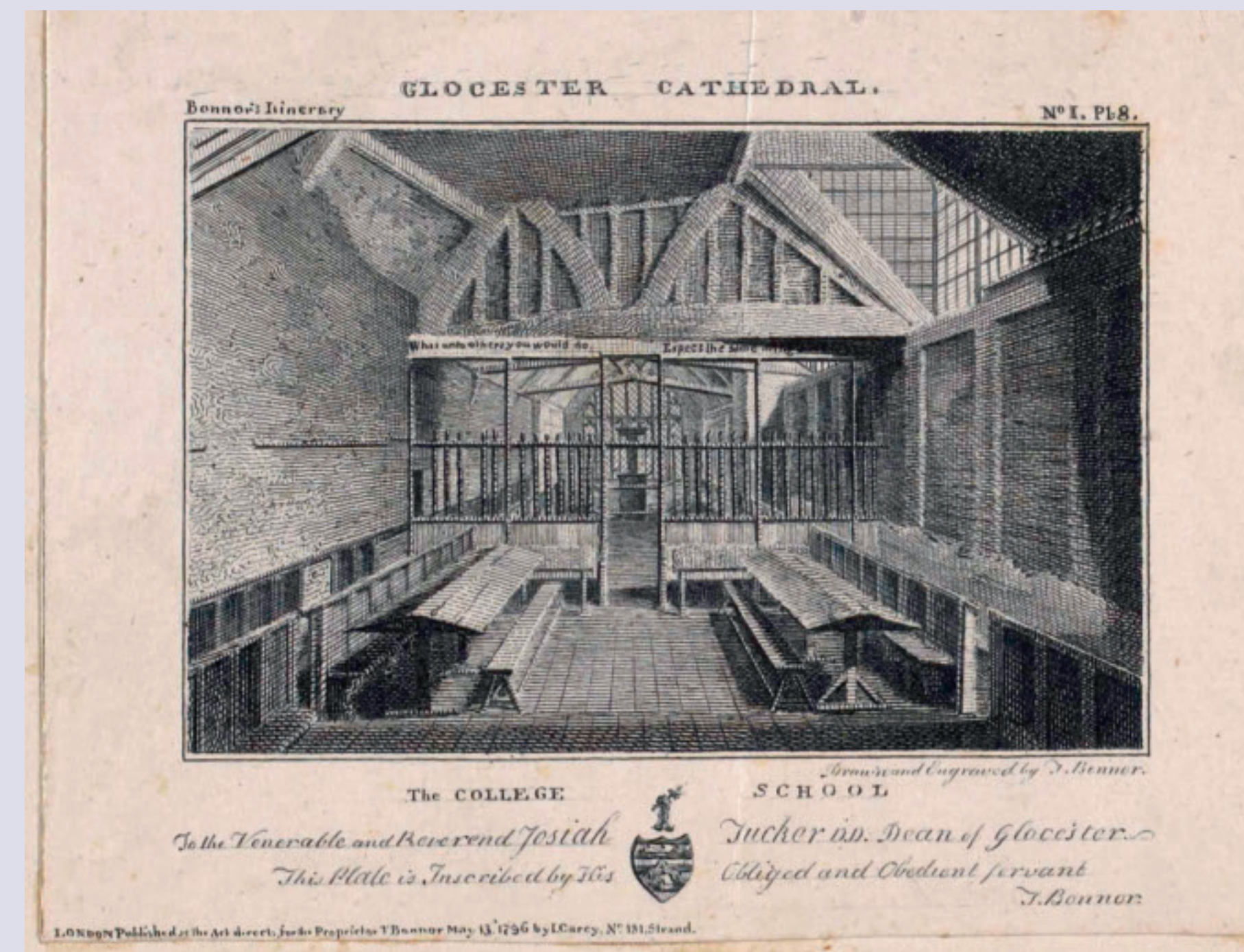


King's School Admissions Register, 1685. The calligraphy on the title page is by Maurice Wheeler himself. On the right is the first page of entries, recording earlier admissions



In 1686 Wheeler decided that the school needed its own library and devised a novel way of finding the finance. It was the school custom that each boy gave sixpence at Lent to the Master who kept half the sum and used the other half to buy cakes for the boys. Wheeler proposed to donate his share to the purchase of books if the boys would give up their cakes and do the same. The boys agreed and the new library was begun.

