Chapter 6. An authoritative source

The last chapter placed the emergence of ‘Properties’ in England in the context of the church’s concern with preaching, the nobility’s concern to support with authoritative texts their control of their domains, and social networks of wealthy book owners. In the fifteenth century these concerns and networks combine to uphold the position of ‘Properties’ as a prestigious and desirable text. We find it commodified as a manuscript or printed book, adapted as an informative manual, and preserved in ecclesiastical and academic libraries. This chapter looks at some examples of how readers and writers made use of Bartholomew’s authority in the context of increasing literacy, but also increasing instability and conflict. From the time of Richard II’s reign to that of Richard III there is evidence of hostility between England and France, king and subjects, Yorkists and Lancastrians; and between upper and lower ranks as the economic climate changed.

The numbers of prose texts written in English dialects suggest that lay people had better access to the written word, and that the later dissemination and rise in status of ‘Properties’ occur at a time of increased lay literacy and professional involvement with informative and devotional texts. The wide range in types and quality of manuscripts drawing on our work in Latin and English, from the cramped home-made booklet of recipes and extracts to the beautifully laid-out and decorated workshop manuscript, testifies to the social breadth of writers with access to ‘Properties’ in whole or part. The record shows that versions in Latin, French and English vernacular were available to both clerical and non-clerical English users.¹

This chapter will look at some of the evidence that writers and readers responding to the demands of their particular time found a durable source of material and authority ‘in Properties’ that they could cite or adapt, or commodify as a prestigious piece of personal property. It could be a source of information; a source of moral examples and images; an authority on the properties of specific items; and a valuable commodity for investment, marketing or exchange.

A source of wisdom

Knowledge had been the object of systematising efforts since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the church and the Paris schools required scholastic texts to support the drive to educate an effective body of preachers. As we saw in the prologues by Belcalzer and Corbechon, knowledge could also confer a mantle of wisdom like that of Solomon, which was seen as appropriate to landed lords. For Thomas Berkeley, Trevisa provided volumes in English prose embodying knowledge of the world’s history and the world’s content.
As we saw in the last chapter, a work such as ‘Properties’ could be re-created as luxurious copies made from expensive materials, and become solid investments, valuable gifts, and overt declarations of wealth and power. The well-preserved manuscript owned by Chaworth is one example; the badly-damaged fifteenth-century copy of ‘Properties’ in English now in the Bristol City Library is another. During the fifteenth century, copies of the French and English vernacular versions of the work, made to a high standard of workmanship, became desirable commodities for purchase or commissioning from specialist workshops. In 1482, Edward IV acquired a two-volume copy of the French version made a century earlier for Charles V, superimposing his own coat of arms upon the title-page with its original dedication to Charles. Edward is thought to have commissioned or bought his copy of *Propriétés* from a workshop in Bruges in about 1482, while in exile. The customising of the copy is consistent with a wish, like that of Charles, to assert the legitimacy of his claim to wise kingship. This copy is still part of the English royal library founded by Henry VII. It is not surprising therefore to find ‘Properties’, either in English or in French, included in an un-headed list of works on chivalry, piety, wisdom and romance, now at Balliol College Library, Oxford:

Boccacio de casu virorum illustrium/ The siege of Troy/Sanke Royall/ Boicius de consolacione/ de Regimine principum/ Secreta Secretorum/ The Romaunce of Partenope/Rommat de la Ros/Brute the chroniciels/Seynt Kateryne of Seene/ The pylgrymage o the sowle/The tales of Caunterburye/The booke of cheuallerie/The booke of the salutacioun of owre lady/Egidius de Regimine principum/Legenda Aurae/Maister of the game/Pontus/ Maundevile/The booke of the ij kynges of Coleyne/The Revelicioun of Seynt Brigiede/Sydrake/ Bartholomew in tweye bookis of ij volemys.

Whether the list was a catalogue, a record or a wish-list, it shows a fifteenth-century reader including Bartholomew’s work among both new and old chivalric and devotional works from England, Italy and France, crossing boundaries of language and genre. The list suggests that these books were for both recreation and edification — they include the *Canterbury Tales* as well as the *Pilgrimage of the Soul*. That ‘Properties’ was also valued as a religious work that could serve a commemorative purpose and benefit the souls of the deceased is attested to by Sir Thomas Tyrrell of Essex (d.1477), who directed in his will that his copy of ‘Properties’ be given to his parish church ‘theire forth to serve in perpetuite to have my soule and the soule of my wif and of myn Aunte Margarete Rypyle’. We find an early Latin manuscript of the work in the careful possession of a west-country vicar in the late fourteenth century. The Reverend John Taylor of Ilminster, Somerset, apparently had the copy re-bound, some old accounts of work in Ilminster church being used in the binding.
Preserving the sources

The global array of authorised knowledge brought together in the compilations became a resource for specialists in separate fields of study, and in the later Middle Ages we can see professionals making customised compendia specific to their fields. ‘Properties’, with its pull-apart format and comprehensive coverage of worldly matters, evidently lent itself to the making of extracts and adaptation. Users drew excerpts from ‘Properties’ to compile books for their own use, edification or enjoyment in modernised, functional formats, in Latin — the language of scholars as well as clerics — and in English and French. Braswell’s study of utilitarian literature indicates that ‘Properties’ and other authoritative, informative texts gained repute among the growing numbers of literate professionals in English society who could draw on Latin as well as vernacular versions.\(^7\) In particular, Books 12 to 18 of ‘Properties’ tended to be copied to make smaller, customised compilations of authorised information. For example, physicians and astrologers made shortened versions and abstracts of ‘Properties’ with emphasis on harmful, remedial or prognostic properties of animals, stones and plants. Writers on heraldry and history also turned to it as a source on the moral, symbolic and historic properties of those things.

There is plenty of manuscript evidence that people used ‘Properties’ or material derived from it to put into new writings for their own lives and needs. These needs might be for reliable, authorised information about the physical world such as physicians or alchemists might require in a handy manual format. Others might need the moralised interpretations of things preserved in, for example, the medieval Latin bestiaries as a source for sermons or tracts that they could present in a local vernacular. By contrast, some writers needed accounts of the properties of things that could be interpreted in more than one way for the purposes of irony, satire or emblematic representation. Such writers would include partisan social commentators and representatives, such as propagandists and heralds.

