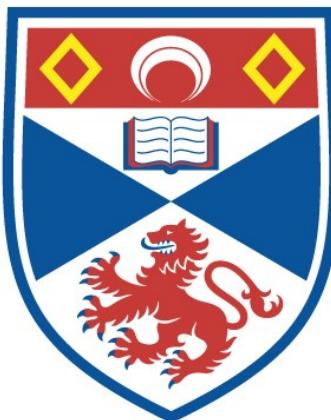


**THE ENGLISH PROVINCIAL BOOK TRADE:  
BOOKSELLER STOCK-LISTS, C. 1520-1640**

**Volume One**

**Jennifer Winters**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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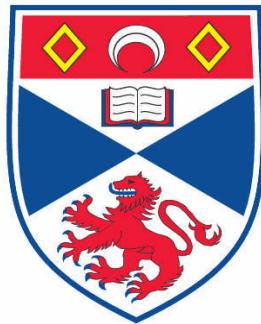
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# The English Provincial Book Trade: Bookseller Stock-lists, c.1520-1640

Jennifer Winters



This thesis is submitted in fulfilment for the degree of Ph.D.  
at the  
University of St Andrews

September 2012

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### **VOLUME TWO:**

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## **Abstract**

The book world of sixteenth-century England was heavily focused on London. London's publishers wholly dominated the production of books, and with Oxford and Cambridge the booksellers of the capital also played the largest role in the supplying and distribution of books imported from Continental Europe. Nevertheless, by the end of the sixteenth century a considerable network of booksellers had been established in England's provincial towns. This dissertation uses scattered surviving evidence from book lists and inventories to investigate the development and character of provincial bookselling in the period between 1520 and 1640. It draws on information from most of England's larger cities, including York, Norwich and Exeter, as well as much smaller places, such as Kirkby Lonsdale and Ormskirk. It demonstrates that, despite the competition from the metropolis, local booksellers played an important role in supplying customers with a considerable range and variety of books, and that these bookshops became larger and more ambitious in their services to customers through this period. The result should be a significant contribution to understanding the book world of early modern England. The dissertation is accompanied by an appendix, listing and identifying the books documented in nine separate lists, each of which, where possible, has been matched to surviving editions.

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### **Abbreviations**

Arber	Edward Arber (ed.), <i>A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640 A.D.</i> , Vols. I-V (London, 1875-1894).
BL	British Library
CL	Cambridge Libraries
EEBO	<i>Early English Books Online</i>
Maunsell	Andrew Maunsell, <i>The Catalogue of English Printed Bookes</i> (2 vols; London, 1595).
OL	Oxford Libraries
USTC	<i>Universal Short Title Catalogue</i>

## **Editorial Conventions**

In this thesis, the topic of cost and price is routinely discussed. I have chosen to keep the monetary values in the old form of British money: pence (*d.*), shilling (*s.*) and pound (*£*). In this monetary system, twelve pence are equal to one shilling, twenty shillings are equal to one pound, and 240 pence are equal to one pound.

In quotations from original documents, original spelling has been used with the exception of ‘i’/‘j’ and ‘u’/‘v’ which have been modernized.

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**Map of Provincial Towns in England**

## I. Introduction

In today's world, where the internet is supplanting print as the popular medium of communication, there has been renewed interest in the development of print and the European book trade. In the early sixteenth century, print came into its own, becoming distinct from the book's manuscript origins. Over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the book transitioned from an item of luxury to a generally attainable commodity. During these tumultuous centuries, print both inspired dissent and served to enforce the status quo, and it became an effective tool to convey the message of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup>

Though scholars have studied the book since the Renaissance, interest in the history of the book as its own distinct field is a more recent development. Book history emerged as recently as the second half of the twentieth century, beginning with contributions by Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin, Rudolf Hirsh and Elizabeth Eisenstein.<sup>2</sup> Before becoming its own distinct field, book history was interdisciplinary, joining historians, bibliographers, librarians, literary critics and others under one theme of scholarship – the study of the social and cultural history of human communication. In the past few decades, these scholars of the book have made significant headway towards

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven, 2010), p. 65; and James Raven, *The Business of Books* (New Haven, 2007), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: the impact of printing, 1450-1800* (London, 1976); Rudolf Hirsh, *Printing, Selling and Reading: 1450-1550* (Wiesbaden, 1974); and Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe, Vol. I and II* (Cambridge, 1979).

understanding the early modern European print world.<sup>3</sup> But not all parts of this book world have received the same amount of attention. We know much more about the major centres of printing, Paris, Venice, Nuremburg and so on, than the outer peripheries of the European market. This work is directed toward one such case.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, this research will trace and elucidate the developments and complexities of the English provincial book trade from 1520 to 1640.

Here it is important to introduce one further distinction, between the history of printing, narrowly conceived, and the book trade. In England, the vast majority of books were printed in London, and this was also the centre of the trade in books. But books also found a lively market in the rest of England, and this provincial trade has received far less attention. Indeed in general terms, the book trade – as opposed to printing – has received comparatively little attention for the first century of print; the large proportion of the scholarship on the book trade is directed to the period after 1640, and particularly after the end of the Licensing Act in 1695.<sup>5</sup> There has also been a plethora of works on English print during the Civil War, but few historians have tackled the book trade before 1640. In the instances in which the English book trade before 1640 are discussed, they are usually small subsets of much larger works, such as in James Raven's *The Business of*

<sup>3</sup> F.W. Ratcliffe, 'The Contribution of Book-Trade Studies to Scholarship' in Peter Isaac (ed.), *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain* (London, 1990), pp. 1-11; and Kevin M. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: the Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, 2000), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Benito Rial Costas (ed.), *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe: A Contribution to the History of Printing and the Book Trade in Small European and Spanish Cities* (Leiden, 2012); and Andrew Pettegree, 'Center and Periphery in the European Book World', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 18 (2008), pp. 101-128.

<sup>5</sup> See Isaac (ed.), *Six Centuries*; Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Spreading the Word: The Distribution Networks of Print, 1550-1850* (Winchester, 1990); Arnold Hunt, Giles Mandelbrote, and Alison Shell (eds.), *The Book Trade and Its Customers, 1450-1900: Historical Essays for Robin Myers* (Winchester, 1997); Barry McKay, John Hinks and Maureen Bell (eds.), *Light on the Book Trade: Essays in Honour of Peter Isaac* (London, 2004); and Peter Isaac and Barry McKay (eds.), *The Reach of Print: Making, Selling and Using Books* (Winchester, 1998) for some examples.