Local dignitaries and old boys donated books and these details were recorded by Wheeler in a King's School Benefactors' Book, which the library still holds. It lists 161 books, of which 56 still survive. These books are now catalogued as a separate collection in the Cathedral library.



The Library as a schoolroom as engraved by Thomas Bonnor in 1796

The Library from the 19th Century

2000

1850

1550

1040



Book damaged in the 1849 fire

The 18th century had seen the addition to the Library of many books on subjects other than theology. This trend continued into the 19th century In 1826 the library was much “modernised” by the replacement of the elaborate, baroque bookcases. The old bookcases were sold for £50 and £268 was spent on repairs and improvements.

The Cathedral accounts show spending, not just on new books, but also on re-binding and on maps, prints and newspapers. Later, it was proposed that each new Canon (member of the Chapter) pay a subscription of five guineas (£5 and 5 shillings) to the library, which seems to have been acquiring something of the character of a gentleman’s club.

Title of Book Borrowed	Letter Number	When borrowed	By whom	When returned
Almon History Vol. 11	A. 110	Feb 22	C. G. G. G. G.	Jan 20
Almon History Vol. 20	I. 150	Dec. 23	T. W. W. W.	Jan 20
Almon History Works	D. 9	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 1	A. 1	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 2	A. 2	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 3	A. 3	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 4	A. 4	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 5	A. 5	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 6	A. 6	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 7	A. 7	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 8	A. 8	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 9	A. 9	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 10	A. 10	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 11	A. 11	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 12	A. 12	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 13	A. 13	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 14	A. 14	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 15	A. 15	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 16	A. 16	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 17	A. 17	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 18	A. 18	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 19	A. 19	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19
Almon History Vol. 20	A. 20	Jan 28	J. G. H. H.	Jan 19

Library Borrowing Book, 1849



The Library c. 1970

In 1849 the present library room was seriously damaged by fire, necessitating the removal of King’s school to other premises in the Cathedral and its grounds. This was the period of the Victorian restoration of the Cathedral and it was decided to take the opportunity this offered to restore the damaged room and then move the library from the Chapter House. It has been in this room ever since and the collections have continued to grow.

