

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE
of the **ENGLISH**
MANUSCRIPTS

of
John Gower's
CONFESSIO
AMANTIS

And seide þer is many of zo
ffautours and so may be pat
art such oon and by feintise
seist pat pou hast me don ser.
And napeles sthe wiste wel
my world stood on anoper whel
Espouten eny faunterie
But algate of my maladie
sche bad me telle and seie hir tre
madame if ze wold haue roupe
Quod I pan wold I telle zois
Sei fory quod sche and telle me ho
Sched me my siknes euerydel
Ma dame pat can I do wel
By so my lif perto wol laste
Wip pat hir look on me sthe caste
And saide in aunter if pou lue
my wille is ferst pat pou be sthru
And napeles hold pat it is
I wot my self but for alpis
vuto my prest which comey anon
I wil pou telle it oon and oon
Boye al py pought and al yn werk
O Semus myn oughne clerk
Com fory and hier yis mannes schrifte
Quod venus po and I copliste
myn heed wip pat and gan biholde
pe selue prest which as sthe wolde
Was redy per and sette him down
To here my confession.



he hat confessi
siden a confess
cord so gem flor
tonde.

DEREK PEARSALL
& LINNE MOONEY

Publications of the John Gower Society

XV

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE ENGLISH MANUSCRIPTS
OF JOHN GOWER'S *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*

Publications of the John Gower Society

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R. F. Yeager, Professor of English, *emeritus*
University of West Florida
byeager@uwf.edu

Alastair J. Minnis, Douglas Tracy Smith Professor, *emeritus*
Yale University
alastair.minnis@yale.edu

Boydell & Brewer Limited, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF, UK

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A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE
ENGLISH MANUSCRIPTS OF JOHN GOWER'S
CONFESSIO AMANTIS

Derek Pearsall and Linne Mooney

Drawing on earlier unpublished work by
Jeremy Griffiths and Kate Harris

D. S. Brewer

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Cover image: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 902, folio 8r. Amans and Genius/Confessor, showing the Lover as old man. Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Cover design: Toni Michelle

We dedicate this book
to the late Dr A. I. Doyle
with heart-felt gratitude for his assistance in its making

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FOREWORD: THE HISTORY OF THE *CATALOGUE*

THIS DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF the English Manuscripts of John Gower's Confessio Amantis has been long in the making. The origins of the project were coeval with the publication in 1978 of the seminal article by Malcolm Parkes and Ian Doyle on the scribes of the copy of the *Confessio Amantis* in Trinity College Cambridge, which opened a new window on the production practices behind the professional copying of late medieval Middle English poetry.¹ At this point Derek Pearsall, at the University of York, started to develop the idea of a catalogue of Gower manuscripts with three young graduate students: Jeremy Griffiths, then working in Oxford on the scribes of the Gower manuscripts under the supervision of Malcolm Parkes; Kate Harris, working on a D.Phil. thesis on the early reception of Gower's *Confessio* with Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall at York; and Jeremy Smith, working in Glasgow with Michael Samuels on the language of the Gower manuscripts. The model for the manuscript descriptions, adopted at the outset on the advice of Jeremy Griffiths and still surviving in the present catalogue, is indebted to the work of Malcolm Parkes.

At this early stage, it was intended to encompass the entire corpus of manuscripts preserving the works of the trilingual poet, including his major French poem the *Mirour de l'Omme* and his Latin work, the *Vox clamantis*. Supporting the ambition to advance the understanding of the production history of Gower's *oeuvre* was a plan (funded by the British Academy) to commission photographs of examples of the work of all scribes involved in the production of copies of Gower's poems. As this early ambition remains to be fulfilled and has of recent years become a focus of more controversy than is usual in the case of palaeographical studies, it is hoped that the collection of images accrued at this time may at some point be made available in a public repository to facilitate further investigation.

Originally the hope was that some further insight into the poet's work over time on the *Confessio*, creating, then revising, his poem, might be gained, and targeted collation of the text was part of the original remit for work on each manuscript copy of the English poem. In this first phase, work on the main geographical concentrations of manuscripts in England commenced and was for practical purposes divided between the three

¹ A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', in M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (eds), *Medieval Scribes, Monasteries and Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker* (London, 1978), 163–210.

cataloguers: Kate Harris, who in 1980 had been appointed Lady Margaret Research Fellow in English at New Hall (now Murray Edwards College) in Cambridge, being assigned, with all the manuscripts containing extracts from the *Confessio*, the Cambridge MSS (including the unique copy of the *Mirour de l'Omme*), Jeremy Griffiths the Oxford MSS and those in libraries further afield, and Derek Pearsall the copies in London, while Jeremy Smith would offer insights into the language of all of the manuscripts. Descriptions of all the Cambridge MSS and some of the Oxford MSS were completed and circulated amongst the collaborators. (The daunting word count of the descriptions of the extracted manuscripts became very apparent almost from the outset of this initial phase of work.)

Some of the impetus for the project slackened when Derek Pearsall left York for Harvard in 1985. The focus of Jeremy Griffiths' research interests changed and the calls on his time multiplied and became more varied. Kate Harris was appointed to the demanding role of Librarian and Archivist to the Marquess of Bath at Longleat House in the summer of 1985; thenceforward, given the richness and diversity of the Longleat library and archives and the want of catalogues in many areas and the non-standard nature of those in others, she had little time for concerted work on the Gower MSS or the opportunity to travel to review and revise her initial research on the *Confessio* MSS, carried out for the purpose of her thesis, in order to produce full manuscript descriptions. Though taking on more wide-ranging duties as Curator, encompassing also the Marquess of Bath's fine and decorative art collections, she continued to publish on the manuscripts containing extracts from Gower's English poem – adding a Longleat manuscript to their number (Longleat House, MS 174).

Beyond her published work cited here, the current authors owe a great debt to the work of Kate Harris on the early ownership of copies of the poem and readers' marks and comments in the manuscripts in her 1993 thesis, 'Ownership and Readership: Studies in the Provenance of the Manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*' (unpublished D.Phil. dissertation, University of York, 1993), which includes an attempt to evaluate and deploy with due caution and discrimination the early provenance evidence preserved in the *Confessio* MSS to establish the potential early audience(s) of the poem. Her lists of readers' names and other additions to the manuscripts and her following out of clues to provenance are much fuller than Derek Pearsall and Linne Mooney could contemplate in preparing the *Catalogue*, and they therefore make frequent acknowledgement of her work.

Amidst the demands on his time for teaching and scholarship as Gurney Professor at Harvard, Derek Pearsall carried on as well, but by the mid-1990s the project was stalled. Jeremy Griffiths sadly died, very young still, in 1997. When Derek Pearsall retired, again based in York, he undertook some further work on the *Catalogue*, but it was very slow. Eventually, he decided to publish seventeen manuscript descriptions, comprising all the London *Confessio* manuscripts and six of those in the Bodleian Library, one by one,

Foreword: The History of the Catalogue

in the Gower Society's *John Gower Newsletter*. As always, R. F. Yeager, the founder and director of the Gower Society and a great friend of Gower studies, willingly agreed to this.

In 2013, Linne Mooney, who had arrived in York some time before as the new Professor of Medieval English Palaeography, offered to join in the effort to complete the *Catalogue* of the manuscripts of Gower's English poem. Her energy and determination resulted in the descriptions of the remaining manuscripts (there are forty-nine in all, excluding fragments and excerpts) beginning to issue forth. She undertook most of the first-hand work in the libraries, while Derek Pearsall reshaped her descriptions to the purposes of the *Catalogue*. Thus the *Catalogue* that had been in process for more than forty years was at last completed.

Derek Pearsall and Linne Mooney
February 2021

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WE RECEIVED HELP FROM many scholars and librarians, in addition to the debt we owed to Jeremy Griffiths and Kate Harris for their work several decades ago. We would want to acknowledge the always-willing help of Tony Edwards and Bob Yeager; the assistance of Jim Binns, Richard Beadle, Christopher de Hamel, Consuelo Dutschke, Ralph Hanna, Holly James-Maddocks, Sally Mapstone, Alastair Minnis, David Rundle and Barbara Shailor with particular manuscripts, the particularly valuable help of Kathleen Scott with insights and updates regarding illustration and decoration, and Peter Nicholson and Joel Fredell for similarly keeping us up to date with developments in the understanding of the relationships between key early manuscripts. We are grateful to Caroline Palmer, of Boydell and Brewer, for her care and patience, and to the editors of the John Gower Society series, Bob Yeager and Alastair Minnis, and two anonymous readers for much good advice.