*Books*, or in small, specific case studies, such as Peter Clark's chapter 'The Ownership of Books in England, 1560-1640' in Lawrence Stone's *Schooling and Society*.<sup>6</sup>

James Raven's *The Business of Books* is a self-proclaimed piece of 'business history' that studies publication and distribution networks that created a 'literary market'. This work, though it technically spans an impressive four hundred years, has a distinct bias to covering these networks and markets after the lapse of the Licensing Act, like many other works published on the history of the book trade. Raven chooses to focus on booksellers rather than printers because he believes this aspect of the trade has been understudied, and in this he is certainly correct.<sup>7</sup>

There are a sizable number of recent scholarly works that attempt to fill the void on booksellers, book ownership and the book trade. Unfortunately, most of these works are concerned primarily with the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century English book trades. An example of this can be seen in Peter Isaac's edited work *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain*. Although the title suggests it covers a large span of time, the actual contents heavily favour the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In fact, only one chapter discusses the provincial trade before the end of the Licensing Act, Paul Morgan's 'The Provincial Book Trade before the End of the Licensing Act'.<sup>8</sup> Even in this chapter, most of the material is concentrated after 1630. This is also the case in Peter Isaac and Barry McKay's *The Reach of Print*, which includes no examination of any topic before the eighteenth century, and Robin Myers's *Spreading the Word: The*

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<sup>6</sup> Raven, *Business of Books*; and Peter Clark , 'The Ownership of Books in England, 1560-1640' in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *Schooling and Society: Studies in the history of education* (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 95-111.

<sup>7</sup> Raven, *The Business of Books*.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Isaac, *Six Centuries*.

*Distribution Networks of Print, 1550-1850*, which is concerned with the book trade outside of London mainly after the 1690s despite its title indicating otherwise.<sup>9</sup>

*The Book Trade and Its Customers*, edited by Arnold Hunt, Giles Mandelbrote, and Alison Shell, does contain many pre-1695 contributions, but, as the title suggests, there exists “at least an elementary division between the mechanics of the book trades, their formal structures and informal accommodations, and their human ends in learning and in transmitting knowledge.”<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the book is divided strictly into two parts. Each of the contributions discusses the ‘book trade’, the economic facets, or ‘its customers’. This division, however, is somewhat artificial. As Feather points out in McKay, Hinks, and Bell’s *Light on the Book Trade*, the book trade was always “part of the economic, social and cultural structures of the towns and cities where it was practiced.”<sup>11</sup>

The period from 1520 to 1640 has been under-researched, but so too has the profession of bookselling in any comprehensive fashion. Though much work has been done on European booksellers, sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English booksellers have received little attention from historians. Furthermore, when works discuss the English book trade, most have a preference for studying printers or other aspects of the trade found in London.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Isaac and McKay, *The Reach of Print*; and Myers and Harris, *Spreading the Word*.

<sup>10</sup> Hunt, Mandelbrote, and Shell, *The Book Trade and Its Customers*, p. xi.

<sup>11</sup> McKay, Hinks, and Bell, *Light on the Book Trade*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> For examples, see Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 3, 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), in which discussion of the book trade is largely restricted to London and Edinburgh. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 4, 1557-1695* (Cambridge, 2002) does have a section entitled ‘Beyond London: Production, Distribution and Reception’, but only John Barnard and Maureen Bell’s chapter ‘The English Provinces’ discusses the provincial book trade in England.

This preference is understandable, because at least with printers we have a tangible body of sources – the printed books – on which to focus our research. The study of the book trade poses more substantial challenges. The process by which books made their way from the print shop to their customers is far more elusive and particularly so outside the metropolitan centre London. Attempts to reconstruct this trade are forced to draw what inferences they can from different sets of data: on book ownership, literacy and sales.

Most studies of book ownership gather their data from private libraries or personal inventories. One example of this is Peter Clark's 'The Ownership of Books in England, 1560-1640', in Lawrence Stone's *Schooling and Society*. This is a case study of three Kentish towns, and the increased book ownership amongst their inhabitants over time. Not surprisingly, in inventories worth over £500, book ownership appears quite high and is dominated by religious books. The problem with Clark's study is that, by studying private libraries and recorded personal inventories, he inevitably creates an elite bias. His information, while helpful in certain regards, tells us very little of the middle or lower orders. For these lower ranks, Clark uses only a very small sample, and he excludes both chapbooks and ballads from his numbers.<sup>13</sup> Another example of the continued focus on private libraries and book ownership can be seen in Elisabeth Leedham-Green's work on Cambridge inventories.<sup>14</sup>

Related to book ownership is the issue of literacy, which has attracted a large amount of attention from literary scholars over the years. I do not want to dwell on this topic for too long, but a few words concerning a seminal work on the subject seem in

<sup>13</sup> Clark, 'The Ownership of Books in England'.

<sup>14</sup> Elisabeth Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book-lists from Vice Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (Cambridge, 1986).

order. David Cressy's two works, 'Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730' and *Literacy and the Social Order*, were ground-breaking in their day and have since inspired a great deal of scholarship on the topic.<sup>15</sup> While recognizing that measuring levels of literacy and illiteracy is ultimately an impossible task, Cressy attempts to construct a method that allows us some numeric understanding of literacy in the early modern period. Cressy chooses to measure literacy by counting signatures from court depositions, because they are tangible, measurable proofs of literacy. Cressy does admit, however, that these figures represent only the minimum levels of literacy in society because the skill of reading was taught before writing in early modern English school systems, a fact also pointed out by Margaret Spufford, who argues on this basis that literacy was more widespread than previously believed.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the study's shortcomings, Cressy's research provides an important starting point for any scholar pursuing literacy rates and early modern readership, which is inherently related to book ownership.

Another facet of the book trade that has received substantial treatment by scholars is the availability of print in early modern England. One recent trend in historiography is to examine these print media in relation to popular culture. Margaret Spufford's *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* concentrates on 'cheap print' or 'little books' of fiction peddled in towns, which includes chapbooks and ballads. These were inexpensive

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<sup>15</sup> The techniques used to measure literacy in David Cressy, 'Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730', *The Historical Journal* 20, no. 1 (1977), pp. 1-23; and David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980) have inspired lively debate among scholars. For these debates, see Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Readership in Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1981), pp. 19-33; Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender and Literacy* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 56-60; and Wyn Ford, 'The Problem of Literacy in Early Modern England', *History* 78, no. 252 (February 1993), pp. 22-37. For examples of works influenced by Cressy's techniques, see Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington, 1991); and R.A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Literacy and Society in Scotland and England, 1660-1850* (Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>16</sup> Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*.

printed pieces that could be afforded by most in society for about 2d. or 3d. Spufford's work centres on an analysis of Samuel Pepys's collection of chapbooks, the 'small merry books', the 'small godly books', and the 'histories'. Spufford contends that this allowed her to avoid "distortions based both on accidents of survival, and on the whims and fancies of more than one collector over different periods of time."<sup>17</sup> By using these as examples, Spufford's analysis shows that these chapbooks were intended for a wide, popular audience, and that their themes influenced the popular mentality of the day.