‘Properties’ was not the only compilation available to late-medieval English readers. Those of Thomas de Cantimpré, Albertus Magnus and Alexander Neckam were available in Latin but were not translated into English. One of the strengths of ‘Properties’ was that it preserved knowledge laid down by writers of the past and, being organised in clearly defined Books and chapters, could be easily excerpted. Seymour reasonably concludes that Bartholomew’s was the most popular of the compilations on the natures and properties of things because it was accessible and adaptable.\(^8\) Adaptations of ‘Properties’ made in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries indicate that the Latin ‘Properties’ in particular was valued as an available repository of useful knowledge carried forward from the past: from the classical writers Aristotle and Plato, Pliny and Solinus via their
Christian mediators, and from the Christian fathers and earlier compilers, Jerome and Gregory, Augustine, Bede and Isidore of Seville.

‘Properties’ was one available source of information about living things capable of a flexible range of interpretation, and which made ancient knowledge available to readers, regardless of the specialist points of view they brought to the work. We can see in some cases the importance given by writers to acknowledging the sources cited by Bartholomew. For example, in a fourteenth-century volume of Latin extracts from Books 12, 16, 17 and 18 of ‘Properties’ a reader has underlined the names of authorities as they occur in the text: Pliny, St Gregory, Aristotle, Constantinus, St Basil, St Ambrose, St Denis, the Book of Job and Isidore of Seville. In a fourteenth-century codex that includes ‘Properties’ Book 15, a reader has written: ‘Take note of which authors one should put one’s trust in’ against Bartholomew’s reference to Jerome’s authority.

Names of sources are included in a home-made collection of remedies and medical notes in Latin, bound with recipes in English, around a core of items from ‘Properties’ to form what appears to be a personal commonplace book or manual, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The extracts come from Books 16, 17 and 18 of ‘Properties’ and are introduced by the rubric ‘What follows are excerpts from the book entitled De proprietatibus rerum’. In this home-made book the text is taken right up to the margins; no space is wasted and many chapters are omitted, but the writer has squeezed the names of Bartholomew’s authorities into the margins. There is no decoration, but red-ink headings and paragraph marks make the whole thing readable as a reference work in spite of the density of text on the page. A comparison with the contents of Trevisa’s Properties, Book 17, indicates that the plants included tend to be herbs and fruits associated with medicine, food and cooking while the exotic and the generalised are excluded.

As Anthony Edwards has demonstrated, ‘Properties’ was regarded in the later Middle Ages in England as a source book to be plundered for a diverse range of miscellaneous information, as writers applied its authority to secular, devotional and didactic literature. Sometimes we can see the same manuscript serving as a source for widely different purposes over time, as in the case of British Library Manuscript Add. 27944 which, Ralph Hanna suggests, Thomas Berkeley caused to be made in London to advertise the translation and his own literary patronage. In a very different type of study of the same manuscript, Michael Seymour deduces that it supplied copy-text for a medical practitioner who, in around 1425–50, abstracted material from Book 7 on arthritis, sciatica and gout. The abstract reflects a concern on the part of this reader for segments of the vernacular manuscript with a particular practical, medical application for him or herself, rather than for the work as a whole.

Several such epitomes exist in Latin and in vernacular languages. In another study, Seymour notes that Book 7, in the redaction known as liber de regimine
sanitatis et de virtutibus naturalibus, had been appointed for use by lecturers at the medical university of Montpellier in 1340. He finds that the content is ‘wholly medical’, and ‘probably reflects the day-to-day concerns of a practising physician … who wanted an inexpensive summary of contemporary medical opinion’. A more personal, home-made collection of medical extracts occurs in Wellcome Institute Manuscript 335, a narrow octavo notebook convenient for the pocket, containing recipes, prayers and paintings of plants. It comprises a herbal accompanied by extracts from ‘Properties’ Books 5 and 7 headed ‘Excerpts from the book entitled De Proprietatibus rerum (B. Anglici). And firstly, concerning the lung.’ This leads into headed excerpts in Latin on the breath, stomach, liver, skin, spleen, gut, kidneys, bladder, urine and dizziness. Prayers to the Virgin and to St Gregory follow, and excerpts from a surgical treatise. Recipes for cures written in French at the start and finish of the codex are further evidence that this collection served a practical need for home remedies, but that these might be accessed in three languages. The Books on birds, stones, plants, animals and substances, and the long chapter on fishes, are barely altered at the level of the chapters; word-by-word examination of the text could reveal whether more detailed cuts have been made.

It may not be clear that a writer had a particular purpose or point of view in making an adapted version of ‘Properties’. The unknown maker of British Library Harley Manuscript 512, an abridged Latin ‘Properties’ entitled ‘On the natures and properties of things’, included all the Books, shortening them to abridge the whole compendium in a manner breve et plano (‘brief and to the point’), but with no apparent emphasis on one area of knowledge. Perhaps a reader in a particular locality would pinpoint plant or animal species known or obtainable in the area. Neither do we know exactly how individual readers became familiar with ‘Properties’ or obtained copy-text. While such processes are hidden from us, the adaptations show that literate people had the means to make copies of parts they wanted for their own use or edification, and to translate, abridge and turn the lengthy and comprehensive work into a manageable text for themselves.

‘Bartholomew the bestiary’

Bartholomew’s status as an authority on nature tends to be confirmed by re-makers of ‘Properties’ in Latin and/or English who selected only from Books and chapters concerning birds, plants, stones and animals. For example, a fourteenth-century workshop-produced manuscript with a professional finish and layout, British Library Manuscript Royal 12 E iii, consists of Books 12, 16, 17 and 18 only, in Latin. It is stylishly produced in book-hand, well laid-out, with neatly coloured initials. The focus of the selection is on birds, fishes, stones and minerals, and herbs, with no reference to the elements in which they are found or to the medieval scheme of creation as a whole. The chapters of Book 17 on plants are reduced by the exclusion of the general, the exotic and the
processed, while materials from the omitted first chapter on the general properties of trees and plants are made into two short chapters on leaves and flowers. A later hand has added alphabetical tables of the listed birds, stones and animals, as if to further organise the wealth of information. We cannot tell for whom it was made but this selection of Books of ‘Properties’ again suggests that Bartholomew was regarded as a marketable, acceptable source on the properties of birds, stones, plants and animals.