In addition, many other scholars have given assistance in regard to individual manuscripts, too many to name them all! Scholars of long ago are not usually mentioned in Acknowledgements such as these, but in the case of Gower an exception has to be made, for without the pioneering work of G. C. Macaulay, and his outstanding editions, still irreplaceable, of all Gower's works, not just the *Confessio*, Gower studies would not be where they are today.

We are also grateful to the many librarians and archivists who have assisted by granting us permission to examine the manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio* in collections in their care: the staff of the Department of Western Manuscripts at the British Library, London; staff of the Western Manuscripts Department at the Bodleian Library at Oxford and of the Manuscripts Department of Cambridge University Library, and individual librarians, past and present, who were helpful to us at smaller archives, including Lynsey Darby (London, College of Arms), Adrian James (London, Society of Antiquaries), Cristina Neagu (Oxford, Christ Church), Joanna Snelling (Oxford, Corpus Christi College), Daryl Green (Oxford, Magdalen College), Naomi Van Loo (Oxford, New College), Tim Kirtley and Francesca Heaney (Oxford, Wadham College), Nicholas Rogers (Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College), Colin Higgins (Cambridge, St Catharine's College), Kathryn McKee (Cambridge, St John's College), David McKitterick and Nicolas Bell (Cambridge, Trinity College), Sarah Hepworth (Glasgow University Library Special Collections), Michael Powell and Fergus Wilde (Manchester, Chetham's Library), Mark Dorrington (Nottingham University Library),

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A more general and profound debt is owed to the late Ian Doyle. Our files are full of his handwritten letters to each of us, generously making available the riches of his notes on Gower's manuscripts. Since his death we have also had access to his own personal notes on the manuscripts of Gower. We have therefore dedicated this *Catalogue* to his memory.

Whereas so many scholars and librarians have assisted in the preparation of this *Catalogue*, we alone are responsible for the views expressed here, for any omissions and for any errors which remain.

ABBREVIATIONS

(for further information, see Works Cited)

<i>Archiv</i>	<i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen</i>
BL	British Library
Briquet	<i>Les Filigranes: Dictionnaire Historique des Marques du Papier</i>
c.	<i>circa</i>
co.	county
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DCL	Doctor of Civil Law
DD	Doctor of Divinity
<i>DIMEV</i>	<i>Digital Index of Middle English Verse</i>
d.w.i.	died without issue
EETS	Early English Text Society
ES	Extra Series
OS	Original Series
esp.	especially
fol.	folio
fols	folios
GEC	(G. E. Cokayne), <i>The Complete Peerage</i>
Gravell	The Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive
HMC	Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (abbreviated thus to avoid confusion with Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, RCHM).
<i>IMEV</i>	<i>Index of Middle English Verse</i>
<i>IPMEP</i>	<i>Index of Printed Middle English Prose</i>
J.P.	Justice of the Peace
<i>LALME</i>	<i>A Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English</i>
mm.	millimetres
<i>MMBL</i>	<i>Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries</i> (N. R. Ker)
MP	Member of Parliament
MS, MSS	manuscript, manuscripts
<i>MWME</i>	<i>Manual of the Writings in Middle English</i> (general editor Albert E. Hartung)
n., nn.	note, notes
<i>NIMEV</i>	<i>New Index of Middle English Verse</i>
NLS	National Library of Scotland
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (superseded <i>DNB</i> in 2004)

Abbreviations

<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>q.v.</i>	<i>quod vide</i>
ra, rb	recto first column, recto second column
RCHM	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments
<i>SC</i>	<i>A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library</i>
S.H.C.J.	Society of the Holy Child Jesus
<i>s.n.</i>	<i>sub nomine</i> (under the name [of])
<i>STC</i>	<i>A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England...1475–1640</i>
S.T.D.	Sacrae Theologiae Doctor
s.xv, s.xvi, &c.	fifteenth century, sixteenth century, etc.
TEAMS	Teaching Association for Medieval Studies (Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo, MI)
UL	University Library
va, vb	verso first column, verso second column
Walther	Hans Walther, <i>Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi</i>

INTRODUCTION

THE *CONFESSIO AMANTIS* WAS written between 1385 and 1408, the year in which John Gower the poet died, though he became increasingly blind from about 1402. It is in English, in octosyllabic couplets, like Chaucer's translation of the *Romance of the Rose*, *Book of the Duchess* and *House of Fame*, and contains 33444 lines, divided into a Prologue of 1088 lines and eight books: Book I, 3446 lines; II, 3530 lines; III, 2774 lines; IV, 3712 lines; V, 7844 lines; VI, 2440 lines; VII, 5438 lines; VIII, 3172 lines. Book VIII has a 'Supplicacioun' by the Lover in twelve rhyme royal stanzas at 2217–2300. Macaulay's line-numbering, which is used throughout this volume, is based on the text contained in his copy-text, Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3, which he takes to represent Gower's final intentions for his poem; passages presumed to be superseded in revision are introduced at the foot of Macaulay's printed page with alternative asterisked line-numbers.¹ Macaulay's line-numbering excludes the sets of Latin elegiac couplets that stand at the beginning of major text-divisions, or 'chapters', which are numbered by Macaulay in small Roman numbers. There are sixty-nine of these sets of verses, from two to twelve lines long, mostly quatrains, especially in the later books, and totalling 388 lines. There are also, at the head of many 'chapters' and shorter 'paragraphs', Latin prose glosses, often in the form of long moralising summaries of the narrative of Genius's exemplary stories; these summaries, like the many short Latin glosses, notes and speech-markers, are placed in the margins in a dozen or so fine manuscripts of good authority,² but in most manuscripts they are moved, with varying degrees of success, into the text-column. This Latin prose contributes considerably to the complex appearance of the poem and to its bulk, about the equivalent of 3000 lines when in the text-column.³

¹ G. C. Macaulay (ed.), *The Complete Works of John Gower*, 4 vols (London, 1899–1902). Vol. I, The French Works; Vols II and III, The English Works, published simultaneously for the Early English Text Society as Vols I and II, Extra Series 81–82 (London, 1901); Vol. IV, The Latin Works. The four-volume version is used for reference throughout this *Descriptive Catalogue*.

² MSS with glosses in the margin include Bodleian, MSS Fairfax 3 and Bodley 902 (copied column-for-column up to fol. 81v), Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21 and Trinity College, MS R.3.2, Cologne, Bodmer MS CB 178, Princeton UL, MS Taylor 5, and San Marino, Huntington, MS EL 26.A.17. All these MSS, as well as a few others, have exactly forty-six lines per column, which facilitated column-for-column copying. Two late MSS with glosses in the margins (BL, MS Harley 3869 and Oxford, Wadham College, MS 13) are in single column.

³ The Latin verses are translated by Siân Echard and Claire Fanger, *The Latin Verses in the Confessio Amantis: An Annotated Translation*, Medieval Texts and Studies,

TEXT

Macaulay distinguishes three forms of the text, which he calls the first, second and third recensions and associates with the chronological process of authorial revision. The first recension has the original form of the prologue (Prol. 24*-92*) and epilogue (VIII.2941*-3114*), both with favourable mention of Richard II, the former with the meeting on the Thames and the latter containing the eulogy of Chaucer; the third recension has the revised prologue (Prol. 24-92) with dedication to Henry of Lancaster instead of Richard II, and the revised epilogue (VIII.2941-3172) with all mention of Richard II removed, as well as the gracious tribute of Venus to Chaucer, the poet of love (VIII.2941*-57*).⁴ The second recension, as described by Macaulay, is characterised by the presence of alternative versions of certain passages in Books V (1781*-92*, 6395*-6438*, 7015*-36*, 7086*-7210*) and VII (2329*-40*, 3149*-80*, 3207*-3360*), the omission of V.7701-46, and the moving of VI.665-964 to follow VI.1146. Some manuscripts of the second recension have or had the 'Richard II prologue', some have the 'Lancaster prologue'; all have the revised epilogue. Macaulay therefore distinguishes two forms, (a) and (b), of the second recension, which he regards as transitional stages in revision. He also distinguishes three forms of the first recension, on the basis of variations in textual affiliation, identifying them, rather unfortunately, as (a) Revised, (b) Intermediate and (c) Unrevised.