Many book historians were inspired by Spufford's work on cheap print and popular culture. One of these historians and a student of Spufford is Tessa Watt, whose *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* continues the study of popular readership and culture. Watt prefers to concentrate on cheap religious print, such as one-page broadsides and small chapbooks, as sources for her examination. Watt attempts to focus on Protestant material, although many works are not easy to define as 'Protestant', 'anti-Catholic' being a better designation. Overall, Watt finds that 'ordinary parishioners' were just as likely to buy cheap religious print as the 'godly elect', meaning that the most 'influential media' were those that combined print with 'non-literate forms' in this partially literate English society.<sup>18</sup>

Continuing the trend of focusing upon specific printed media is Alexandra Halasz's *The Marketplace of Print*, which studies pamphlet production and circulation.<sup>19</sup> As the title suggests, Halasz is interested in the economics of print production and distribution. This is surprising, due to the fact that Halasz is a recognized 'literary

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<sup>17</sup> Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, p. xix.

<sup>18</sup> Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 322.

<sup>19</sup> Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997).

scholar and cultural historian'.<sup>20</sup> Within her discussions of the economics of the Elizabethan book trade, Halasz turns her attention to authorship and authorial control of print. Halasz's work is valuable in that it explores the expanding literary market, detailing the troubles of the pamphlet trade, and furthering our understanding of an additional type of early modern print.

Similarly, Natascha Würzbach's *The Rise of the English Street Ballad* explores an understudied medium of popular print. Overall, Würzbach is concerned with the literary value of the ballads, inserting them into their societal context. She explains how these materials predominantly appealed to the lower and middle classes as a form of entertainment and political commentary. Like Spufford's study on chapbooks, Würzbach's study of ballads shows how wide the intended audience was. She demonstrates effectively that the sale of ballads was a profitable business for printers.<sup>21</sup> While there was certainly a large demand for printed ballads as Würzbach shows, part of the popularity of the printed ballad must certainly have lain in its inexpensive production costs.

These studies treat aspects of the book market that would have been important in provincial England, but they do not differentiate between that portion of output sold in London and the wider market. Merely to remark this is to point out the difficulties of such a study.

There has been no comprehensive examination of the English provincial book trade before 1640. The work that comes closest to handling this topic is H.S. Bennett's

<sup>20</sup> David Cressy, review of *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, by Alexandra Halasz, in *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999), pp. 985-986.

<sup>21</sup> Natascha Würzbach, *The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550-1650* (Cambridge, 1990).

set of books on *English Books and Readers*.<sup>22</sup> These works, a total of three volumes, covers the years 1475-1640. Though these works were published in the 1960s, they remain a valuable source today. But inevitably they treat reading in the round: they make no attempt to distinguish separate audiences in London, the university towns or elsewhere in the country.

Although this present study is by no means a complete discussion of the topic, it will bring the provincial English book trade in the period 1520-1640 into the centre of the question for the first time. The principal resource available for such a study is the surviving lists of booksellers' stock. As one would expect the largest lists were those of the wealthiest booksellers, and they were generally to be found in London, Oxford or Cambridge. But some lists do survive for other English towns, and these have been the basis of the work that follows. The intention has been to study these lists individually – to gain a snap-shot of the trade in a particular place at a particular time – and comparatively – to get a sense of the sort of books most regularly traded outside London.

The cornerstone of this work has been a careful transcription and analysis of surviving lists. In this respect, my work has certainly benefited from the new developments of the digital age. The use of research and tools available online, such as the *Universal Short Title Catalogue* and *Early English Books Online*, has made the identification of titles found on the manuscript lists far easier. In many cases, it has enabled me to identify the book in question for the first time.

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<sup>22</sup> H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1475-1557: being a study in the history of the book trade from Caxton to the incorporation of the Stationers' Company* (London, 1952); H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1558-1603: being a study in the history of the book trade in the reign of Elizabeth I* (Cambridge, 1965); and H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1603-1640: being a study in the history of the book trade in the reigns of James I and Charles I* (London, 1970).

By analyzing inventories and stock-lists of booksellers, the data collected will allow me to address many pressing questions, including what books were available for purchase in a city at a particular time, what the booksellers' stock-lists tell us about the booksellers themselves and their trade, the distribution of books, and who a bookseller's potential customers were.

In total, twelve provincial stock-lists will be examined, ranging in years from 1538 to 1648. The majority of this study will focus upon those inventories produced before 1640, using subsequent lists only as a basis of comparison. These bookseller stock-lists originate from a range of towns, from varying geographic regions of England. The cities range from the major cathedral towns of Exeter, Norwich and York to the smaller towns of Ormskirk and Kirkby Lonsdale. Even though they are technically provincial towns, booksellers' lists from both Oxford and Cambridge will be excluded. They are atypical examples due to their status as university towns and the very particular markets they served. As Leedham-Green has shown in her work on personal libraries, inventories and book ownership in Cambridge, the booksellers' customers were primarily affiliated with the university, which gave local booksellers a healthy customer base with unusually scholarly tastes.

<b>Provincial Bookseller Stock-lists</b>
Neville Mores (York, 1538)
Robert Scott (Norwich, 1568-1570)
James Backhouse (Kirkby Lonsdale, 1578)
Roger Ward (Shrewsbury, 1585)
Christopher Hunt (Exeter, 1603)
Roger Sankey (Ormskirk, 1613)
Michael Harte (Exeter, 1615)
John Foster (York, 1616)
Thomas James (Norwich, 1629)
Mark Foster (York, 1644)
John Awdley (Hull, 1644)
Robert Booth (Warrington, 1648)

While the focus of this work is to analyze the provincial book trade, it is necessary also to give some measure of attention to London booksellers. As the centre of England's book trade, it is impossible to ignore the dominance of London. London's role in the book trade will be discussed only in direct relation to the provincial towns and their trade. For that reason, no comprehensive examination of London bookseller stock-lists will take place here. Instead, a sample of contemporary inventories has been selected, as they will allow for a comparison of the availability of books inside and outside of the capital. A similar selection of inventories from university booksellers has been taken for the same purpose.

The booksellers' stock-lists have been recovered from many sources, including probate records, court and legal proceedings, and Stationers' Company records. Online databases of public records have been immensely helpful in identifying potential stock-lists. The probate collection at the National Archives is easily searched online and, in some cases, provides an instant copy of the desired will. In total, these inventories range

in size from a few dozen titles to nearly two-thousand and provide excellent geographical and temporal comparisons.