It does seem arguable that Properties in English provided information transmitted in the Latin bestiaries. For the writer of Mum and the Sothsegger in the 1390s, ‘Bartholomew the bestiary’ had been an authority on bees. A manuscript that has been described as a unique late-medieval representative of the bestiary genre in England, now in Cambridge University Library, draws heavily on Bartholomew as an acknowledged source supplemented by readers’ annotations in English. It is made in the form of a bestiary, with entries on animals, each with a prominent illustration and with each description of properties followed by a moral significatio. Its maker and original purpose are unknown, but the content and marginalia all suggest it could have supplied recreation, instruction and moral edification from bestiary sources. The manuscript indicates that Bartholomew was still seen as an authority and repository of even older authorities on the properties of animals, birds, fishes and plants late in the fifteenth century, but the illustrations suggest that the volume was designed to be diverting as well as instructive. It testifies to a continuity of interest in animals as moral examples along with a more empirical attitude in written texts to animals and birds as local and identifiable objects of interest. In spite of the fact that it does share some features with bestiary manuscripts, we need to ask what function a moralised collection of animal properties could have had in late-medieval England in a non-clerical context.

**Moralising properties**

Because of the way Bartholomew presented certain creatures as analogous to people interacting with each other, his compilation could later be used in wider contexts as a source for writers of stories where animals might reflect or parody human behaviour. Indeed, Michel Zink argues that medieval literature concerning animals is really to do with people. Writers of devotional texts could invoke readers’ knowledge of the symbolism of certain animals and birds, preserved in the bestiary, to teach through allegorical and moralising associations. Bartholomew had defined the properties of things as their ‘dispositions, doings and effects’; that is, their characters, behaviours, and relations with each other, and this implied analogies with the relationships and behaviours of people. Although in ‘Properties’ the things of creation reflect the cosmos in their hierarchical arrangement (as Bartholomew had explained in Books 3 and 4), they also have complementary and opposing properties. In the later Books, the
compiler had organised the plethora of things of the world into complementary relationships of alliance or enmity, fertility and infertility, poison and antidote, all under the providence of *natura*. The diversity of living things and their mutual oppositions, purposely ordained by *natura*, forms the theme of Bartholomew’s long introduction to Book 18. Even fruit could be described as wild/tame; fair/foul; good/evil. This allowed writers to find, in his chapters and cross-references, analogues for the dynamics of human relationships observable around them.

The writer of the mid-fifteenth-century collection of sermons *Jacob’s Well* shows us how ‘Properties’ could be a vehicle for carrying forward the concept of such mutual tensions through analogy with well-known beasts:

*Bertylmew, de proprietatibus rerum, libro xvijo, he seyth þat an harpe hath strynges of wolfys guttys & of schepys mengyd to hepe, schal neuer be set wel in twene, be-cause þe scheep & þe wolf arn contraraye in kynde.*

Since the sheep and the wolf have contrary properties, a harp strung with gut from both of these animals will be discordant. As we saw in Chapter 5, the author of *Dives and Pauper* draws on the same image in the context of his dialogue-sermon on ‘Thou shalt not kill’.

In the image of the 10-stringed harp, these two writers rely on their readers’ awareness of the predator/prey relationship between wolf and sheep, and the antithetical nature of their properties, to strengthen the point that one failure of Christian observance could vitiate all the rest. They also assume familiarity with the Old Testament story of David, the epistle of James on keeping the whole law, and the parable of the lost sheep.

Bartholomew’s account of the wolf combines stories from a number of sources including *Physiologus*, Isidore, ‘Cherles’, Pliny, Homer, Avicenna, Solinus and Aristotle, that convey the density of fearful myth surrounding the animal, especially its savagery towards sheep; and descriptions of actual wolf behaviour such as fishermen’s observations of the way it scavenges for fish offal. He concludes the chapter:

*Also Aristotil seiþ þat al pe kynde of wolues is contrary and aduersary to al þe kynde of scheep. And so I haue yraddde in a booke þat a strenge ymade of a wolues gutte ydo among harpestrenges ymade of þe guttes of scheep destroyþ and corrumpþ hem, as an egle feþer ydo amonge coluere fþeres pilieþ and gnaweþ hem if þey ben ylefte togidres longe in oon place, as he seiþ. Loke tofore de aquila.*

Bartholomew stresses the contrariness of nature between wolf and sheep, like that between eagle and dove, whereas the later users of this source make explicit...
the exegetical link to the Ten Commandments and the theme of salvation. We can see how Bartholomew’s multiplicity of sources and viewpoints enabled these later writers to use the harp-string anecdote as a basis for sermons with the addition of their own emphasis or interpretation.

The multiple viewpoints and opinions cited by Bartholomew on some matters allowed later writers to recast the properties of things to create ambiguity and double entendre as a basis for social comment. Ambiguity and double entendre offered a useful mode of discourse for those who wished to represent objects of criticism at a safe remove, such as writers of political satire; or who needed to privilege some properties over others in their interpretations of Bartholomew, such as the heralds.

The heralds were allied with lawyers in that their knowledge and records of genealogies could be applied to legal claims of ownership or inheritance in threatening times. Anthony Wagner describes the development of the functions and status of heralds from the earliest mention (c.1170) of their role in tournaments. Their responsibilities and expertise increased during the Hundred Years’ War and, by the 1370s, they were compiling rolls of arms and were called to give expert evidence when the right to a coat of arms was disputed. They could also set their hands and seals to certificates or grants of arms, a process tightened under Henry V to control the use of arms by unqualified persons. By the end of the fifteenth century, heraldry was a well-developed system for bestowing and interpreting arms, with its own technical language, rules and body of knowledge. Through the system, they had developed an agreed code of meanings attached to certain animals, birds, plants and colours in use as personal or family emblems. The animal or bird displayed upon the shield, so easily depicted in carved stone and wood, or in the margins of a manuscript, could make an encoded claim interpretable by those who knew about the charges’ properties. 30

The author of the earliest-known heraldic treatise, the Anglo-Norman De heraudie, variously dated to between 1280 and 1345, had listed the limited number of natural and fabulous creatures that could be used as charges on the shield — the lion, the leopard, and the griffin; the eagle, the martlet, the popinjay, the crow, the swan and the heron. 31 Although the list of heraldic birds and animals was still quite short, the herald and the armiger were free to draw on puns, or on literary or other sources. Aspiring armigers would have needed the expertise and resources of the heralds to select something suitable. 32

Bartholomew and the heralds

Like physicians, the heralds were cultivated, professional and pragmatic readers who found an invaluable source of knowledge in ‘Properties’. 33 The evident increase in heraldic display in written and graphic forms during the fifteenth
century coincides with production of manuscript copies of *Properties*, and of other manuscripts based on ‘Properties’ or *Properties*, made in workshops and in the home.\(^{34}\) At the time when Trevisa was working on his prose translations, cognisances and emblems appear in literature and art as weapons in the propaganda wars between Richard II and his critics. Later, during the conflict between Lancastrian and Yorkist factions, ‘Properties’ could supply or confirm properties of creatures as a basis for some important political image-making.