The variations in the form of the *Confessio*, especially the changes made for political reasons, clearly indicate authorial revision. But it is very doubtful whether the extant manuscripts will allow the recovery of detailed stages in this process of revision, if there were any.⁵ In particular, Macaulay's second recension has a dubious status as a recension, while the three forms

No. 7 (East Lansing, MI, 1991), and the Latin prose by Andrew Galloway in the edition of the *Confessio* by Russell A. Peck, *John Gower: Confessio Amantis*, 3 vols, TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications (Kalamazoo, MI, 2003-06).

⁴ The omission of the tribute to Chaucer has led to speculation about a 'quarrel' between Chaucer and Gower in later life. It is much more likely that the lines on Chaucer were a casualty of the strenuous necessities imposed on Gower by his recasting of himself as an important commentator on the political events surrounding the Deposition. Praise of Chaucer as love's poet would be out of place and out of date.

⁵ See Peter Nicholson, 'Gower's Revisions in the *Confessio Amantis*', *Chaucer Review*, 19 (1984), 123-43; 'Poet and Scribe in the Manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*', in Derek Pearsall (ed.), *Manuscripts and Texts: Editorial Problems in Later Middle English Literature* (Cambridge, 1987), 130-42; 'The Dedications of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*', *Mediaevalia*, 10 (1988), 159-80; 'Gower's Manuscript of the *Confessio Amantis*', in R. F. Yeager and Toshiyuki Takamiya (eds), *The Medieval Python: The Purposive and Provocative Work of Terry Jones* (New York, 2012), 75-86; also Joel Fredell, 'The Gower Manuscripts: Some Inconvenient Truths', *Viator*, 41 (2010), 1-20. Macaulay's own account of

of the first recension are very imperfectly identified and distinguished on the basis of what Macaulay acknowledges (ed., *Works*, II.clxx) to be a partial collation. Macaulay's 'Recensions' are of necessity referred to in this *Catalogue*, but they are not used. Furthermore, it is clear that Macaulay's collation was sometimes cursory, of necessity in certain cases where manuscripts were made available only for a short time, and may have had the character at times of 'spot-collation', looking only at what had been decided to be key variants.⁶ In fact it is doubtful if the evidence of textual affiliation, even if it were exhaustively recovered, would ever provide support for an elaborate theory of authorial revision. There is evidence of shifts in exemplar which would disturb affiliations considerably, also the fact that large numbers of manuscripts, twenty-one of forty-nine, lack first or last leaves, where the most important evidence of affiliation is often to be found, and there is also the ease with which Gower or his scribes could update Latin rubrics and glosses to suit new political circumstances. Scholars' attempts to match the different versions of the poem, on any large scale, to those new circumstances are misdirected. Fredell points to the fact that two fine early manuscripts were owned by Henry's sons, Thomas, duke of Clarence (Oxford, Christ Church, MS 148) and Humphrey, duke of Gloucester (Bodleian, MS Bodley 294): both contained the Ricardian dedication.⁷ The aristocracy was probably not as interested in Gower's revisions as Gower expected. In sum, it is impossible to deduce from the MSS a chronological view of the processes of authorial revision or to divide them into 'recensions'. Indeed, the *Confessio* cannot properly be said to have been 'revised': what Gower did, to put it too bluntly, was to tinker with the opening and closing lines, up to Prol. 92 and after VIII.2941, in order to adapt his poem to what he assumed to be the tastes of the new regime.

Nevertheless, since Macaulay's is the account of the text of the *Confessio* that has been used in all subsequent discussion and description, and since no-one is likely at any time soon to try to complete or improve upon his heroic work, we record for each manuscript, for convenience in referring to previous scholarship, and also to enable readers to find Macaulay's

the processes of authorial revision (ed., *Works*, II.cxxvii–cxxviii), even where it does throw up groups of MSS which are affiliated (e.g. II.cxxxi), is confusing.

⁶ Macaulay tells us (ed., *Works*, II.clxx–clxxi) that he made a full collation of Bodleian, MSS Bodley 294 and Bodley 902 and Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 67 with his copy-text, Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3. In addition, he collated a number of the substantive variants (text and gloss) he found in those four MSS with fourteen other MSS. He doesn't say which, but they are likely to have been those to the text and language of which he gives most attention in his MS descriptions. For the remaining twenty-three MSS that he was acquainted with, he must have made only a number of 'spot-collations', and hardly that where he had access to MSS only briefly (see Appendix I, where four such MSS are listed and also the eight that he did not know at all).

⁷ Fredell, 'Inconvenient Truths', 6.

descriptions in his lists (ed., *Works*, II.cxxxviii–clxvii), the form of the text as he describes it (viz. Ia, Ib, Ic, IIa, IIb or III). The descriptions in the *Catalogue* are based on the template designed by Jeremy Griffiths on the model of that devised by Malcolm Parkes for college library catalogues. Provision is made in the descriptions for the inclusion of details of the Contents of the manuscript (usually almost entirely taken up with the *Confessio*), accounts of Illustration and Decoration, and a lengthy Physical Description of the manuscript, under seven headings: (I) material, (II) foliation, (III) collation, (IV) preparation of the page for copying, (V) scribe(s), (VI) punctuation and correction, (VII) binding. After the Physical Description comes the specification of ‘secundo folio’, a traditional practice that helps with the identification of manuscripts that have lost their first leaf, or to identify manuscripts in early modern book-lists, where MSS are identified in this way. There follows the list of Additions to the manuscript that were not part of the original production process, and, closely tied to that, an account of what is known about Provenance.

Following the descriptions of MSS, there are three Appendices. Appendix I contains, for easy reference, a summary list of the manuscripts of the *Confessio*, in the order in which they are placed in the *Catalogue*, that is, by location: country, city, library, collection and number. They are not listed according to supposed textual affiliation, as in the previous lists of Macaulay (ed., *Works*, II.cxxxviii–clxxiii), Fisher and Pearsall, for reasons detailed above.⁸ The list includes brief indication of date, lines missing, other texts included with the *Confessio* in the individual MSS, and Macaulay’s classification. Appendix II provides an alphabetical list of Macaulay’s manuscript sigla, which will help readers navigate a way through and around Macaulay’s collations, especially in his manuscript descriptions. Appendix III lists and describes Gower’s Latin addenda to the *Confessio* and also English poems included in the manuscripts as part of the production process and positioned in relation to the *Confessio* presumably because they were regarded as relevant to it.

The ‘Works Cited’, at the end of the volume, is restricted to works referred to in this *Catalogue*, and is not a General Bibliography for the *Confessio*.

KINDS OF MANUSCRIPTS

There are forty-nine Middle English MSS of the *Confessio*, though this number includes the debatable cases of Bodleian, MS Hatton 51, which is a copy of Caxton’s print of 1483, and BL, MS Egerton 913, which stops at

⁸ John H. Fisher, *John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer* (New York, 1964), 303–07; Derek Pearsall, ‘The Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower’s Works’, in Siân Echard (ed.), *A Companion to Gower* (Cambridge, 2004), 73–97.

Book I.1700, and has sometimes been called a 'fragment'. In addition, there are two surviving Portuguese and Castilian translations of the text, which we have not included: several articles treat these MSS (now in Madrid) in Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and R. F. Yeager (eds), *John Gower in England and Iberia: Manuscripts, Influences, Reception*, Publications of the John Gower Society, X (Cambridge, 2014). There are six fragments of what may have been, or intended to be originally, complete manuscripts, but the original context of two of these (the Pearson fragment and the Takamiya fragment) have been found (in Yale, Beinecke Library, MS Osborn fa. 1 and in Huntington Library, MS EL 26 A 17, respectively: see the descriptions of these MSS), though they have not been re-integrated with them.⁹ All are listed in Pearsall's essay on the manuscripts of Gower and described here in Appendix I, but the twelve excerpts from the *Confessio* included in other manuscripts are merely listed and the manuscripts not described.¹⁰

Of the forty-nine MSS that survive, most have leaves missing. Some of the losses are disastrous: BL, MS Harley 7184, a magnificent manuscript of the mid-century, has lost fifty-two leaves, BL, MS Add. 22139 has lost thirty-four, New York, Columbia UL, MS Plimpton 265 twenty-three, Chicago, Newberry Library, MS +33.5 twenty-two and Cambridge Trinity College MS R.3.2 no less than five complete quires at the beginning (forty leaves). Glasgow UL, Hunterian MS 7 has lost twenty-four leaves, five of them single leaves with the beginnings of Books I, II, VI, VII and VIII, where there would have been decorated initials and borders. Such a manuscript confirms the usual assumption that manuscripts were mutilated for the sake of their miniatures and decorated initials and borders. This was no doubt so, but in Cambridge, St Catharine's College, MS 7 eight leaves have been lost, all but one of them single leaves, and not one of them affects the beginning of a book, nor would there have been illustrations on the lost leaves. Clearly there is no single reason for the mutilation of manuscripts. Some leaves

⁹ For a general study of MS fragments containing Middle English verse, see Linne R. Mooney, 'Fragments of Middle English Verse: An Overview and Some Speculations about their Survival', in Linda L. Brownrigg and Margaret M. Smith (eds), *Interpreting and Collecting Fragments of Medieval Books*, Proceedings of the Seminar in the History of the Book to 1500 (Oxford, 2000), 137–50.