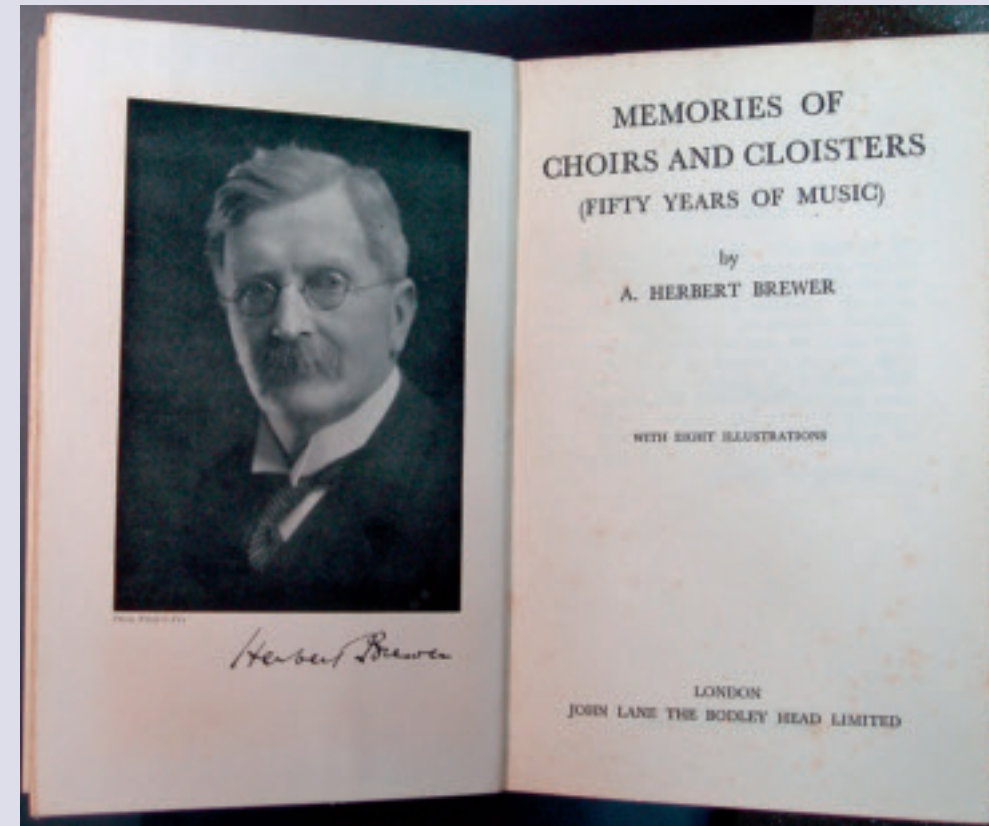


The Library whilst still in the Chapter House. Engraved by Thomas Bonnor, 1796

The work was completed by 1857. A new oak floor had been laid; the room had been re-roofed using original timbers wherever possible; stonework had been repaired and windows glazed; a new fireplace had been installed; new oak doors made and staircases repaired. The bookcases and books were then transferred from the Chapter House.

Music

2000
1850
1550
1040



Sir Herbert Brewer, Cathedral Organist

The library preserves a collection of more than 70 handwritten part books that were used by the choristers. The earliest dates from c.1640 and the series continues to 1863. These books contain music for organ and the different male voices, distinguishing between the two sides of the choir (decani and cantoris) and would have been used by the choristers in the daily services held at the Cathedral.

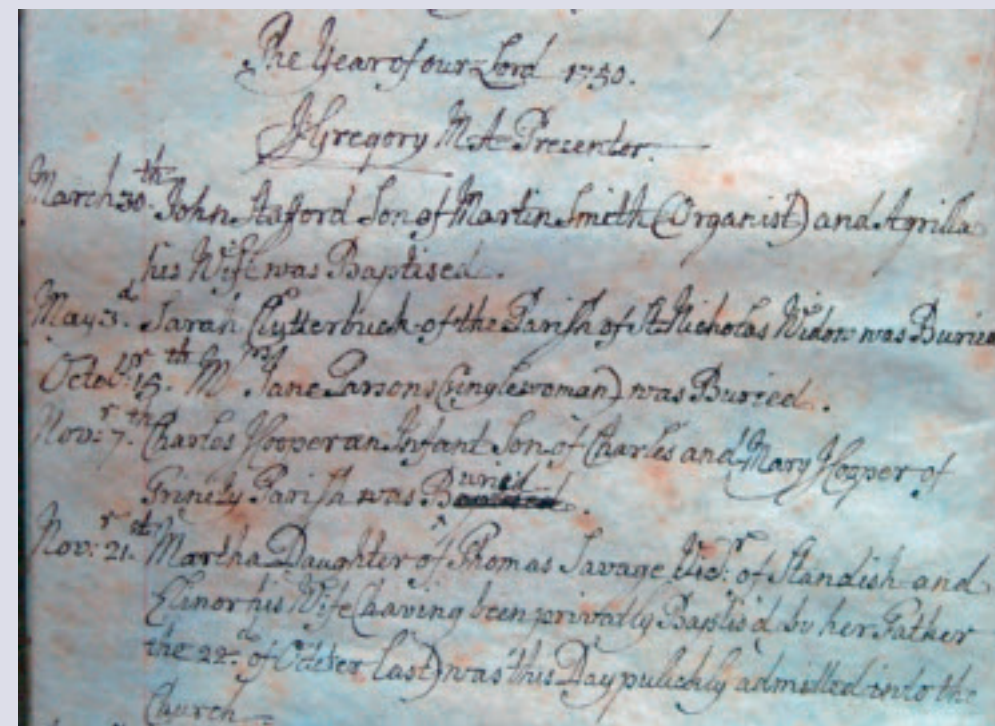
They include music by many famous names such as Handel, but also many pieces by lesser known composers and organists. In particular there are compositions by local men such as Joseph Mutlow who was Organist and Choirmaster from 1782 to 1832 and was renowned not only for his musical abilities but also for his large physical presence.