The *Tractatus de Armis* by Johannes De Bado Aureo, a work contemporary with Trevisa’s translation of ‘Properties’, demonstrates Richard II’s participation in heraldry and the part that Bartholomew continued to play in its formal expression, during and after his reign.\(^{35}\) The writer of this Latin treatise cites Bartholomew on the properties of certain animals and birds depicted in arms.\(^{36}\) ‘Bartholomew of the property of things’ is De Bado Aureo’s most frequently-cited source, at times referred to by name but often closely though selectively quoted. He notes Bartholomew’s agreement with other sources — Aristotle, Isidore, Pliny, and the heralds ‘franciscus’ [de Foveis] and ‘dominus Bartholus [di Sasso Ferrato]’ — regarding the boar, the horse, the bear, the dragon and the dove.\(^{37}\) Following technical information on the hierarchy of colours, the *Tractatus* lists the beasts and birds that are, by that time, suitable to be borne as arms (lion, leopard, pard, hart, boar, dog, dragon, horse, bear, eagle, falcon, owl, dove, crow, swan, cock, gryphon, martlet,pike and crab) and explains what character traits or life events a particular emblem might betoken.\(^{38}\)

De Bado Aureo dedicates his treatise to Richard II’s queen, Anne of Bohemia (d.1394). For these patrons it was necessary to present their most prominent emblems, the lion of England and Richard’s personal emblem, the white hart, in the best possible light. He had a complex array of properties to draw upon, derived from a range of sources. By the late Middle Ages the bestiary sources on both *leo*, the lion, and *cervus*, the hart or stag, spanned the eras from pre-Christian to contemporary times. We can see from secular literature — fables, secular bestiaries, heraldic treatises, romances and allegories, and moralised hunting treatises — that both the lion and the stag acquired great significance during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The stag accrued a wealth of significance from many different sources, including ‘Properties’, and became in its various forms one of the most widely adopted personal emblems in the later Middle Ages. For noblemen and women who enjoyed the actuality of the chase, secular and erotic associations were added to the stag’s significance as a symbol of Christian endeavour and purity.\(^{39}\) The lion, bestiary symbol of Christ as all-powerful king, is thought to be the oldest animal symbol used as a European monarch’s emblem. The lion’s character as a Christian symbol — the Lion of Judah — became further defined through its heraldic association with kingship, and by contrast with its disreputable bestiary relatives, the lioness, the pard

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An authoritative source
and the leopard. Controversy over the emblem shows how the blazon, which could be recorded in an unequivocal verbal format, was a more reliable possession than its variable graphic representations.

Bartholomew had given the scriptural and bestiary accounts of the stag seeking the water brooks, extracting and trampling serpents, helping its companions across water, hiding its hind and her young, and hiding itself while its new antlers grew. But the stag also had some negative connotations of timidity from classical literature, and Bartholomew slips Aristotle’s statement that the stag is the friend of the fox into the chapter on *vulpis*; timidity being perhaps an adjunct of guile. In De Bado Aureo’s account, the stag’s yearly moult and withdrawal while it grows new and bigger antlers, becomes a sign of increasing wisdom, peaceableness and wealth in the bearer of the emblem who was ‘poor in first age and substance’. The image would have been appropriate to Richard’s long minority under the domination of powerful adults, and compatible with the style of kingship that he adopted. De Bado Aureo’s selective account of the properties of the hart shows us how Richard was able to proclaim his kingship to be wise, mature, peaceable and discreet through the heraldic emblem he and his followers displayed.

**Bartholomew and the satirist: the hobbling stag**

Richard was under great pressure in the last years of his reign. Henry Bolingbroke was exiled in 1397 but returned to effect Richard’s deposition and became Henry IV in 1399. At the same time that Richard’s followers were displaying his white-hart emblem in the late nineteens, some of his opponents were using the same image to undermine his rule. Hassig remarks on the classical notion of the stag’s timidity, ignored by the bestiary writers in their emphasis upon its positive scriptural associations. Bartholomew does reveal, however, that the hart or stag, *cervus*, could still be understood as a creature with two sides to its character. We know that the contrary idea of the tainting timidity of the stag was accessible in ‘Properties’ in the chapter on the fox, and those in possession of this knowledge only had to present the hart in a different light to present the king and his liveried followers as timid and impotent. The author of the alliterative poem *Mum and the Sothsegger*, thought to date from the last years of the reign, uses the negative properties of the stag to attack and mock the king. In Passus II, the writer begins by marvelling at the number of livery badges Richard has granted. He tells Richard that although he has given out so many badges, the harts fail to stand by him because they are afraid of the eagle (an emblem of Bolingbroke). Also, they are dismayed that moultng-time is coming, and so the whole herd runs away to the forest and is scattered. The writer goes on to list the wrongs performed by the harts. They had cumbered the country, stripped the poor, let the king down and spoilt the broth (lines 28–52). For every hart on a badge, Richard lost 10 score of hearts (lines 42–3). In Passus III, the writer
makes fun of the stags in old age, hobbling and feeble, searching among the bushes for adders and feeding on venom in an effort to rejuvenate themselves.\textsuperscript{45} Whereas De Bado Aureo, writing for Richard’s queen, made the stag’s property of moulting a token in heraldry of discretion and increasing wisdom, here it is represented as an embarrassment and disgrace.

**England’s genealogy: the lion and the leopard**

A by-product of civil war during the fifteenth century was the demand for more emblems to signal personal qualities and allegiances, as gentry sought to improve their social status, and the rapid development of the ethos and trappings of heraldry to meet this demand. An English translation of the *Tractatus de Armis*, made in the following century in a fine manuscript version, supports this view. This translation, illustrated with the heraldic beasts and blazons it describes, is followed in the codex by an English chronicle of monarchs, starting with the arrival in England of the legendary Brutus, and illustrated with each monarch’s retrospectively-created coat of arms.\textsuperscript{46} These illustrations suggest that contemporaries saw heraldic properties as a way of confirming and validating the account of England’s heroic origins set down in chronicles such as the *Brut*. The maker of the codex includes a discussion of the arms of Brutus, legendary founder of Britain, and his three sons (Locrine, Camber and Albanact, founders of England, Wales and Scotland respectively): a lion rampant with a double head and red lilies on a field of gold.\textsuperscript{47} Again we find Bartholomew referred to as confirmation that the lion, as emblem of England, had the necessary supremacy over all other beasts. Nevertheless, like the hart, the lion had potentially conflicting associations.