¹⁰ Derek Pearsall, 'Manuscripts and Illustrations'. For discussion of the excerpts, see Kate Harris, 'John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: The Virtues of Bad Texts', in Derek Pearsall (ed.), *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England: The Literary Implications of Manuscript Study* (Cambridge, 1983), 26–40, and Harris, 'Ownership and Readership: Studies in the Provenance of the Manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*' (unpublished D.Phil. dissertation, University of York, 1993), 27–75, as well as A. S. G. Edwards, 'Selection and Subversion in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*', in R. F. Yeager (ed.), *Re-Visioning Gower* (Asheville, NC, 1998), 257–67.

were torn out and used for wrapping cheese.¹¹ Opening and closing pages are particularly vulnerable to loss by accident: nine have lost the beginning leaf or leaves, nine the last leaf or leaves, and three both beginning and end (BL, MS Add. 12043, the Bute MS [now in private hands], New York, Columbia UL, MS Plimpton 265), twenty-one manuscripts in all. But some of the finest manuscripts have lost no leaves at all, amongst them BL, MS Harley 3869, Bodleian, MSS Bodley 294, 693 and 902, and Fairfax MS 3. Nottingham UL, MS WLC/LM/8 has suffered no losses, but perhaps that was because its decorative programme was never started. Several manuscripts suffer from misbinding or other forms of disorder without loss of text, such as Oxford, Wadham College, MS 13, Cambridge, St Catharine's College, MS 7, and Chicago, Newberry Library, MS +33.5.

SCRIBES

More than half the surviving Middle English MSS of the *Confessio* (twenty-nine of forty-nine) are from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, some very early, or even before 1400 (Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3, New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS M.690 and San Marino, Huntington, MS EL 26 A 17). Most of these manuscripts are of high quality, with illustrations (not always), decorative borders, elaborately decorated and flourished initials and handwriting in very regular anglicana formata. Although Fisher's idea of a Southwark scriptorium overseen by the author has been largely discredited, it is striking how many of the early MSS were produced by a limited number of scribes, whom Mooney and Stubbs locate in or round the London Guildhall rather than in Southwark.¹² One scribe is responsible for all or parts of eight copies of the *Confessio* (a full list is given in the description in this *Catalogue* of BL, MS Egerton 1991) and possibly also Glasgow, Hunterian MS 7 and New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS M.125.¹³ Mooney and Stubbs identified this scribe (dubbed 'Scribe D' by

¹¹ For examples of such practice, see Andrew Prescott, 'Administrative Records and the Scribal Achievement of Medieval England', in A. S. G. Edwards and Orietta da Rold (eds), *English Manuscripts before 1400*, English Manuscript Studies, 17 (London, 2012), 173–99.

¹² Fisher, *Gower: Moral Philosopher*, 60, 66, 101; Linne R. Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature 1375–1425* (York, 2013).

¹³ For seven of these MSS see the seminal essay on Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2 by A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', in M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (eds), *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker* (London, 1978), 163–210. Jeremy Griffiths added an eighth ('*Confessio Amantis*: The Poem and its Pictures', in A. J. Minnis [ed.], *Gower's Confessio Amantis: Responses and Reassessments*

A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes) as John Marchaunt, first Chamber Clerk and then Common Clerk of the City of London (1380–99, 1399–1417).¹⁴ All of these manuscripts are early copies, written at the end of the fourteenth or in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and their common scribe may have played an important early role in systematising the presentation of the decorative apparatus and Latin marginal material in the poem. Apart from Trinity MS R.3.2, only two other manuscripts are known to have been written by as many as five or six scribes: Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21 and the Bodmer MS CB 178: these three manuscripts with multiple scribes are all early productions and may indicate that exemplars were circulating then in parts or lent to copyists on a limited-time-only basis. Most manuscripts were written by single scribes, with occasionally a second or third involved, for various reasons (for instance BL, MS Egerton 913, Bodleian MS Bodley 902, Princeton UL MS Taylor 5).

The five scribes of Trinity College, MS R.3.2 were designated by Doyle and Parkes ('Production of Copies') as Scribes A, B, C, D and E. They identified Scribe E as Thomas Hoccleve and, since they wrote, Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, have proposed that Scribe D is Marchaunt, as detailed above, and Scribe B, who wrote the two most important early manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D (Hengwrt 154) and San Marino, Huntington Library, MS EL 26 C 9, is Adam Pinkhurst.¹⁵ Scribes A and C have not yet been identified. Doyle and Parkes ('Production of Copies', 178, 206–08) also discuss at length a 'Scribe Delta', whose hand is sufficiently similar to their Scribe D's (Marchaunt's) for them to think that he might have been working in the same environment or had the same training. They identified his as the hand of a *Confessio* manuscript, BL, MS Royal 18.C.xxii. Three other scribes are responsible for multiple early copies. The scribe who wrote most of Bodleian, MS Bodley 902, with Marchaunt writing the first two quires only, must have been working in the same circles. He may

[Cambridge, 1983], 163–78 [see 170 n. 19]); and A. I. Doyle suggested that two further MSS were either the work of this hand or of someone trained by him (personal communication). For more detail on the scribes of Trinity College, MS R.3.2, see our description of this MS below.

¹⁴ Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 38–65. For doubts raised about the identification of Doyle and Parkes's 'Scribe D' as John Marchaunt, see Lawrence Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384–1432* (Cambridge, 2018), 108–11.

¹⁵ Linne R. Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 97–138. For other views relating to this identification see Jane Roberts, 'On Giving Scribe B a Name and a Clutch of London Manuscripts from c. 1400', *Medium Aevum*, 80 (2011), 247–70; Lawrence Warner, 'Scribes, Misattributed: Hoccleve and Pinkhurst', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 38 (2015), 55–100, esp. 72–100; Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes*, 1–71. See also Christopher de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (London, 2016), 426–65.

be responsible for three other *Confessio* manuscripts besides Bodley 902: Bodleian, MS Laud misc. 609, Bodleian, MS Bodley 693 and the fragment now in London, University College, MS Angl. 1, all written in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁶ Linne Mooney and Estelle Stubbs identify John Carpenter, Common Clerk of the City of London immediately after Marchaunt, 1417–37, as having been responsible for writing two copies of the *Confessio*, the beautiful Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library MS 1083/29 and Cambridge UL, MS Dd.8.19, both in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.¹⁷ The poet and Privy Seal Clerk Thomas Hoccleve was one of the five scribes responsible for Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2 and Mooney also argues that his is the first hand of the incomplete copy in BL, MS Egerton 913.¹⁸ The manuscript of the *Confessio* now in private hands, Cologny, Martin Bodmer MS CB 178, is also written by five scribes, according to Macaulay, who noted that scribes A and D of this manuscript copied Fairfax exactly, word for word, with exactly the same spellings as Fairfax.¹⁹ The Bodmer MS, Macaulay thought, must have been used as an exemplar for BL, MS Harley 7184 and Oxford, Magdalen College, MS lat. 213, both copied in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, since they replicate not only the text but also the errors of Bodmer.²⁰ The copying of MSS of Gower's *Confessio* dated before 1425 was therefore the work of a select group of metropolitan scribes. Mooney and Stubbs argue that the early concentration of *Confessio* copyists in the London Guildhall (by their identifications) must point to a connection between Gower and the Guildhall, but there is no proof of this and other explanations are possible.²¹ The Fairfax 3 manuscript seems key to the dissemination of that recension of the text. While neither the Fairfax MS nor the closely associated Bodmer MS CB 178 have known provenance before the sixteenth century, their post-1500 ownership is provincial rather than metropolitan: the Fairfax MS in Yorkshire and the Bodmer MS in East Anglia.