A page from the oldest Part Book

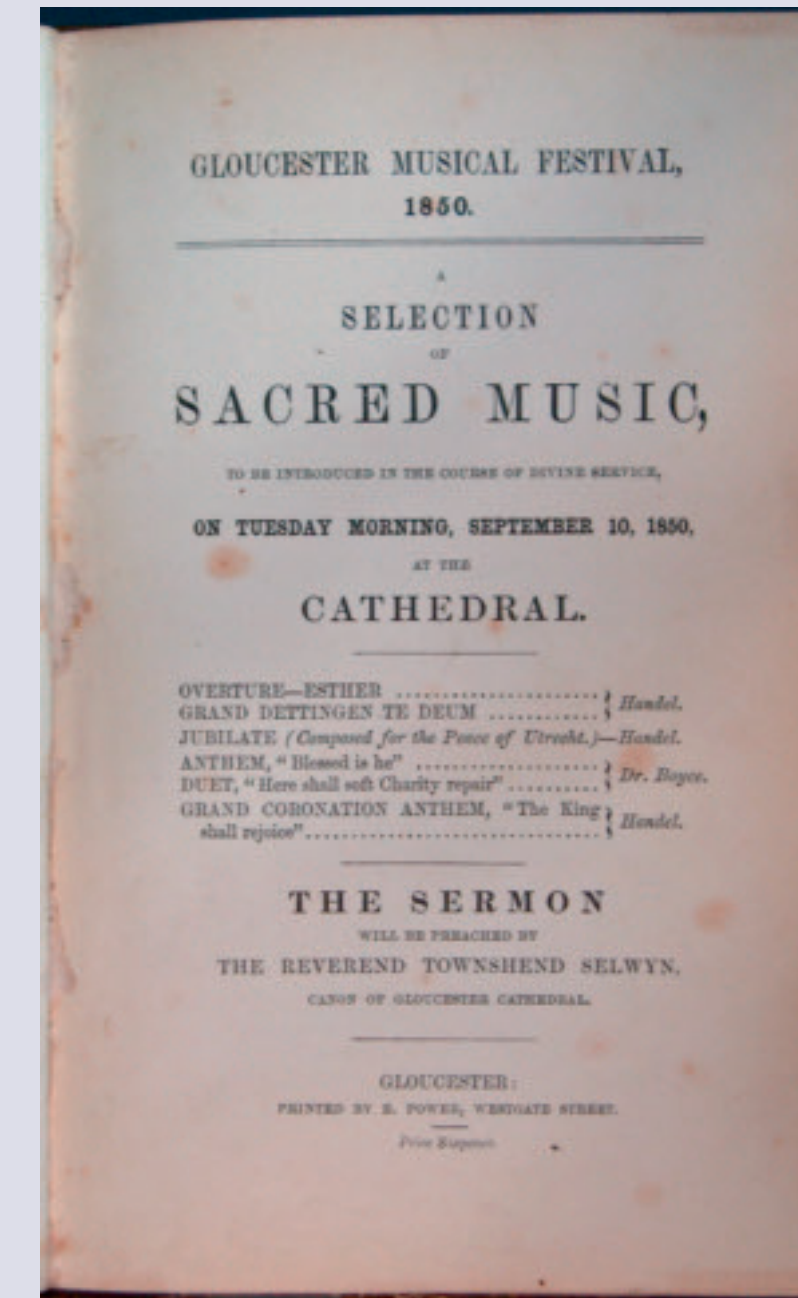
Secondly, the library holds considerable material relating to the Three Choirs Festival, one of the world's oldest choral festivals. It has been held annually in turn at Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Cathedrals since at least the early 18th century and is associated with many great musicians and composers, most notably Sir Edward Elgar. The Library has a complete set of festival programmes from the 1870s to date as well as the minutes of the local organising committee and scrapbooks compiled in the early 20th century.

The archives also offer a glimpse of John Stafford Smith (1750-1836) the son of Martin Smith Cathedral Organist. He is famous for writing the tune that was later adopted for the American national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner*. His baptism is recorded in the Cathedral register as is his admission to King's school where he was a chorister.