The two-faced character of the lion derived from its dual function in the Bible as vengeful and merciful.\textsuperscript{48} Bartholomew cites *Physiologus* on its Christ-like properties: it is merciful, gentle and of kingly demeanour; nobly-maned and generous in sharing its food; its body has good medicinal virtues.\textsuperscript{49} He reserves all the lion’s vices, such as cruelty, gluttony, anger, madness and lechery, for his separate chapter on the lioness, citing Pliny and Isidore, Aristotle and Avicenna.\textsuperscript{50} Bartholomew provides more information on the leopard, transmitting Isidore’s account of it as a very cruel beast engendered in adultery between a lioness and a pard, and adding the opinion of Aristotle that the leopard’s method of chasing prey is confused and unnatural. The leopard is one of those unchivalrous creatures which, like the fox and the snake, masters strong ones by craftiness and not by strength. In Trevisa’s words: ‘And so the lasse beste haþ ofte þe maystrye of the strengere beste by deceipte and gyly ... and dar nouȝt rese on him opentliche in the feelde, as Homerus seîþ.’\textsuperscript{51} This was valuable knowledge at the time of the Hundred Years’ War, since the leopard was one of the emblems of France.
De Bado Aureo presents the properties of the lion appropriate for the royal emblem of England. The ‘nature and kind of the lion’, although it could be represented in other ways by this time, is in the translated Tractatus unequivocally that which ‘the king of England is wont to show’ as the ‘three lions passing of gold in a field of red’, with the kingly attributes implied by the charge and blazon. The author is able to put the French leopard firmly in its place as a derogatory emblem suitable for those born in adultery; or, being like the mule an infertile hybrid, for prelates. We can see, by comparing his selections from Bartholomew on the lion and the hart, how De Bado Aureo presented the properties of these creatures in such a way as to make them accord with the heraldic and personal function they already performed for Richard II, for whose queen he claimed to be writing.

The wild pig and the tame pig

Bartholomew can be of use to the historian in providing a key to coded insult in the long aftermath of civil war in the century after Richard II’s deposition. Our knowledge of properties can help us to detect, for example, the force of the satirical attack on Richard by Wyllyam Collyngbourne in 1484, one year before the king’s death:

The Cat, the Rat and Lovel our dog
Rule all England under a hog.

This couplet has often been quoted, but we are made more aware of the verse’s potential resonance by the distinction Bartholomew had made between the wild pig, aper, and the tame pig, porcus:

The boor hatte aper and is a swyn þat lyueþ in woodes or in feelde and is most cruel and nouste mylde, as Isidorus seþ ... Alsswyno the boor is so fers a beste and also so cruelt þat for his fiersnesse and his cruelnesse he despyseþ and setteþ nouþ by deþþ. And he reseþ ful spitously aœins þe poync of a spere of þe hontere. And þough it so be þat he be smyten or stiked wiþ a spere þurgh þe body, þitte for þe grete yre and cruelte þat he hapþ in herte and strengþe to wrekþ himself of his adversary wiþ his tuskes. And putþ himself in peril of deþ wiþ a wonder fersenesse aœins þe wepene of his enemy.

This shows how the boar could signify valour and indomitable power in the armiger. The attributes of fierceness, wrath, cruelty, and courage in facing the adversary are appropriate for a military leader fighting for the throne and rallying support among military men. They seem especially appropriate to Richard III in the light of his apparently suicidal courage at Bosworth, and raise the question of how far an armiger might identify with his or her personal emblem.
However, Bartholomew’s chapter on the domestic pig, *porcus*, reveals its insulting connotations:

A swyn hatte *porcus* as it were *sporcus* ‘vile and defouled’, as Isidorus seif *libro xii*. and froteþ and walweþ in drytte and in fenne and dyueþ in slyme and bawdeþ himself þerwiþ and resteþ in styntkyng place. Oracius seif þat ‘þe sowe is frende to fenne and to pluddes’ and þerfore swyn ben accompted foule and vnhoneste.\(^{56}\)

### The English rose

In contrast to the use of hidden properties of animals for social and political comment, we find the Tudors promoting the public display of the national flower as a dynastic symbol with unambiguously positive properties. After the death of the Boar at Bosworth, the new king, Henry VII, in 1485 adopted the rose as emblem of the Tudor dynasty; joined with the white rose of York in his marriage to Edward’s daughter, Elizabeth, it became the Tudor rose that would restore the garden of England despoiled by the wallowing swine.\(^{57}\) Bartholomew had praised the rose as first of all flowers, and Trevisa continues the emphasis on its virtues:

Among alle floures of þe worlde þe flour of þe rose is chief and bereþ þe prys, and þerfore ofte the chief partie of man, þe heed, is crowned with floures of rose, as Plius seith, and bycause of veirnes and swete smylle and sauour and vertu. For by fayreness þey fedith þe sight, and plesëþ þe smylle by odour, and þe touche by neysshe and softe handellynge, and wiþstondeþ and socoureþ by vertu aëins many sicknesses and yueles, as he seif, and acordeþ to medicine boþe grene and druye.\(^{58}\)

In 1486, we find this authoritative view of the rose invoked for an important civic purpose; the pageant for the reception of Henry VII into York, in which the conjoining roses were to play a central part as symbol and emblem of the marriage and new dynasty:

at the entrie of the Citie and first Bar of the same, shalbe craftely conceyved a place in maner of a heven, of grete joy and anglicall armony; under the heven shalbe a world desolate, full of treys and floures, in the which shall spryng up a roiall rich rede rose convaide by viace, unto the which rose shall appeyre another rich white rose, unto whome so being togedre all other floures shall lowte and evidently yeve suffrante, shewing the rose to be principall of all floures, as witnes Barthilmow, and therupon shall come fro a cloud a croune covering the roses.\(^{59}\)

The entry in the York civic records confirms that there was a sufficiently general awareness of Bartholomew in the upper ranks of York, for his name to lend
credence to the emblematic rose as a symbol of flourishing supremacy, one that would turn England from ‘a world desolate’ beneath the overarching ‘heven of grete joy and anglicall armony’, into an earthly garden in which the populace rejoice.60 This glimpse of Bartholomew presented as an authority at the start of Henry VII’s reign supplements other evidence that Henry was eulogised in terms of the rose, especially the Tudor rose that united the houses of Lancaster and York and restored the garden of England. To be effective, the eulogy had to be based on a sufficiently general belief in the rose as a symbol of fertility and supremacy, and it is arguable that the currency of ‘Properties’ helped to establish and develop such a shared understanding, and to make it an effective dynastic emblem. As mentioned earlier, Bartholomew’s chapter on the rose combines properties of the flower as religious symbol, medicinal herb and source of confidence in the land that produced it. Thus Bartholomew’s text filtered down in fragmentary fashion through successive borrowings and translations.61 As new social and political situations arose over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, writers adapted the stable core of source material available in ‘Properties’ to meet fresh contingencies.