After these early copies of the *Confessio*, there are only two further scribes, of similar training, responsible for multiple copies of the poem: the scribe of Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS SM.1 and of Oxford, Magdalen College, MS lat. 213, also called the BL, MS Royal 19.D.vi scribe

¹⁶ See Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 136; the similarity of hand in these MSS was brought to Mooney's attention by A. I. Doyle, upon whose advice she was (until his death in 2018) compiling a list of hands appearing in more than one late medieval English manuscript.

¹⁷ Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 86–106. Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes*, 108–11, agrees with Mooney and Stubbs with regard to the Cambridge manuscript but disagrees with regard to the Philadelphia one.

¹⁸ Linne R. Mooney, 'Thomas Hoccleve in Another *Confessio Amantis* Manuscript', *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 22 (2019), 225–38.

¹⁹ Macaulay (ed.), *Works*, II.clxi–clxii.

²⁰ For dates and Macaulay's classifications, see Appendix I, below.

²¹ Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 134–37.

after his copying of a *Canterbury Tales* manuscript or the ‘Upright hooked-g scribe’ after his unique graph of lower-case ‘g’; and, secondly, the scribe of Bodleian, MS Lyell 31 and BL, MS Harley 7184, sometimes called the ‘Devonshire scribe’ after his copying of the *Canterbury Tales* manuscript formerly owned by the Duke of Devonshire (now Takamiya MS 24) or the ‘Slanted hooked-g scribe’ after his unique form of ‘g’.²² These two scribes, responsible for four *Confessio* manuscripts in the mid- to third quarter of the fifteenth century, are related by training, since they share the unusual form of hooked letter ‘g’ and since, in one case, they shared access to a common exemplar: both Oxford, Magdalen, MS lat. 213 and BL, MS Harley 7184 used the Bodmer MS CB 178 as their exemplar.²³ From the evidence of the illuminated borders in these manuscripts, they seem to have been metropolitan productions.²⁴ The remaining copies of the *Confessio* are one-off copies by scribes, as far as we know, some highly professional and some amateurish. Production seems less centred on the capital after the initial burst, and especially after mid-century.

Punctuation of the *Confessio* is treated variably by its scribes, though there are some of them who observe the strong caesural break that Gower often employs after a particularly daring enjambement, or when conversations are broken across the line, by inserting a *punctus elevatus* or a *punctus*: examples are given in the description of Bodleian, MS Bodley 902 in this *Catalogue*. Correction is sporadic, though there is unusually thorough correction of all kinds in Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS SM.1, extensive correction by a later Scottish scribe in BL, MS Add. 22139, some correction of final -e in Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3 (Macaulay [ed.], *Works*, II.clix), and an attempt to remove some of Gower’s ‘Kenticisms’ in BL, MS Royal 18.C.xxii (see also BL, MS Harley 3869).

In this *Catalogue* we refer to our own and other scholars’ identifications of hands and of artists, either by names or by other MSS written or decorated by the same scribe or artist. We are conscious that this is an aspect of manuscript study that is potentially controversial and users of the *Catalogue* should be aware that there is an element of subjectivity (combined with expertise) in assigning different manuscripts to the same scribe or artist, and, at times, in differentiating stints. In addition, we should note that criteria for

²² For the various ‘hooked-g’ scribes, see Linne R. Mooney and Daniel W. Mosser, ‘Hooked-g Scribes and Takamiya Manuscripts’, in Takami Matsuda, Richard A. Linenthal and John Scatill (eds), *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya* (Cambridge and Tokyo, 2004), 179–96, and Daniel W. Mosser and Linne R. Mooney, ‘The Case of the Hooked-g Scribe(s) and the Production of Middle English Literature, c. 1460–c. 1490’, *The Chaucer Review*, 52 (2016), 131–50.

²³ Macaulay (ed.), *Works*, II.clxii.

²⁴ See Holly James-Maddocks, ‘The Illuminators of the Hooked-g scribe(s) and the Production of Middle English Literature, c. 1460–c. 1490’, *The Chaucer Review*, 51 (2015), 151–86.

dating manuscripts on the basis of hands and/or decoration alone are also open to question in respect of the degree of precision they permit. Where identifications have been a matter of published scholarly debate, we have cited the relevant literature.

ILLUSTRATION AND DECORATION

The *Confessio* manuscripts of the early fifteenth century were part of a great expansion, even an explosion, of commercial copying in London to cater for a growing public taste for the 'new' literature in English – Chaucer, Gower, Langland, Trevisa, and soon Hoccleve and Lydgate. Some of the first owners of these manuscripts were of royal or aristocratic origin, perhaps consciously exercising a role as shapers of the new English literary tradition. A large number of first-quarter manuscripts of the *Confessio* were thus *de luxe* copies, often with illustrations. Twenty manuscripts of the first quarter had or have illustrations (out of twenty-six in all), usually the two that Gower seems to have 'authorised', that is, of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Prol. 591; see Figures 1–2) and the Lover confessing to Genius (I.202; see Figures 4–5 and cover illustration). Another scene, that of the Author with pen in hand, sometimes appears at the head of the Prologue, as in Philadelphia, Rosenbach Museum and Library, MS 1083/29 (see Figure 3).²⁵ Two manuscripts have cycles of pictures, Oxford, New College, MS 266 and New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS M.126.

In addition to illustrations, a large number of first-generation *Confessio* manuscripts have or had elaborate borders and elaborately decorated and flourished initials, some of them done in the workshops of Hermann Scheerre or 'Johannes', the most famous manuscript painters of the day.²⁶

²⁵ See Griffiths, 'The Poem and its Pictures', 177. Since these MSS constitute the elite core of first-generation *Confessio* MSS, they are listed here: BL, MS Egerton 1991, BL, MS Royal 18.C.xxii; Bodleian, MSS Bodley 294, 693 and 902, MS Fairfax 3, Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 67; Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21, Pembroke College, MS 307, St John's College, MS B.12; Nottingham UL, MS WLC/LM/8 (planned as a *de luxe* MS but no decoration begun), the Bodmer MS CB 178, and in the US, New York, Pierpont Morgan, MSS M.125 and M.690, New York, Columbia UL, MS Plimpton 265, Philadelphia, MS Rosenbach 1083/29, Princeton UL, MS Taylor 5, and San Marino, Huntington, MS EL 26 A 17.

²⁶ See Gereth M. Spriggs, 'Unnoticed Bodleian Manuscripts illuminated by Herman Scheerre and his School', *Bodleian Library Record*, 7, no. 4 (1964), 193–203, and 'The Nevill Hours and the School of Herman Scheerre', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 37 (1974), 104–30; also Kathleen L. Scott, 'Design, Decoration and Illustration', in Griffiths and Pearsall (eds), *Book Production and Publishing*, 31–64, and Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490* (A Survey of Manuscripts Illustrated in the British Isles, general editor, J. J. G. Alexander), 2 vols (London, 1996).

There was soon established a well-organised hierarchy of decoration, fully realised in Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3 and Princeton UL, MS Taylor 5, designed to make visible the organisation of the poem: three- or four-line (or more) decorated and flourished initials, often with elaborate bar-borders, to mark the beginnings of books; two- or three-line decorated and flourished initials, without borders, to mark major text-divisions ('chapters'), which usually follow sets of Latin verses and are indicated by Macaulay with a one-line space; one- or two-line similarly decorated initials to mark minor text-divisions ('paragraphs' within a story, for instance), indicated by Macaulay with paragraph indents; and one-line initials, or paraphs, themselves often decorated, for the beginnings of Latin verses and glosses, and simpler paraphs for speech-markers. The hierarchy of decoration was repeated in manuscripts that might be called 'economy *de luxe*', operating on a sliding scale whereby the decoration slipped a notch – smaller initials for each kind of text-division, with plainer flourishing, and simpler paraphs, if at all, for example BL, MS Stowe 950, London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 45, and Bodleian, MSS Lyell 31, Laud misc. 609 (top of the range for economy *de luxe*) and Arch. Selden B.11. Thus, less well-off customers could participate by imitation in the new fashion. It may be noted here that nearly all *Confessio* manuscripts are on parchment, though cheaper paper manuscripts began to be produced quite early (Bodleian, MS Ashmole 35 and BL, MS Egerton 913) and more frequently from about 1450 onward (BL, MS Harley 3869, London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 45, Bodleian, MS Arch. Selden MS B.11, Oxford, Wadham College, MS 13 and Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 63).