The entry for John Stafford Smith in the Cathedral's Register of Baptisms

Below and right: Programmes for the Three Choirs Festival in 1850 and in 2001



A page from the Three Choirs Festival scrapbook

Prints, Photographs and Architectural Records

2000
1850
1550
1040



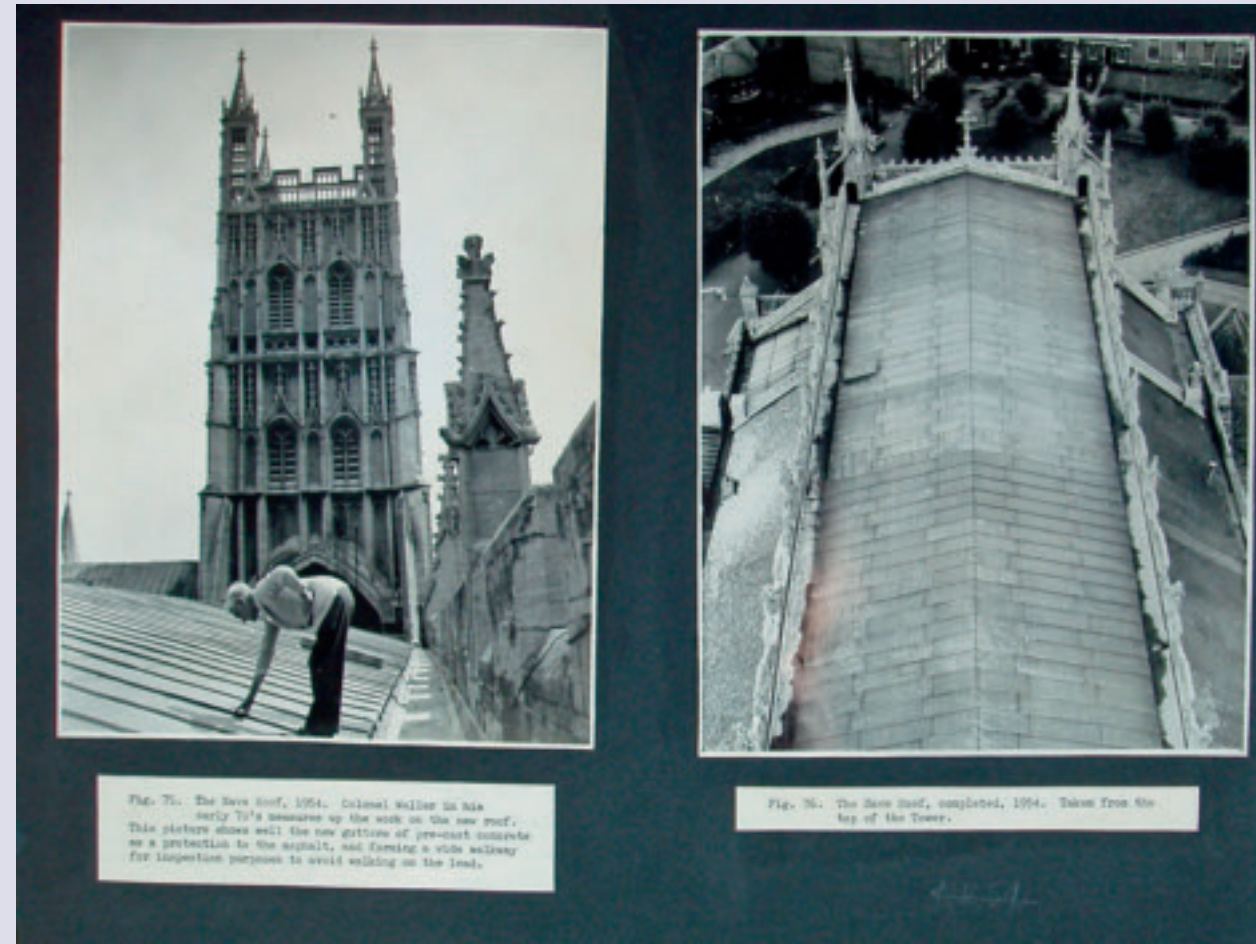
Lantern slide showing the Cathedral
c. 1890

In addition to printed books and documents the Library also has a fine collection of prints and drawings showing the Cathedral and its precincts over the centuries. Some are engravings by well-known artists and were published at the time, but others are by local artists who capture something of cathedral life in the period that they worked.

There is also a photograph collection which has yet to be fully catalogued. This includes a collection of late 19th century lantern slides which were used by the Cathedral architect. They offer a unique record of both the interior and exterior of the Cathedral at a point when major restoration work was being undertaken.