Because of the multivalent meanings underlying things of the natural world, heraldic emblems, or cognisances, could work both for and against their bearers. An emblem’s very allusiveness and multivalence made it possible to make, through personal identification with it, a blatant claim to the loftiest attributes it implied; but also made it possible for others to subvert that claim by treating the same attributes as negative. To be able to participate as non-contemporary observers in this serious play of allusion and counter-allusion, we need access to the layers of potential meaning available to the players. Properties can be a starting point in our attempts to understand what people were expressing in their recorded responses to immediate events.

Properties and the press

Bartholomew already had a reputation in Europe as a notable author in his own right. ‘Properties’ in Latin and in French translation had been in print on the continent since the 1470s; the titles of the printed editions of Corbechon’s Propriétés indicate a widening function of ‘Properties’ in France, adding information on elixirs and herbs, remedies against plague and other maladies, and the casting of horoscopes — all ‘very useful and profitable for maintaining human health’ — and also ‘a very useful medicine … for horses’.62 These titles suggest that in France the work was seen as a marketable and useful source of information needed by the well-to-do and the professional physician. The printed edition of ‘Properties’ in England in 1495 implies that in that country there was also a market for the work in an updated and manageable format, in the era of increased book-production and rising literacy.63
I have mentioned Seymour’s conclusion that the English translation copies were bibliophiles’ books. This being so, the implication is that the work would not have been readily marketable on a large scale. In the light of De Worde’s business preference during the 1490s for small, saleable items such as schoolbooks, psalters and the like, this printing venture seems anomalously risky. But ‘De Worde knew what was “commercial”, and the Subsidy Rolls show that he was a fairly rich man’.  

Anthony Edwards and Carole Meale have explored the marketing considerations in detail and conclude that De Worde emerges as a ‘crucial figure’ in the consolidation of printing as a commercial structure in London. While the network of printer, merchant and sponsor could indeed be an important factor, it is rarely clear who footed the bill for an edition. We may assume that cost was a major consideration for printers and buyers. Those involved in the first English printed edition of ‘Properties’ were businessmen well able to calculate risks and returns. Wynkyn de Worde was a Flemish artisan, and William Caxton, his predecessor, master and the founder of his Press, had been an English mercer and merchant venturer active in Bruges before coming to London.

The printing of Trevisa’s Properties by Wynkyn de Worde at Westminster in 1495 suggests that the work and the compiler had sufficient appeal to warrant such a major undertaking on a speculative basis. The justification for it may have rested on the work’s perceived commercial potential and practical value, as well as the prestige of the author. The possibly limited book-buying clientele may well have included other members of the prosperous merchant network: we have a glimpse of a copy of ‘Properties’ in the inventory of the possessions of Sir John Rudstone (d.1531), a wealthy and eminent member of the Draper’s Guild in London, made after his death. ‘Item a boke of Bartholome de proprietatibus ijs’ is listed among the contents of an expensively furnished chamber that was seemingly used for the display of valuable items. This book, valued at two shillings, could have been either a manuscript or a copy of the 1495 printed edition.

De Worde’s verses at the end of his edition suggest that the project may have been made possible by the co-operation of a team of commercially and socially connected patrons, intermediaries and suppliers. De Worde adds 12 stanzas of cumbersome verse, naming in stanzas five and eight those to whom he is indebted:

By Wyken de Worde whyche thruh his dyligence
Emprentyd hath at prayer and desyre
Of Roger Thorny mercer and from thens
This mocion sprange to sette the heretes on fyre
Of suche as love to rede in every shire
Dyvers maters in voydynge ydylnesse
Lyke as this boke hath shewed to you expresse.
And also of your charyte call to remembraunce
The soule of William Caxton first prynter of this boke
In laten tonge at Coleyn hymself to avaunce
That every well disposyd man may theron loke
And John Tate the yonger Joye mote he broke
Whiche late hathe in Englonde doo make this paper thynne
That now in our englyssh this boke is prynted Inne.

These stanzas appear to acknowledge key players in the project, including the supplier of English-made paper. A handwritten note on the back flyleaf of the incunable copy, adjacent to the above printed colophon and dated 1590, states that in 1507 there was a paper mill at Hertford that belonged to John Tate, whose father was Mayor of London. Thus, De Worde would appear to have had the advantages of access to a local manufacturer of paper with powerful civic connections. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs point out that a merchant-adventurer background was the most likely to encourage a man to promote the printed book, not only because of the nature of ‘venturing’, but also because he could himself import the large quantities of paper required — normally the single most expensive investment of any printing venture.67

As in the case of Berkeley’s promotion of his manuscript of Properties through the good offices of his London agent, Knolles, and Hugh Bryce’s use of Caxton to present The mirour of the world to his patron, there is some evidence that civic connections were crucial to success as a book producer. When Caxton had printed Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s Polychronicon in 1482, Roger Thorney or Thornye (d.1515) — guildsman, merchant adventurer and book collector — had been involved in the arrangement.68 Thirteen years later we again find Thorney acting in negotiations with the Chaworth family for the use of their manuscript as a copy-text for the printing of Properties by De Worde.69 Bone describes Thorney as a staunch Yorkist and ‘a rich, enlightened mercer, with connexions in Flanders and friends among the humanists’. Evidence for his Yorkist sympathies can be found in his books and verses, and from his active support in the 1480s and ’90s for Caxton and his printing ventures under the patronage of Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV. He seems to have had a strong bond with John Pickering, Caxton’s successor as governor of the English merchants in Bruges.70 Thorney appears to have used the services first of Caxton and then of De Worde to procure printed versions of the Polychronicon and Properties for himself or others. The evidence points to a perception of ‘Properties’ as a viable marketing project, worthy of the combined attention of a diverse group: a wealthy gentry family from the midlands in possession of a fine copy-text, the merchant-venturer fraternity, the manufacturing entrepreneur and the printing house itself.71 It is reasonable to conclude that the first English
edition was a product of a network of interested parties prepared to invest in ‘Properties’ as a commercially viable title.