There were of course plainer manuscripts, with much less decoration (BL, MS Stowe 950, Bodleian, MS Ashmole 35), being produced in the first quarter, and more such manuscripts as the century went on. At the end of the century an unusually small manuscript of the *Confessio* was produced, Princeton UL, MS Garrett 136 (235 x 155 mm.). It was in fact a deliberate and carefully thought-out abridgement of the poem, a twin of Manchester, Chetham's, MS 6696, which nevertheless is no smaller than the average manuscript (385 x 260 mm.). Generally speaking, the number of new copies of the *Confessio* produced in the later part of the century dropped sharply, probably because the fall-out of the explosion in copying in the first quarter, as owners disposed of their copies, created a flourishing second-hand market. But grand MSS continued to be produced and there was something of a spurt around 1450–60, with the huge but badly mutilated BL, MS Harley 7184 (545 x 370 mm.), written by one of the 'hooked-g' scribes, the beautiful BL, MS Harley 3490, probably produced in Oxford where its artists were regularly employed by Roger Keys, and the dazzlingly inventive

New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS M.126, in a French batarde secretary hand, written by the French scribe 'Ricardus Franciscus'.²⁷

THE LATIN APPARATUS

Gower's design for the *Confessio* was extremely ambitious.²⁸ There was not only the English text and the sets of Latin verses at major text-breaks, but also Latin glosses to be accommodated in the margin or text-column, some of them very long, such as the glosses in the form of summaries of the narrative expounding a more sternly moral significance for Genius's exempla – over a hundred in all, usually beginning 'Hic narrat' or 'Hic ponit exemplum'. There are also substantial notes on the text, detailing the Confessor's explanations, usually headed 'Hic loquitur' or 'Hic tractat'; running commentaries on the longer stories of Constance (II.587–1598) and Appolinus (Apollonius of Tyre, VIII.271–2008), usually headed 'Qualiter'; very many shorter notes (often headed 'Nota') to mark subject-matter, especially in the encyclopaedic sections of Books V and VII, such as VII.1309–1440; many short glosses identifying authorities; and speech-markers, explicits and incipits. The Latin glosses are an attempt to emulate practice in contemporary manuscripts of Boethius and Ovid, and also in Boccaccio, but only ten double-column manuscripts actually have them in the margins, most of them elite first-generation copies.²⁹ The long moralising glosses on Genius's exempla are so prominent a feature

²⁷ For the Oxford artists of Harley 3490, see our description of this MS below, under 'DECORATION', and for Ricardus Franciscus, see K. L. Scott, 'A Mid-Fifteenth-Century English Illuminating Shop and its Customers', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 31 (1968), 170–96, esp. 170, note 3; others who have written about this scribe are detailed in our description of the Pierpont Morgan, MS M.126 below.

²⁸ For discussion of the Latin glosses (the general term conventionally used for all forms of Latin marginal comment), see Andrew Galloway, 'Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, *The Prick of Conscience*, and the History of the Latin Gloss in Early English Literature', in Urban (ed.), *Gower: Manuscripts, Readers, Contexts*, 39–70; and Alastair J. Minnis, 'Inglorious Glosses', in Sáez-Hidalgo and Yeager (eds), *Gower in England and Iberia*, 51–76. For the problems that scribes faced in accommodating the glosses, especially the longer narrative glosses, to the manuscript page, see Derek Pearsall, 'The Organisation of the Latin Apparatus in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: The Scribes and their Problems', in Matsuda, Linenthal and Scahill (eds), *The Medieval Book*, 99–112. For particular attention to the Latin verses, see Winthrop Wetherbee, 'Classical and Boethian Tradition in the *Confessio Amantis*', in Echard (ed.), *Companion to Gower*, 181–96.

²⁹ Seven are listed in note 2, above; the other three are BL, MS Add. 12043 (but the practice abandoned in Book I), BL, MS Egerton 913 (but the MS breaks off in Book I) and Oxford, New College, MS 266 (some allowance is made here for shift in practice within a MS).

of the *Confessio*, so important to Gower's determination to integrate the exempla into the larger moral structure of the *Confessio* and its over-arching book-by-book structure, that they are given special attention in the Descriptions. The moralising is not the same as Genius's 'morality of love' (more 'lore', less 'lust': see Prol. 19), and it may be that the moral expositions were added in the late 1390s to give extra weight to the poem when Gower was re-positioning himself as a serious Lancastrian apologist.

When written in the margins, these long glosses posed further problems for the scribes. If the text required that the gloss should begin someway down the page, and the gloss itself was long, the Latin text had to be run out under the English text-column, sometimes both columns separately, and for up to eight lines (for detail, see the description of Bodleian, MS Bodley 902; for an illustration, see Figure 7, Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3). It is the usual situation in Latin manuscripts with marginal material, and the most proficient scribes, most of whom would have had experience of copying Latin, managed it successfully, some after initial hesitancy, for instance the scribe of London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 134. Others found themselves carrying the gloss over onto the next page, an unsatisfactory expedient, compounded when the decorator, coming later, trained to decorate anything that looked like the beginning of a new portion of text, decorated the initial of the first word of the continuation. One can understand that scribes sometimes grew exasperated: the scribe of BL, MS Add. 12043, after trying hard and nevertheless making the inevitable mistakes, eventually threw up the whole business and stopped writing in the margins altogether. Others left the moralising glosses out from the start – Cambridge, St John's College, MS B.12, Oxford, Christ Church, MS 148 and New College, MS 326 – and two, Bodleian, MS Ashmole 35 and Princeton UL, MS Garrett 136, replaced them with abbreviated English summaries.

Taking the marginal gloss into the column produced its own problems, as is illustrated in detail in the descriptions in the present volume of BL, MSS Egerton 1991 and Harley 3490, and Bodleian, MSS Bodley 294 and 902. The gloss was often inserted at the point in the English text-column level where it began in the margin, usually two or three or more lines into the English text-paragraph (Macaulay's text, following Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3 exactly, places them in the margin thus). This was again untidy, and again made worse when the decorator proceeded to decorate the initial letter of the English text where it resumed, that is, several lines into the English (having often already routinely decorated the initial letter of the English text-paragraph). There was also the difficulty of inserting the Latin gloss in the text-column if the Latin was being done in red ink, as often. Should the copying of the Latin be done as the scribe went along, changing his pen each time he had to write Latin, with all the inconveniences that that incurred? There are examples proving that this was sometimes the practice, where the scribe forgot to exchange pens and started writing the ensuing English text in red. If he chose instead to leave spaces and do the long glosses at the end

of a stint or quire, it was difficult to know how much space to leave, since the calculation of how many full lines the shorter Latin lines in the margin would take up was easy to get wrong. Sometimes too much space was left and there were awkward gaps in the column; or too little was left, and the scribe had to improvise desperately, as he watched his space disappear, by writing smaller, or abbreviating the Latin brutally, or allowing the last lines of the gloss to drip over the ends of the next lines of English text (see Figure 4).

Usually, one presumes, scribes and decorators worked in harmony, trying to ease each other's problems. Even the Latin verses created problems. Some scribes of course wrote the Latin verses as prose, which solved all these problems, at a cost. Others had the habit of elegantly pushing the Latin verses, which were longer than the English lines, out into the left margin of the column, so that the ends of the lines would not encroach on the sacred space of the central column (for which reason they couldn't practise the same freedom in the b column). The decorator, when he came along to provide an elaborate border, found the space allocated to him had been encroached upon. One ingenious solution was to keep the border intact but put a little 'alcove' in it to accommodate the intrusive lines, as in Bodleian, MSS Bodley 902 and Fairfax 3 (see Figure 8).³⁰ Scribes also sometimes went out of their way to make the decorator's job easier: filling up column space, for instance, by leaving gaps or enlarging explicits and incipits so that a new Book would begin at the head of a column. This would enable the decorator to place a decorative initial and its accompanying border where it would be most advantageously displayed. A good example is Oxford, Magdalen College, MS lat. 213, and there are others, including Bodleian, MSS Bodley 902 and Fairfax 3. One is most often struck not by the carelessness and negligence and stupidity of scribes, which is what they are often accused of, but by the workmanlike patience they displayed in trying to make a good job out of what was put before them.