Though the ultimate goal is to recover inventories from all major provincial towns, there are some important English towns that are unrepresented in my collection of lists. One major example is Bristol, which provides no inventory for this study. In Bristol, which certainly had a significant role in the English book trade, there are no records of any sixteenth-century booksellers in the town, though they must have certainly existed.<sup>23</sup> In many important English towns where there is evidence of booksellers residing, there are no surviving inventories of their wares and stock, as is the case with the majority of probate records for this period.<sup>24</sup>

So this is a record of what can be achieved with a very partial, fragmentary resource base of chance survivals. It relies heavily on documents compiled for a particular purpose, normally probate, and then filed. We must live with the frustrations that a large number of these documents must have been completed but have since disappeared, along with stock books, account books and correspondence with customers. Perhaps a few other lists will emerge in due course, though the twelve lists presented here are certainly the result of a diligent and wider-ranging search of possible lists.

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<sup>23</sup> Jonathon Barry, ‘Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century Bristol’ in Barry Reay (ed.), *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1988), pp. 59-90.

<sup>24</sup> For evidence of absent inventories or stock-lists for popular provincial towns and regions, see Jacqueline Bower, ‘Kent Towns, 1540-1640’ in Michael Zell (ed.), *Early Modern Kent, 1540-1640* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 144-177; R.S. Brown, ‘The Stationers, Booksellers and Printers of Chester’, *Transactions of the Lancashire and Chester Historical Society* 83 (1932), pp. 101-152; C.W. Chilton, *Early Hull Printers and Booksellers* (Hull, 1982); F.A. Hyett, ‘Notes on The First Bristol and Gloucestershire Printers’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 20 (1895-1897), pp. 38-51; Janet Ing Freeman, ‘Anthony Scoloker, the “Just Reckoning Printer” and the Earliest Ipswich Printing’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographic Society* 9 (1986-1990), pp. 476-496; R.A. Peddie, ‘Notes on Provincial Printers and Booksellers: Essex’, *Library World* (September 1904), pp. 57-60; and A. Cecil Piper, ‘The Early Printers and Booksellers of Winchester’, *The Library* s4-I, no. 1 (June 1920), pp. 103-110.

This work will be divided into nine chapters. The second chapter is a series of individualized case studies of each of the provincial bookseller's stock-lists, intended as an introduction to the lists' contexts. Here, a detailed analysis of each of the lists will be performed based on the available information. The individual inventories themselves contain a great deal of data, though the consistency of this information may vary from one inventory to another. All of the collected stock-lists contain the titles or descriptions of books available for purchase in the shops as well as how many copies of each title the bookseller was holding at the time the inventory was taken. Inventories whose entries merely list 'bookes' have been excluded from detailed analysis, but not dismissed in their entirety. Some of the inventories, helpfully, contain the price or estimated value of each particular set of titles.<sup>25</sup> Occasionally, they also provide the format of the listed books.

Using the pieces of information provided by the book list, I attempt to search and discover the specific edition on every entry found on each inventory. I began by searching the *English Short-Title Catalogue*, which will aid my search in books printed within England. For Continental titles, I consult other resources, such as Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby, and Alexander Wilkinson's *French Vernacular Books* and the catalogue at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for the French titles, and the Cambridge University Library catalogue and British Library catalogue for works printed in Latin or other languages.<sup>26</sup> In the last stages of my work, I was also able to make use of the *Universal Short Title Catalogue*, a composite resource with information on all books published throughout Europe before 1601. Occasionally other catalogues from research libraries are helpful in providing exact identifications, such as the Folger

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<sup>25</sup> For examples, see Chapter two.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby, and Alexander Wilkinson (eds.), *French Vernacular Books: Books Published in the French Language before 1601* (Leiden, 2007).

Shakespeare Library and the Huntington Library. Once identified, most of the other information is revealed, such as author's name, printing location and date, printer's name, format, and number of sheets contained within the book.

Once a bookseller's inventory is recovered, the pertinent and available information has been entered into a database. The database records the following information: book title, author's name, STC number, language of the book, printing location, printer's name, printing date, book subject, format, number of copies, retail value of all copies, price per copy, number of sheets per copy and price per sheet. A summary of this data is presented in the second volume of this thesis, as an appendix. It is impossible to discover and record entries for every category, but much of the information is discernible.

In all, this inventory contains 2,138 entries for provincial booksellers. I have succeeded in making a likely identification of the book or edition on sale in 1,683 of cases (78.7%). In addition, I have conducted a parallel process for selected London, Oxford and Cambridge booksellers, encompassing a further 3,265 items. A major part of the underlying research for this dissertation has consisted of identifying and characterizing the contents of each shop. For this purpose, I have used subject designations developed for the *Universal Short Title Catalogue*. Deciding the book subject categories is not always a simple task, because many works may fit into multiple categories. Accordingly, in these cases, I tag the books twice: for instance, a work may be tagged as a work by a classical author and a school book.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> One example of this is Ward, 'Ovid metamorphosis english', Inventory no. 462.

<b>USTC Subject Categories</b>	
A	Architecture
AA	Educational Books (ABCs, grammars, school books)
B	Bibles (including parts)
C	Classical Authors
CC	Cookery
D	Drama
E	Calendars, Almanacs and Prognostications
EE	Economics
F	Political Tracts, Ordinances and Edicts
H	History and Chronicles
J	Jurisprudence (excluding edicts)
K	Military Handbooks
L	Literature
M	Music
N	News Books
P	Poetry
PP	Philosophy and Morality
Q	Astrology and Cosmography
R	Religious
S	Science and Mathematics
T	Travel, Topography, Maps and Navigational Manuals
U	Agriculture, Texts on Hunting and Veterinary Science
V	Medical Texts
W	Women's Topics
WP	Parenting
Y	Dictionaries

The stock-lists are being presented in a chronological format, which allows a discussion of the development of the book trade from the sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century. Particular attention will be given to stock-lists from the same town in different years to highlight trends in the book trade's development over time.

The third chapter is concerned with the economic aspects of the book trade. In this section, book prices will be discussed, and a comparison will be made to the findings of Francis R. Johnson's work on English book prices. Formats and bindings will also be discussed, as they relate specifically to the cost of the books when offered for sale.

Furthermore, the inherent economic vulnerability of the provincial bookseller will be emphasized. This chapter will also include discussion of the methods of transporting books from their printing centre to the bookseller's shop, as this directly affects the profits of the bookseller.

In the fourth chapter, direct geographical comparisons will be explored. This chapter includes comparisons of contemporary provincial lists from different geographic regions, such as stock-lists from Exeter in 1615 and York in 1616. This chapter will also include comparisons of the provincial booksellers' stock to their counterparts in London and the university towns. In each case, where possible, a provincial bookseller's inventory is directly contrasted to one from the capital and university towns. These comparisons will highlight the unique or particular characterisations of the provincial book trade.

Chapters five, six and seven each contain detailed analyses of titles on the provincial stock-lists. School books, a staple of every early modern provincial book shop, will be discussed in chapter five. Chapter six contains an examination of more expensive titles, those works that largely targeted specialised and professional markets. This chapter will focus on medical texts, law books and histories. Chapter seven will include a detailed discussion of religious books, which were overwhelmingly the most popular subject category in early modern England.