Wynkyn de Worde’s printed edition of the English Properties in 1495 is a fine production, in spite of the doubtful quality of the translation. The woodcuts, one at the start of each Book, indicate further cooperative networking, as there are strong similarities between this edition and those made in France at around the same time and referred to above. Similar or identical blocks appear to have been used in both, and were not necessarily made for Properties. A set of wood-blocks can be traced from the printer Verard to the printer Pynson, who either bought or copied them and used them in the Shepherd’s Kalendar. They then appear in the work of De Worde, and thence amongst the books of the printer Wyer, who for the most part used the cast-off blocks from other offices.

This chapter has examined the passage of ‘Properties’ from its translation into English to its printed editions. The English translation provided a new route by which ‘Properties’ could reach yet another cohort of readers. The fact that the translated versions had shed the glosses allowed adaptors to use the factual content at face value. They were freed from the need for a conventional moralising interpretation, but could still exploit its many-sided potential for allegorical treatment. There is much that we do not know about its late-medieval reception, but disparate pieces of manuscript evidence tell us that some fifteenth-century people preserved the work in toto. Others took it apart to make new compilations; some at the level of selected detail to incorporate into specialist texts, others at the level of selected Books and chapters.

That things had properties was a fluid concept that could be taken as empirical, remedial, prognostic and moral. We find Bartholomew’s work lending itself to not only different genres of writing but also to different modes of production: in the home, in the professional workshop and at the printing press. The extant copies and abstracts of ‘Properties’ and Properties, and the fact that it was printed, testify to the status of ‘Properties’ as an important prose work that preserved respected authorities from the distant past and made them available in the English language.
Figure 5: Map of the world on the title page of Book 8, Bartholomeus De Proprietatibus Rerum. Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1495.

The illustration resembles a medieval T-O map, showing the world in three parts, surrounded by spheres. It is much simplified, however, and lacks the iconography of judgement and salvation associated with earlier maps. Its upside-down orientation, with buildings filling the area occupied by the Mediterranean and Africa, suggests a new importance given to Europe and the notion of urban civilisation. Used by permission of the British Library.
The illustrations to Books 10, 12 and 13–18 in De Worde’s edition show animals, birds, plants and stones still depicted as properties or ‘ornaments’ of the four elements as Bartholomew had described. On the other hand, the illustration to Book 19 offers a very pragmatic interpretation of Bartholomew’s topics: colour as dyestuff or pigment, rather than light; food and drink as cooking ingredients, rather than metaphors for mystical experience; weights and measures as marketplace items, rather than spiritual properties.

Used by permission of the British Library.
NOTES

1 Parkes discriminates between ‘cultivated’ and ‘pragmatic’ readers: Parkes, M. B., “The literacy of the laity” in The Medieval World, edited by David Daiches and Anthony Thurlby, 555–77, London: Aldus Books, 1973, p.555. To borrow terms proposed by Kerby-Fulton (2001), some were ‘professional readers’ in the sense of professional copiers; some can perhaps be categorised as ‘dissenting’ readers. To venture on a modification, we might add ‘discriminating’ readers, since some re-writers discard, as well as take from, the broad array of topics and sources in ‘Properties’.

2 Bristol City Library Ms 9.


5 Seymour, “English owners”, p.162.


7 R. F. Green, pp.140–3; Braswell, Laurel, “Utilitarian and Scientific Prose” in Edwards, 1984, 337–87, enumerates the main genres of utilitarian writings extant in English from the fifteenth century as medical, astrological, mathematical, occult and technical.


9 BL Ms Royal 12 E iii.

10 Nota quibus auctoribus sunt fides adhibenda: BL Arundel 123, f.21r.

11 Haec qui sequuntur excerpta sunt de libro qui intitulatur de proprietatibus rerum.

12 See Appendix B, Abridgement of ‘Properties’ in Bodleian Library Ms Laud Miscellany 682.


14 See Chapter 5, above.


17 Wellcome Ms 335, f.1r: Excerpta quaedam ex libro qui de proprietatibus rerum intitulatur (B. Anglici). Et primo de pulmone. Author’s paraphrase.

18 De naturis et proprietatibus rerum; BL Ms Harley 512 ff.3r–88v. Other contents of the ms are: ff.1r–2v poems in French; some sayings of Aristotle in French; f.88v an alchemical test (A cognosire le vray Basme, si il est Sophistique, ou non); f.89r prayers (Tabulae binae, quibus repraesentatur Angelus ante BV Mariam genuflexus); the codex includes an astrological table (ff.2v–27v).

19 Later additions are tables of birds, stones and animals, Tabula Avium (ff.34r); Tabula lapidum (f.35v); Tabula animalium (f.169v).

20 See Chapter 5, p.85.

22 A further line of enquiry concerns the absorption of BA’s teaching into early modern printed works that used animals and plants to discuss human morality, such as the Dialoge of Creatures Moralised, and the emblem literature of the sixteenth century: see Kratzmann and Gee; Klingender, pp. 354, 489–94.


24 See, for example, Properties Bk 16, cap lxxxvi De saphiro, p. 871; Bk 13, De piscibus, pp. 675–80, Bk 16 De petra, p. 865, Bk 17, De arbore, pp. 882–903.


26 Brandeis, Arthur, Jacob’s well, London: Early English Text Society, 1900, p. 90; see Fletcher, pp. 257–8 on this collection as an example of the sermon built upon a framework of allegory.

27 See Chapter 5, p. 84.


29 Properties, Bk 18, cap lxxii De lupo, p. 1224.


31 Woodcock, Thomas, and John Martin Robinson, The Oxford Guide to Heraldry; Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 51; Dennys, Rodney, The Heraldic Imagination, London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1975, pp. 59–62: other known treatises are De Insignia et Armis of Bartolo di Sasso Ferrato c. 1354; Arbre des Batailles by Honoré Bonet c. 1387; De Picturis Armorum by Franciscus de Foveis (known only from citations in other treatises); Tractatus de Armis by Johannes de Bado Aureo c. 1394; Le Livre des Faits D’Armes et de Chevalerie by Christine de Pisan c. 1409.

32 We can see in the proliferation of carved shields upon the walls of abbeys and churches, surrounding the tombs of knights and in artefacts, that the late-fourteenth-century heralds provided a way for arms-bearers to advertise prowess, lineage, wealth and patronage: see Dennys, pp. 70–3, for illustrated examples, also Binski, Paul, Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200–1400, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 202.


34 Edwards, 1985, p. 126.

35 The identity of ‘De Bado Aureo’ is unknown but a punning association with Guildford has been suggested: Woodcock and Robinson, p. 51.