OWNERSHIP

One of the advantages of a Descriptive Catalogue of all the MSS of a single work is that it gives the opportunity for a comprehensive view, or at least a cross-section, of the conditions of manuscript production over a century or more.³¹ In particular it provides, though the evidence is partial and sketchy, a picture of the ownership of such manuscripts over that period. Manuscripts of the *Confessio* began to circulate just before 1400 and among

³⁰ The description of Glasgow UL, Hunterian MS 7 in this *Catalogue* gives a detailed account of scribes working with decorators to fudge solutions to these problems.

³¹ The possibility of such a comprehensive view has been greatly enhanced by the chapters on owners in Harris, 'Ownership and Readership', 76–208.

the first owners, as has been mentioned, were two royal princes. Another MS, San Marino, Huntington Library, MS EL 26 A 17, has the coat of arms of Henry earl of Derby (therefore before 1399 – though see now the new information on coats of arms in the Description of the MS below), while inscriptions in Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 307 connect it with Jacqueline de Luxembourg, who married John duke of Bedford, another of Henry's sons, in 1433. Gower's declaration of allegiance to Henry and the Lancastrian dynasty no doubt had much to do with this spurt in production, though the general rapid growth in commercial copying at just this time was probably more important. But given that up to twenty *de luxe* manuscripts of the *Confessio* were produced in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, many certainly for aristocratic patrons and customers, the haul of owners' names is disappointingly small. Coats of arms integral with the decoration of a manuscript appear in only three early *Confessio* MSS (San Marino, Huntington Library, MS EL 26 A 17, BL, MS Harley 3490, Oxford, Christ Church, MS 148), though part of a shield is just visible in Cambridge, St John's College, MS B.12 (the arms in Oxford, New College, MS 326 are later additions).³² One reason for the poor showing of coats of arms must be the great losses of beginning and ending leaves sustained by such MSS, whether through accident or, in the case of opening leaves, their deliberate removal for the sake of decorated borders and initials. It is on beginning and ending leaves, and adjacent flyleaves too, that ownership inscriptions were most likely to have been written down.

The fine manuscripts produced in the first quarter of the century, with the subsequent influx of discarded copies on the second-hand market, probably satisfied demand for a while. There is little evidence of new production until the appearance of BL, MS Harley 3490 towards 1450, written for Sir Edmund Rede of Boarstall, probably in Oxford (see Description of this MS below). It is a beautiful production, elaborately decorated, especially the exaggerated pictorial ascenders (compare BL, MS Stowe 950), with ten coats of arms associated with the Rede family painted in the lower borders. There is nothing to match it, but a strong case can be made that some fine manuscripts were falling after the mid-century into the hands of provincial gentry such as the Broughton family of Toddington in Bedfordshire (Bodleian, MS Bodley 902), and high officials like Sir Thomas Urswyck, recorder of London 1453–71 and Chief Baron of the Exchequer, a well-known book-collector.³³ It is possible that London, Society of

³² See Harris, 'Ownership and Readership', 168–77, in the context of a general account of fifteenth-century armigerous MSS. See also Carol Meale, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status', in Griffiths and Pearsall (eds), *Book Production and Publishing*, 201–38.

³³ He owned Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2, which in the sixteenth century passed to Claude Annibaut, Admiral of France. Urswyck also owned a *Canterbury Tales* manuscript which John M. Manly and Edith M. Rickert, *The Text of the*

Antiquaries, MS 134 was newly commissioned as early as the 1460s by Sir Thomas Littelton, another well-known book-collector of the time, since the manuscript was bequeathed to the Society by Charles Lyttelton at his death in 1768 and inscriptions show that it had been in the family since the fifteenth century. The library of Henry Willoughby, who owned what is now Nottingham UL, MS WLC/LM/8 about 1500, was one of the largest built up by a medieval gentry family. The name 'Elyzabeth Vernon' appearing in BL, MS Add. 12043 may indicate that the manuscript belonged in the fifteenth century to the quite distinguished Vernon family, but proof is impossible, as also with the name 'Grace Seyton' inscribed in the early sixteenth century in New York, Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library, MS M.126.

Later in the century, and on into the sixteenth, more modest manuscripts were made for John Mompesson, sheriff of Wiltshire (Oxford, New College MS 326), with his coat of arms added, possibly a clue to speculative production, and for John Dedwood, mayor of Chester in 1468 and 1483 (Oxford, Wadham College, MS 13). There are some frustrations to enquiry: in Cambridge, St John's College, MS B.12, a coat of arms has been cut out (when the manuscript changed hands, presumably), and in BL, MS Add. 22139 the arms of the Scottish Hay family have been imposed on a shield previously left blank (note the evidence of a Scottish corrector in this manuscript, mentioned above). Meanwhile, fine early fifteenth-century manuscripts were passing down to the richer London merchants such as the mercer Thomas Crispe (Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 67) and the goldsmith Sir John Mundy (Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 307) and more workaday manuscripts to less rich London merchants like the girdlers Thomas Goodenston and John Bartholomew (London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 45). It was not likely that many further manuscripts would be commissioned once Caxton had brought out his printed edition in 1483, except, ironically, for the manuscript copy of Caxton in Bodleian, MS Hatton 51.³⁴ But the *Confessio* still enjoyed moments of grandeur, as when Bodleian MS Bodley 693 passed to Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk (d. 1545), a favourite of Henry VIII, and BL, MS Egerton 1991 to Elizabeth Blount (Tailboys), one of the mistresses of the same monarch. Less breathtakingly, Bodleian, MS Laud 609 is recorded as having been owned by a son of Edward VI's Chief Butler. Numbers of fine manuscripts

Canterbury Tales, 8 vols (Chicago, 1940), I.616–17, thought likely to be the Hengwrt MS, now Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 392D, copied by Adam Pinkhurst (according to Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City*, 122).

³⁴ For examples of MSS copied from early printed books, see Appendix C in N. F. Blake, 'Manuscript to Print', in Griffiths and Pearsall (eds), *Book Production*, 403–32 (see esp. 426–29). For MS Hatton 51, see Aditi Nafde, 'Gower from Print to Manuscript: Copying Caxton in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 51', in Martha Driver, Derek Pearsall and R. F. Yeager (eds), *John Gower in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* (Cambridge, 2020), 189–200.

are inscribed with the names of sixteenth-century gentry families, including the Fairfaxes (Bodleian, MS Fairfax 3), the Feildings (BL, MS Harley 3869), the Fleetwoods (Bodleian, MS Bodley 294), the Russells and St Johns (Bodleian, MS Bodley 902), the Verneys (New York, Columbia UL, MS Plimpton 265) and Margaret Clifford, who married Henry Stanley, Lord Strange, created earl of Derby in 1572 (BL, MS Royal 18.C.xxii and Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21).³⁵

After 1600 or so, *Confessio* manuscripts not already annexed to the Bodleian or Royal libraries usually found their way into the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge colleges or, later, into collections like that of Robert Harley, earl of Oxford, or got stuffed away in country houses, from where they were 'rescued' by dealers and American collectors in the nineteenth century. New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS M. 690 was found in Ravensworth Castle, an obscure pile in North Yorkshire, by its owner, Henry Thomas, first earl of Ravensworth, in 1861, 'in a very dirty rotten condition' (fol. ii verso). He had it repaired and rebound, and it eventually went to the London dealers and so to Pierpont Morgan in 1924.