The eighth chapter will explore the intricate social and financial networks of the English book trade. This includes the interconnected relationships of printers, publishers and booksellers as well as the bonds between booksellers themselves. A significant portion of this chapter is dedicated to one of the most important aspects of the book trade:

the customers. By using private libraries and book collections, it is possible to evaluate who might be counted as a provincial bookseller's customer. The titles found in book collections provide an important comparison to evaluate the quality of a bookseller's stock.

Over the course of this analysis it will become clear the extent to which England was a very special and particular case in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century print world. The English book market was very unusual in two particular respects. In the first case, it was unique in the major European book world in that printing was almost entirely concentrated in one place – London, the capital and by some margin the largest city. Over 90% of all books printed in England in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century were printed in London. Presses were at one point or other active in York, Ipswich and Norwich, but were not continuously active through the period under study.<sup>28</sup> Most produced only a handful of books. So the provincial booksellers studied here were necessarily connected to the metropolitan market. Few had a local printer to which they would turn, even for the most popular staples of their businesses.

Secondly, the English book market was almost uniquely dependent upon imports. Only around 14,500 (14,694 according to the *USTC*) books were actually printed in England before 1600.<sup>29</sup> Of those, a large proportion was for official purposes, such as proclamations and edicts, or for the use of the legal world, such as year books and legal text books. England played virtually no role in the production of Latin works for the international book trade. In consequence, for many of the categories of books that

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<sup>28</sup> William Sessions, *A Printers Dozen: The First British Printing Centres to 1557 after Westminster and London* (York, 1983); and William Sessions, *The Spread of British Printing, 1557-1695: Do Not Think That You Can Blind the Crows* (London, 1988).

<sup>29</sup> Barnard and McKenzie, *Cambridge History of the Book*, Vol. 4; and USTC, search 'England' [23 May 2012].

English readers would wish to obtain for their collections, these had to be brought in from overseas. In principle, this would have posed little problem, because the import market was already well organized in the first age of print, indeed in the manuscript era.<sup>30</sup> But most of these books went directly through London, with Cambridge and Oxford as other important nodes of the Latin trade. What we will wish to see is how far provincial booksellers were able to secure for themselves a share in this trade. Were they able to hold stock of expensive books, or did they have to send for individual copies as required? It would have been frustrating and dangerous for them if customers had used them only for cheap stock and had gone elsewhere for more lucrative purchases. One sees an example of this in the well-documented case of the establishment of a parish library in Grantham, where a rich man had set aside a considerable sum for this prestigious project. In this case, the whole sum seems to have been spent in Cambridge, where a sufficient range of the stock of the Latin standards that make up the largest part of the library would have been available.<sup>31</sup> The provincial towns studied in this work were mostly larger than Grantham, and we do not even know if Grantham had a local bookshop. But booksellers in places like Exeter, Norwich and York would certainly not wish to receive similar treatment.

This is currently the only systematic attempt to study the English provincial book trade through the comparison of individual booksellers and their stock. By comparing book stock-lists from different provincial towns over the course of a century, this work

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<sup>30</sup> C. Paul Christianson, ‘The Rise of London’s Book-trade’ in Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 3, 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 128-147; and Julian Roberts, ‘The Latin Trade’ in John Barnard and D.F. McKenzie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 4, 1557-1695* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 141-173.

<sup>31</sup> John Glenn and David Walsh (eds.), *Catalogue of the Francis Trigge Chained Library: St Wulfram’s Church, Grantham* (Cambridge, 1988).

will shed light on how the book trade varied by geographic region and developed over time. It will uncover radical variations and remarkable similarities. Rather than simply focus on a single case study, the value of this type of research is in its ability to compare the data and analyze it in relation to the wider early modern English book trade. In short, taking detailed, micro-histories of the book trade from a particular place in time enables us better to understand the book trade in a wider, more generalized English scope.

## II. The Development of the Provincial Book Trade

Early modern English bookseller inventories contain a wide variety of information regarding the bookseller and their shop. Some of the extant inventories concerning booksellers' goods and wares are vague, rarely specifying anything beyond 'bookes' or the value of the 'shoppe'. Bookseller inventories of this period rarely include a detailed description of titles. One example of this less revealing type can be seen in the inventory of Manchester bookseller John Browne.<sup>1</sup> Browne died in 1612, and his shop was valued at £60 18s. 9d., about 50% of his total possessions, but no individual titles or descriptions are given. The shop value makes no distinction between the value of his stock and the value of his tools and other wares. This is also the case in the inventory of James Milner, bookseller and bookbinder from Warrington.<sup>2</sup> Like Browne's, Milner's 1639 inventory only gives the value of his shop, which was £39 4s. 8d.

Most of the bookseller inventories between 1520 and 1640 provide as little information as Browne's and Milner's. Though this is frustrating, these inventories are still valuable. At the very least, each inventory contains a value for the bookseller's shop. From this value alone, we can extract some basic conclusions about the shop and the business. By comparing the shop values with the values found in other inventories, we can make a reasonable guess as to the size of the shop. John Browne's shop was of a medium-size, likely comparable to Roger Ward's shop in Shrewsbury. James Milner's shop was about half of that size. Milner's shop was larger than Mark Foster's in 1644

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<sup>1</sup> J.P. Earwaker, 'Notes on the early booksellers and stationers of Manchester prior to the year 1700', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 6 (1889), pp. 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> W.H. Rylands, 'Booksellers and Stationers in Warrington', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 37 (1888 for 1885), pp. 67-70.

York, but it was less than half the size of other contemporary shops. While any data is valuable, these types of information can obviously not be the basis of the detailed analysis we hope to undertake in this dissertation. What follows will therefore describe the small cohort of inventories that do provide more detailed information on book titles, quantities and prices.

### **Neville Mores, York, 1538**

The earliest provincial bookseller stock-list of this period belongs to Neville Mores of York, and it can be dated between 19 April and 21 May 1538. York, according to a 1548 population survey, contained approximately 8,000 people living within the city. This number represents a decreased population compared to the figures of 12,000-15,000 given around the year 1400.<sup>3</sup> The significant economic ramifications of this population decrease are evident in Mores's stock-list.

Despite the fluctuations in population levels and economic prosperity during the early half of the sixteenth century, there is evidence that the book trade in York was flourishing. From analysis of the registers of freemen, between the years 1510-1540, it is clear that the book trade was growing in importance in York. During these years a considerable number associated with the book trade were admitted as freemen: four stationers, two bookbinders, thirteen parchment-makers, and one printer.<sup>4</sup> This is not surprising given York's status as a provincial capital and its close association to the Minster. Many people from the surrounding areas were attracted to the city for economic

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<sup>3</sup> D.M. Palliser, *Tudor York* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 111-113.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Collins (ed.), *Register of the Freemen of the City of York from the City Records Vol. I, 1272-1558*, 96 (Durham, 1897), pp. 233-256.

and professional reasons, while the clergy of the diocese demanded a steady source of reading materials, such as Bibles, prayer books and theological tracts.