36 BL Add. 28791 ff. 5–38v. The title TRACTATUS DE ARMIS occurs on f. 1. The evidence of the opening words (f. 12r) indicates that the treatise was written for Anne of Bohemia, Richard II’s first wife, which dates it to before 1394. De Bado Aureo acknowledges a debt to the writer of another lost treatise, Francis de Foveis.

37 BL Add. 28791 ff. 12r–13r.

38 BL Add. 28791 f. 5r.


41 Properties, Bk 18, De cervo, pp. 1175–8.
There is much material evidence of Richard II’s personal emblem, the white hart, in the form of livery badges, wall-paintings and decorated artefacts made in the later years of his reign when he was trying hard to re-build his image as king: see Binski, p.203. It has been suggested that Richard might, in the first place, have been given this emblem by his mother, and encouraged to identify with it by the pun on ‘Richart’: Gordon, Dillian, ed, Making and Meaning: The Wilton Diptych, London: National Gallery Publications, 1993, pp.49–50.


He continues that it is against nature for a hart to attack a horse, a swan or a bear: ‘This was aȝeins kynde as clerkis me tolde’: Day and Steele, pp.12–3, lines 1–36.

Bodleian Ms Laud Misc. 733.

BL Add. 28791 ff.38v foll: Portat leonem rampantem cum duplici testu cum floribis gladioli de rubeo contraposite in campo aureo.

Klingender, p.306.

Properties, Bk 18, De leone, pp.1214–7.

Properties, Bk 18, De leena, p.1217–9. In this passage BA was following the lead of the bestiary writers who drew on the church fathers, rather than expressing unusual misogyny.

Properties, Bk 18, De pardo, p.1235; De leopardo, p.1219.

BL Ms Add. 28791, f.6.

Scattergood, V. J., Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century, London: Blandford Press, 1971, p.21, comments that the verse was designed to isolate Richard from his supporters, especially Sir William Catesby, Sir Richard Ratcliffe and Viscount Francis Lovell, who are signified by the cat, the rat and the dog. Richard’s special cognisant was ‘A boar rampant ar gent, armed and bristled or’: Anglo, Sydney, Images of Tudor Kingship, London: Seaby, 1992, p.122, stresses the difference between a personal emblem (for example, Richard III’s boar, Richard II’s white hart) and a dynastic emblem (for example, the Plantagenets’ broom-cods, the Tudor rose).

Properties Bk 18, cap vii De apro, pp.1117–8. We do not know if Richard III owned ‘Properties’, but Edward IV’s French copy of Propriétés was already in the royal library.

BL Ms Add. 28791 f.12r. The Tractatus author merely states that the wild boar is, according to Bartholomew, a pig of either woods or fields, and can be wild or tame: Aper ut dicit Barth. de proprietates rerum est porcus silvestris ut agristis.


Wahlgren-Smith, Lena, “Heraldry in Arcadia: the court eclogue of Johannes Opicius”, Renaissance Studies 14, no.2 (2000): 210–34. Wahlgren-Smith (pp.225–7) demonstrates that the poets around Henry VII found the heraldic garden a useful motif to celebrate the arrival of the Tudors: in The Rose of England (c.1495) the garden is first despoiled by the ‘beast men call a bore’ who ‘rooted this garden upp and downe’; but is then made fair by the return of the exiled branch of the rose and the slaying of the boar; other poets celebrated Elizabeth of York as the white rose joining the red rose in the garden. Anglo, p.35 and Chap.4 ‘The Rose both Red and White’, pp.74–97, examines the iconography of the Tudor rose in court poetry of the early years of the reign and the presentation, through garden imagery, of Henry’s kingship as restorative. Robbins, Rossell Hope, ed, Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries, New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, includes (p.93) the poem ‘the Lily-white Rose’ of 1486, written in honour of Elizabeth of York.


Scattergood, 1971, p.215: meanwhile Bristol welcomed Henry as the ‘delicate Rose of this your Brytaigne’.


Wagner, pp.72–3, suggests that the heraldic treatise written about 1440 or earlier by Nicholas Upton and dedicated to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, is simply a revised version of the treatise by De Bado Aureo, freely incorporated by Upton. Edwards, 1985, p.126, notes that: ‘The heraldic utility of
‘Properties’ was still perceived in the late sixteenth century by John Bossewell in his *Works of Armorie* (1572) where BA is included among the list of authorities consulted and named in the text.

62 Corbechon, J., *Histoire universelle* 1476; *Le Proprietaire des choses*…, n.d, 1530; *Le Grand proprietaire de toutes choses*…, 1556 (see Reference List for full titles); Seymour (1992, pp.262–3) summarises the early printed editions made between 1472 and 1609 in Germany, France and England, noting that: ‘The printing of eleven editions of the book between 1472 and 1492 is a remarkable witness to its popularity in the later years of the 15th c.’


66 BL Ms Harley 1231, f. 25v. Thank you to John Tillotson for this information.


69 Mitchner, pp.7–17: close examination of compositors’ marks leads Mitchner to conclude that De Worde used the Chaworth ms (now Columbia University Ms Plimpton 263) plus at least one other as his copy-texts; the ms was probably owned in the 1490s by Sir Henry Willoughby of Wollaton, who was by then head of the Chaworth family.

70 Bone, Gavin, “Extant manuscripts printed by W. De Worde with notes on the owner, Roger Thorney”, *The Library* XII (1932): 284–309, pp.297–302: three mss owned by Thorney contain what are arguably his own Yorkist verses and drawing of a white-rose emblem; evidence for Thorney’s wealth comes from his ownership of books and from his bequest of property to Jesus College, Cambridge; evidence for his high social connections can be found in the Jesus College muniments of 1499, where he heads a list of great names including knights, earls, constables, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, aldermen and others. Comparisons of three of Thorney’s mss with printed works indicate that he lent several mss to De Worde for use as copy-texts.

71 Visser-Fuchs and Sutton, p.254: Thorney and Tate ‘are a rare indication of how the booktrade was viewed by the more cultivated of English entrepreneurs. Alien and Englishman worked together for profit when opportunity existed, but this could be a temporary alliance.’

72 Clair (pp.2, 19) considers that *Properties* was one of the best-printed of all De Worde’s large books; Mitchner (pp.12–18) details some of the hundreds of modernisations made to Trevisa’s language, presumably by De Worde — including many ‘careless mistakes’ that reversed meanings.

73 Plomer, p.231; Hodnett, in his Introduction (pp.11–22), analyses the evidence that blocks were shared and copied between De Worde, Pynson, Verard and continental printers, and compares their qualities; see Hodnett, pp.315–7 for detailed descriptions of all 19 woodcuts printed in De Worde’s edition of ‘Properties’.