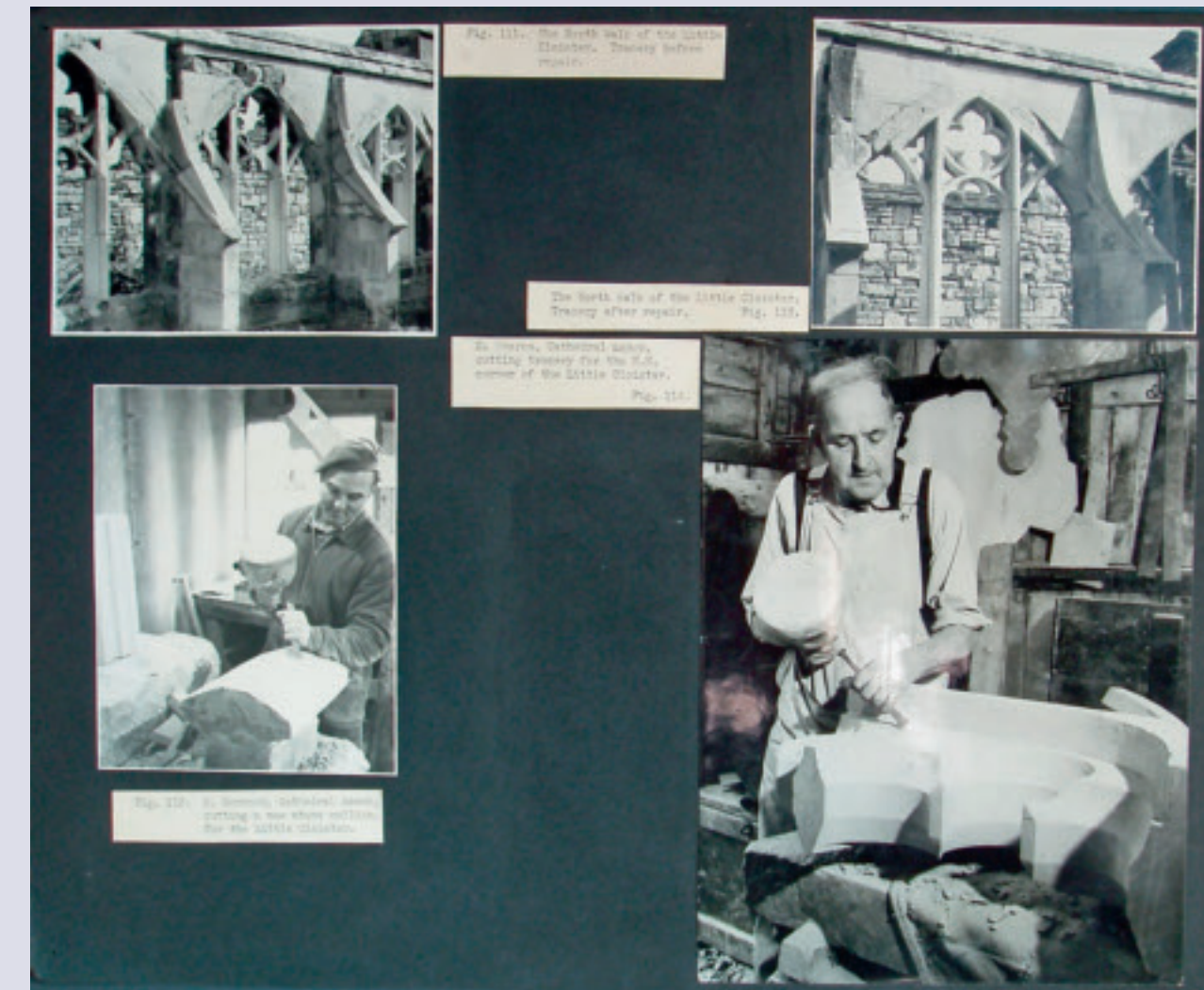


Lantern slide showing the Lady Chapel with Gurney stove to provide heating, c.1900



Above and below right: Pages from the "chronicle" of works compiled by Bernard Ashwell, Cathedral Architect

The extensive series of architects' plans, drawings and correspondence, preserved as part of the archives, also offer a wealth of detailed information about the history of the buildings and the changes that have taken place since the mid-19th century. These records are still being created today and will continue to be a vital resource for future historians and custodians of the Cathedral.



Twentieth century photographs document some of the repair work to the Cathedral buildings and, in some cases, the skilled craftsmen who carried it out. The images show the everyday activity that has ensured that the Cathedral's fabric remained in good order.



Two prints from the Library collection and a published drawings by F.S. Waller (1822-1905), Cathedral Architect