Though it is impossible to know the exact number of clergy in the city of York and the wider York diocese, some estimates have been attempted. According to Claire Cross, in her work on the clergy wills and inventories of York, about fifty priests would have resided in the Minster itself in 1520.<sup>5</sup> This number would have obviously declined after the Reformation. During the Reformation, York Minster lost six prebends, all of its chantries and St Sepulchre's chapel. The number of clergy associated with the Minster continued to decline continued throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup> York's booksellers would also have expected to sell some books to the more literate members of the local parish clergy.

York was also one of the English provincial towns where an early attempt was made to establish a printing press. One of the first to set up a press was John Gachet, a Frenchman who settled in York in 1516. In his shop close to the Minster, Gachet was a successful printer, publisher and bookseller. One reason for Gachet's success in York was the extensive connections he had with Continental printers and publishers. Gachet's most notable work, a Latin and English dictionary, was published with the help of Rouen bookseller John Caillard, with whom he had many business dealings.<sup>7</sup> The dictionary was printed for Gachet in Rouen in 1517.<sup>8</sup> Gachet also printed works in York, his last work completed in 1530.<sup>9</sup> But as was the case for all English cities outside the capital,

<sup>5</sup> Claire Cross, *York Clergy Wills, 1520-1600*, Vol. I (York, 1984), p. iv.

<sup>6</sup> Claire Cross, *York Minister Clergy*, Vol. I, p. iv-ix.

<sup>7</sup> William Sessions, *Les Deux Pierres, Rouen, Edinburgh, York: Early Sixteenth Century Printing Connections* (York, 1982), pp. 23-25.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Davies, *A Memoir of the York Press with Notice of Authors, Printers, and Stationers in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (Westminster, 1868), p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> STC 16161.

this attempt to establish a local press could not be sustained. After the death of Gachet, York would not see another printer for over one hundred years.<sup>10</sup>

Neville Mores was a foreigner, like many of the other early stationers in England, and of French nationality, like Gachet. He apprenticed or held an assistantship with Gerard Wanseford, York's earliest stationer and close acquaintance of Wynkyn de Worde, and was certainly in York by 1517.<sup>11</sup> Mores joined the Corpus Christi Guild and became a freeman in 1520-1521, but unfortunately not much else is known of the man. Mores's stock-list is not overly large, especially compared to some of the surviving inventories from Oxford and Cambridge booksellers from around a similar time.<sup>12</sup> Mores's inventory contained only 126 volumes, but, despite having a smaller stock-list, it appears as though Mores's shop allowed him to live a comfortable lifestyle. According to his inventory, Mores lived in a large and well-furnished home, which included at least ten rooms and one stable. He was also successful enough to be a full-time bookseller-bookbinder, rather than delving into sideline trades. Mores's total goods were appraised at £17. 4s. 6½d., which was substantial, although Mores never accumulated the wealth of men like Wanseford, whose personal book stock alone was valued at £20 and whose joint-stock was valued at over £86 at his death.<sup>13</sup>

It is likely, however, that Neville Mores was more successful than his stock-list insinuates. At his death, Mores's book stock was valued at £3 3s. 10d. On 5 August 1520, however, Mores was known to have paid custom dues in Hull on a shipment of printed books worth £4 13s. 4d., which is a higher value than the total of his stock at the

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<sup>10</sup> Davies, *A Memoir of the York Press*, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> E. Gordon Duff, *Early Printed Books* (London, 1893), p. 179.

<sup>12</sup> An example, for comparison, would be Nicholas Pilgrim of Cambridge (1546), who had 382 titles in his inventory. See Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, no. 25.

<sup>13</sup> Davies, *A Memoir of the York Press*, p. 14.

time of his death.<sup>14</sup> This brings home one limitation of stock-lists as evidence. Stock-lists tell us only about unsold books. They may therefore be evidence not only of the bookshops' owners thought likely to sell, but of their misjudgements: the books that were left on their hands. Stock-lists tell us less about overall turnover. On the whole, we should accept that men like Mores, who made a decent living, knew their business. Though it is likely that this stock represents a residue of books reasonably likely to sell, it is something to keep in mind.

Neville Mores's shop contained seventy-one titles and 126 volumes. The original copy of the stock-list provides identification titles, number of copies of each title, as well as a value or price for each title.<sup>15</sup> A transcription of the stock-list by D.M. Palliser and D.G. Selwyn may be found in *The Library* journal.<sup>16</sup> While Palliser and Selwyn made a tentative attempt to identify a number of the titles, this study has been able to further identify titles as well as narrow down the number of possible editions.

Of the seventy-one titles, my research has identified fifty-three. One of the more striking features of Mores's stock is the small number of copies held for each title. The overwhelming majority of titles are represented by only a single copy, and rarely did Mores hold more than three copies of a title. This may have been the case for a number of reasons, but it is likely that the number of copies per title was kept small to save space within the shop and maintain a range of titles for customers to peruse. As port records have shown, Neville Mores imported a considerable value of books in a single large

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<sup>14</sup> National Archives, Records of the Exchequer (E 122/64/5, f 21).

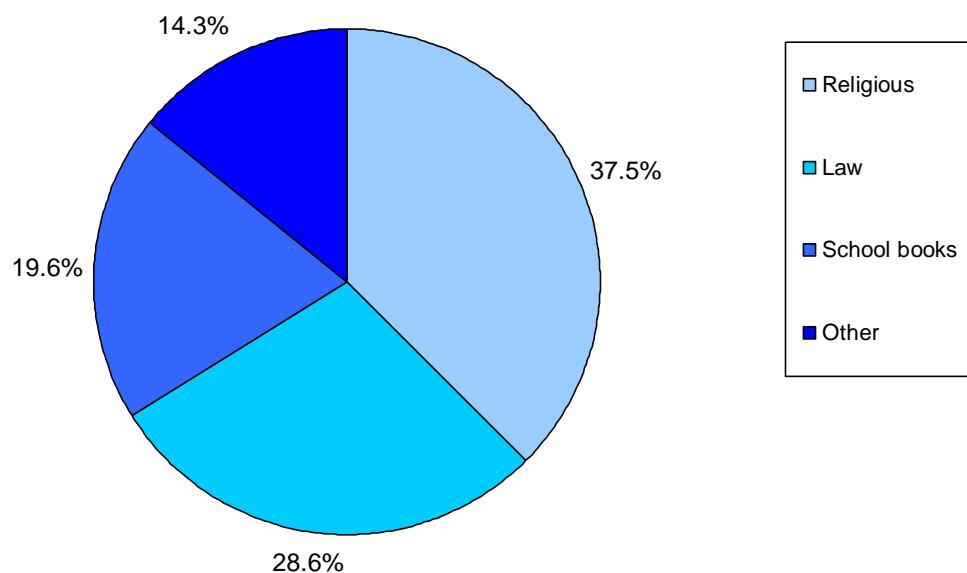
<sup>15</sup> Borthwick Institute, Dean and Chapter original wills (1538).