'ADDITIONS': READERS' COMMENTS

The term 'Additions' in this *Catalogue* is reserved for owners' inscriptions such as have just been described, and for readers' comments on the text, favourite tags and proverbs, and random jottings of all kinds, including bits of English and Latin verse. These bits of English verse are to be distinguished from texts regarded by the producers of the manuscripts as part of the production history and literary content of the manuscript, and therefore positioned in the body of the manuscript and not on the flyleaves. Such snatches of verse are listed among the 'Contents' of the manuscript, along with Gower's Latin addenda to the *Confessio*, with an asterisk attached if they postdate the years of production. Others are assembled under the head of 'Additions'. Tables of contents, such as occasionally appear in manuscripts of the *Confessio*, may fall into either category. New York, Pierpont Morgan, MS M.126 has an alphabetical index to the poem by the scribe, obviously part of the Contents of the manuscript, as are the tables of contents preceding or following the poem in Oxford, Magdalen College, MS lat. 213, Princeton UL, MS Taylor 5 (the table of contents is seventeenth century), and also Bodleian, MS Hatton 51, copied from Caxton. Other manuscripts have simple 'embryonic' tables of contents based on the lists of the seven sins that Gower frequently incorporates in his

³⁵ New York, Columbia UL, MS Plimpton 265 is a particularly good example of a fine MS being used as a 'family album', in this case by the Verneys: see Siân Echard, 'House Arrest: Modern Archives, Medieval Manuscripts', *Journal of Medieval and Modern Studies*, 30 (2000), 185–210.

poem, in addition to using them as the basis of the structure of the poem into books: Oxford, New College, MS 326, Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21, Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 307, and New York, Columbia UL, MS Plimpton 265. These go in 'Additions'.

'Additions', however, are usually tags, proverbs, bits of verse, comments on the text, and personal remarks such as litter the margins and flyleaves of many manuscripts.³⁶ BL, MS Egerton 1991 swarms with these comments and jottings, the family that owned the manuscript having used it as a kind of 'family album' for a century and more in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to record important events in the history of a minor aristocratic family, expanding and rising in the world, and also more intimate exchanges between its members. There are also proverbial sayings in English and in Latin, and comments on the text and summaries of its content: 'Thetis begilith deidame Clothyngh hir sonne Achilles in Maydens apparell' (V.2980) is rather typical of the attention provoked by slightly risqué tales. London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 134 has a similar mixture of family information and comment on the text: it includes a playful little exchange between, as we deduce, an aunt and her niece: 'my mynde to me a kingdome is' | 'Soe is myne if that I might obtaine it'. There are also examples in this manuscript of another use to which margins and flyleaves were put – practice in formal phrasing for letters and legal documents: 'Nouerint uniuersi & presentes me...' (formula for beginning a charter), or 'I praye go to the screvener in feter lane and desire him to Come to the flete and bringe the leter of atturneye...'.³⁷

Sometimes Gower's margins and flyleaves were used for popular love-songs like that of 'Besse Buntyngh the myllars may' in Bodleian, MS Laud misc. 609 (fol. 170v), or for cryptic messages of love (or practice in such, or just showing-off), most usually by women, or at least in women's voices, as in Bodleian, MS Bodley 902: 'Speke as yow lyst | I am contente for Now', and 'yf hope may hye hoppe and hope may haue hyre | So I shall my [hele] posses [and s/he] euerhyche desyere', and in Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS SM.1, where Jane Sergeant writes 'If v as I be true then v must with me lie and I with v'. These little lyrics and scraps of verse are often in a woman's voice, as in Bodleian, MS Laud misc. 609 and CUL, MS Mm.2.21; perhaps the margins of a big old book provided a 'secret place' for messages or daydreams.

³⁶ These have become a subject of great interest to students of MSS in recent years, as 'reception history' expanded to cover all aspects of literary and cultural history. The chapter on readers' comments in MSS of the *Confessio* in Harris, 'Ownership and Readership', 209–43, is an excellent demonstration of this enlarged interest; for a slightly later period, see William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, 2007), and Jean-Christophe Mayer, *Shakespeare's Early Readers: A Cultural History from 1599–1800* (Cambridge, 2019).

Oxford, Magdalen College, MS lat. 213 has much that is in other ways typical, including the rather complacent (surely male?) comment on the tale of Rosiphelee, 'Maides beware you beare not horse halters', repeated almost word for word in BL, MS Harley 3869. The latter MS is also typical in its interest in stories of sex and violence, with annotations singling out the stories of Medea and Tereus (the latter a particular target for comment), perhaps to mark them the more readily for re-reading, and a 'nota' beside the suggestive story of Hercules, Eole and Faunus (V.6833). Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS Osborn fa. 1 has a sardonic comment on Venus being 'wroth' with Actaeon, 'as women be most commonly', and betrays a certain prurient interest in the stories of Nectanabus and Olympias (VI.1980) and of Neptune's rape of Cornix (V.6183).

More restrained are the margins of BL, MS Harley 7184, with comfortable approving comments from a seventeenth-century reader on Gower's moral commonplaces, 'A good rule to worke by', 'True saying', 'good counsell', as also on Gower's edifying stories in Chicago, Newberry Library, MS +33.5, 'Note here a worthie story of...' or 'Note a plesant history howe a king...' and a frequent 'nota' to mark 'good stories'. Perhaps such commentators took their cue from the moralising Latin glosses, without bothering much with the actual narratives. In the Bute MS there are strings of manacula pointing to edifying tales, and daggers in BL, MS Royal 18.C.xxii. Much else is likewise sober, for instance the lists of the sins given in the passages where they are treated, in the margins in BL, MS Harley 3490, alongside the running-titles in BL, MS Harley 3869, and in place of the running-titles in Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21 (mentioned above as 'embryonic' tables of contents). There is much Latin in the margins of BL, MS Stowe 950, some of it giving the impression of dutiful exercises written out by a pupil, and pagefuls of Latin apophthegms on the flyleaves of Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 67. Less to do with the actual contents of the manuscripts are those execrations wishing a painful death on whoever steals the book, which are familiar in most kinds of manuscript. Sometimes the margins are used, apropos of nothing, to abuse the writer's acquaintance: 'Iohn Morgan is a knaue' (Oxford, Magdalen College, MS lat. 213), and 'William Swanne is a very knaue' (Bodmer MS). In Bodleian, MS Laud misc. 609 'Thomas baly ys a knaue testys Alleandur brayne' provokes the retort 'Who þat euer wryte this | I beschrewe hym Ywis...' continuing for four more lines quite cleverly rhyming on 'brayne'. It is maybe a schoolboys' game. Probably many readers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries echoed the plaintive or exasperated cry in BL, MS Add. 22139: 'As for this Book I doe nott understand itt, and I haue fini[shed with it?]'.

It is rarely that a manuscript contains no owners' marks or readers' comments at all, but New York, Pierpont Morgan, MSS M.125 and M.126 are pristine, as is Philadelphia, Rosenbach, MS 1083/29. One assumes that such handsome manuscripts called for a certain respect, but many fine manuscripts are scrawled over regardless, and the main reason that some

manuscripts suffered less was probably that they did not pass through so many hands, and found their final homes early. Annotation goes on after 1700, usually biographies of Gower drawn from standard encyclopaedias, or screeds of Latin barely relevant to the subject, as in Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS SM.1.

One final remark. It was originally part of the plan for the present *Catalogue* that there should be a section describing the dialect of each scribe, to be done by Jeremy J. Smith. In the event the descriptions tended to repeat that the poem was written in London in 'Gowerian English', and it became clear that the subject was better treated separately, as a whole, as it has subsequently been done by Smith.³⁷ Few manuscripts were written outside London: Oxford, New College, MS 326 and Oxford, Wadham College, MS 13 were written in provincial centres, and BL, MS Harley 3490 in Oxford. Of course, individual scribes may have come from any part of the country to work in the commercial centres in London, but the traces of their dialect are only rarely of significance. Even when the scribe's own dialect can be localised (see the description of Cambridge UL, MS Mm.2.21), this did not affect the place of production.

³⁷ Jeremy J. Smith, 'Studies in the Language of some Manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Glasgow, 1985), and 'Spelling and Tradition in Fifteenth-Century Copies of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*', in M. L. Samuels and Jeremy J. Smith (eds), *The English of Chaucer and his Contemporaries* (Aberdeen, 1988), 96–113. The latter volume contains also M. L. Samuels and Jeremy J. Smith, 'The Language of Gower', 13–22.

DESCRIPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL MANUSCRIPTS

AN EXPLANATION OF THE format of these individual descriptions is provided in the Introduction, along with many important points necessary to understanding them fully. The Introduction should be read in conjunction with the consultation of the individual manuscript descriptions. It is not a general introduction to the *Confessio Amantis* but an introduction to those descriptions. Note that descriptions of the manuscripts under each heading are ordered alphabetically according to the city of their current location.