<sup>16</sup> D.M. Palliser, and D.G. Selwyn, 'The Stock of a York Stationer, 1538', *The Library* 27 (1972), pp. 207-219.

shipment.<sup>17</sup> It may also be possible that the books contained within his shop were for browsing purposes, enabling customers to order specific titles, which would then be shipped to Mores from the printers and distributed to his clientele.

Of the fifty-six titles that can be confidently identified, religious works represent the largest single subject category, comprising twenty-one titles, or 37.5% of the total stock. There are sixteen law books (28.6%), eleven school books (19.6%), three dictionaries (5.4%), and two works of drama (3.6%). There is also a single title each of history, science and medicine.

### Distribution of Subjects in Neville Mores's Shop



The high proportion of religious and legal works suggests that Mores's clientele was highly educated and likely to have been associated with the nearby York Minster.

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<sup>17</sup> National Archives, Records of the Exchequer (E 122/64/5, f 21).

The religious works included on Mores's stock-list are almost exclusively in Latin, and it includes works such as treatises upon the Eucharist, books of hours, and missals.<sup>18</sup> These are works that would have been required by the Minster clergy; certainly, the fact that the stock was largely Latin would have restricted the number of potential readers. Similarly, the legal texts contained were highly technical, including numerous legal commentaries, and would have likely been read by legal professionals, including those versed in ecclesiastical law working at York Minster. Latin works represented fifty-eight of the sixty-two titles where language can be identified (93.5% of the total). The stock also contains two titles in Dutch and two titles in French (each 3.2%). Not one title was in English.

A large proportion of Mores's book stock was printed abroad. This is unsurprising, given the prevalence of Latin, as well as the fact that, in 1538, English publishers were not yet in the position to satisfy demand for books published in the learned languages. Unfortunately, because many of Mores's books had been printed in Continental Europe, it can be challenging to narrow down the specific edition of a work. For some titles, it is very possible for the books to have originated from two or three different printing centres. For numerous identified titles it is impossible to narrow down the edition to a particular city of origin. These titles, as well as the twenty-five unidentifiable titles, have been excluded from my analysis of print location.

However, with these qualifications, we can say that between thirty-five and thirty-eight titles of the books Mores stocked were printed outside of England (85-93%). Of those, twenty to twenty-seven titles were printed in France (49-66%), which amounts to

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<sup>18</sup> Mores, 'Item j Innocencius de officio misse', Inventory no. 40; 'Item ij dosan and one portus', Inventory no. 2; and 'In primis iij dosan of messe booke bound and unbound', Inventory no. 1.

approximately half the total. Of these books printed in France, about half (ten to twelve titles) originated in Paris. Lyon is the second largest French printing centre represented in the stock, with seven to nine titles. This is followed by Rouen, with three to six titles, and Caen, with potentially a single title. It is noteworthy that Mores had imported roughly the same number of books from Paris as from Germany, Italy and Switzerland combined. Between eight and ten titles had been printed in Germany, from printing centres such as Bamberg, Cologne, Wittenberg, and Strasbourg. The Italian cities of Venice, Rome and Milan represented three or four editions found in Mores's shop. The Swiss city of Basel appears as the origin of a single copy.

It is highly improbable that Mores maintained direct trading relations with many of these places. Most likely he purchased a mixed batch supplied from a major printing centre, most likely in Paris, Rouen or Antwerp. Though Hull must have maintained good trade connections with the Low Countries, the high number of books in his stock published in France and the absence of books from the Low Countries suggests the probability of a French wholesaler.

Of Mores's stock where it has been possible to identify the book's format, there are ten folios, representing 28.6% of the total. Quartos account for sixteen titles (45.7%), and octavos account for nine titles (25.7%). This is a distribution characteristic of the first age of print, but not of the century of the whole. Mores's clientele were certainly readers who would have needed to make a substantial investment to build their libraries.

The average price per copy of Mores's available stock is 11.7*d.* for folios, 9.25*d.* for quartos, and 3.1*d.* for octavos. With a total stock value of £3 14*s.* 8*d.*, the known

folios represent 32.2% of the total stock value, while quartos represent 41.7% and octavos 3%.

When we examine the relationship between price and subject matter, we find that the religious stock has a total value of £1 13*s.* 4*d.*<sup>19</sup> This means the average price per copy is 2*s.* 1.6*d.* for religious works, and that they make up a staggering 83.5% of the total value of all books. Considering religious titles only form 37.5% of Mores's inventory, this demonstrates that it is only when we combine the analysis of raw numbers with data on price that the extent to which religious books dominated his trade becomes clear.

Law books, which form the second largest subject group from Neville Mores's inventory, comprise sixteen titles and have a total value of 5*s.* 6*d.* These law books have an average price per copy of 4.1*d.* and account for only 8.6% of the total stock value. School books represent the cheapest texts from Mores's stock-list. Including dictionaries in the calculations, school books comprise fourteen titles and copies, with a total value of 30*d.*, representing 3.9% of the total stock value. The average price per copy is 2.1*d.*, which is remarkably inexpensive. From the little information available, it appears that the editions of school books possessed by Mores were short and cheaply produced.

Combining this price analysis with information on place of printing is also illuminating. The average price per copy for books printed in England was 13.8-23.2*d.*, which is comparatively expensive. Books printed in France averaged 7.6-9.2*d.*; from Italy, 1.5-3.8*d.*; from Germany and Switzerland, about 2*d.* Books printed in London and York were significantly more expensive than books printed in Continental cities.

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<sup>19</sup> This represents twenty-one titles, of which Mores held a total of twenty-five copies.

Although transportation would add considerably to the cost of obtaining Continental books, they still had a significant price advantage in the York shop.

When one examines book titles found in the extant wills and inventories in York in the early sixteenth century, it is clear that Mores made good business decisions with regards to which stock to fill his shop with. I have examined most of York's wills and inventories that contain mention of books and manuscripts from this time period. The majority of these wills come from Minster clergy, and upon examination it becomes clear that many of the titles found on these inventories also appeared in Mores's shop. Even when different individual titles appear, the nature and characteristics of these York inventories complement the range of titles Mores is known to have offered. For instance, William Melton, Chancellor of York Minster, has an extensive inventory which included ninety total books and manuscripts, dated 20 August 1528.<sup>20</sup> This inventory shows that Melton possessed a copy of Jacobus de Varagine's *Sermones*, of which two Parisian editions could be found in Mores's bookshop. Melton's copy of *Sermones* was valued at 6d., while the assessors valued Mores's editions at 4d. each. Melton's book collection, similar to Mores's shop, contained numerous classical works, including editions of Cicero, Plato, Seneca, Origen, and Terence. Also, humanist works were notably absent, the exceptions being from Erasmus, which corresponds to the preferences and trends found in Mores's shop.

Other York wills and inventories contain this parallel trend. Titles from Guillelmus Durandus, Justianian, and Jacobus de Varagine were incredibly popular and found in wills of John Fewlare, chaplain at St Stephen's Altar in York Minster, Thomas Barton, vicar of St Lawrence, William Coca, chantry priest in Holy Trinity, Richard

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<sup>20</sup> Claire Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. I, pp. 9-25.

Barwike, former monk, Lawrence Hall, priest in St Michael le Belfrey, and Edward Kellett, precentor of York Minster.<sup>21</sup> Kellett's inventory, which contains a total of forty-six titles, also includes the second volume of Bartolus de Saxoferrato, Lucian's *Dialogues*, and a Lyon edition of Niccolò Tedeschi's *Super Libris Decretalium*. Each of these match titles and, in the last case, potential editions of books held in Mores's shop.<sup>22</sup>

The inventory of Neville Mores presents a successful York bookseller in the early sixteenth century. Despite Mores's stock being remarkably scant compared to his contemporary booksellers in Oxford and Cambridge, he provided a valuable service to book-buying residents of York. From extant wills and inventories in York, it appears as though by far the most valuable customers were the Minster clergy and ecclesiastical lawyers.<sup>23</sup> These two groups of customers would have been more than adequately served by Mores's stock holdings. There are none of the humanists' works or secular literature found in inventories from Oxford and Cambridge, but this may have been because there was little interest in purchasing these works in 1530s York. Despite initial appearances, this collection of saleable books was enough to provide Mores and his family with comfortable household and furnishings.

### **Robert Scott, Norwich, 1568-1570**

Between 1554 and 1579, the population of Norwich rose as much as 60%, due largely to the influx of Dutch and Flemish refugees.<sup>24</sup> By 1579, the number of Flemish

<sup>21</sup> Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. II, pp. 5-7, 16-17, 28-30, and 44-45.

<sup>22</sup> Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. I, pp. 38-45.

<sup>23</sup> See below chapter eight.

<sup>24</sup> D.A. Stoker, 'A History of the Norwich book trades from 1560 to 1760' (Library Association Fellowship thesis, 1976), p. 5.

refugees had reached 6,000 out of a total city population of 16,000.<sup>25</sup> While the number of refugees in Norwich was not as large as some other cities like London, the proportion of the refugee population had been significantly higher. These Dutch and Flemish refugees represented over one-third of Norwich's population. East Anglia may have appealed to these refugees because there were established intimate trading links between the area and the Low Countries during this period.

The book trade in Norwich has a long history stretching back to the medieval era. As a cathedral city, Norwich had an impressive cathedral library and book collection within its walls. By the middle of the fourteenth century, there were approximately thirty monastic institutions in Norwich, many of which would have been keen to assemble a collection of books.<sup>26</sup> By the end of the thirteenth century, bookbinding had already become a popular trade in the city.<sup>27</sup>

Although the book trade was rooted in Norwich's history, there is no evidence that book ownership had been widespread. It is only in the 1560s that the book trade really expands and becomes prominent within the town. This can be associated with the rapid expansion of educational provision. There had been an explosion of literacy with the establishment of grammar schools. In 1566, a headmaster had been appointed to a grammar school with 100 students. The 1570 census found that sixty-eight children from poorer families were attending school, with an additional fifteen being taught in Norman's Charity Hospital.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Stoker, 'Norwich book trades', p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> William Sessions and David Stoker, *The First Printers in Norwich from 1567 – Anthony de Solempne, Albert Christiaensz & Joannes Paetz* (York, 1987); and Stoker, 'Norwich book trades', p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Stoker, 'Norwich book trades', p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110, and 122.

With increased literacy and demand for school books, becoming a stationer was an attractive career opportunity. Stationers might enjoy a lifestyle that was both financially viable and socially meaningful. Many were found to have held minor official appointments, such as constable or churchwarden.<sup>29</sup> But they also faced increased competition within the industry. The Norwich book trade in the 1560s and 1570s was still a risky business. Some stationers, such as Leonard Delyson in 1571, died as poor men in debt. Other stationers, like John Clifford, were never able to purchase their shops despite having long careers.<sup>30</sup> Despite the potential pitfalls, five book professionals were plying their trades in Norwich around 1570. There was one printer, Anthony de Solempne, and four booksellers/bookbinders, John Clifford, Thomas Gilbert, Leonard Delyson and Robert Scott. These five shops would have been located very close to one another, largely in St Andrew's parish.<sup>31</sup>

Though very little information is known of the man or his life, it appears as though Robert Scott was a man who struggled to maintain his shop and business. Nearly all the information we have on Scott emanates from the Common Plea Roll where his stock-list is contained. The stock-list was produced as a part of a law suit between Robert Scott and Abraham Veale, a London wholesaler.<sup>32</sup> Veale had filed a claim against Scott for the cost of materials provided. The total cost of these books and materials was £30 13s. 4d., of which only £18 3s. had been paid by Scott, who was identified as a bookbinder in the proceedings. Judgment was given in favour of Veale and a list of the books and materials provided to Scott was recorded in the Common Plea Rolls.

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<sup>29</sup> Stoker, 'Norwich book trades', p. 102.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-132.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 467.

<sup>32</sup> National Archives, Court of Common Pleas (CP 40/1297, f 1649).

The list itself is divided into shipments or orders requested by Scott. It shows that there had been twenty-eight consignments made between 12 July 1568 and 24 November 1570, which amounts to approximately two per month. Within these twenty-eight deliveries, there are 323 individual titles listed in a total of 5,313 copies. While there are no prices given for individual items, aggregate prices are provided for each consignment. Because Robert Scott's list is not a conventional inventory, and many of the entries are for the same titles, analysis will be handled slightly differently. Rather than interpreting the data as if one walked into the bookseller's shop, one must bear in mind that all data will represent what Scott perceived as popular and likely to have a regular sale. Because this list is an account of ordering history, the majority of the ordered books will necessarily be replenishments for items previously purchased.

Robert Scott's list shows that English and Latin works were about equally popular among his Norwich customers. Of the 179 titles where language can be firmly determined, ninety-nine (55.3%) were in English and seventy-eight (43.6%) were in Latin. The only other language represented is Greek with a mere two titles (1%). The majority of the Latin titles are school books, composing sixty of the seventy-eight known Latin titles (76.9%). The remaining eighteen Latin titles (23.1%) are religious works that may have also been used as school books. Unlike their Latin counterparts, books in English cover a wide range of categories, including school books, political works, science, religious works and bibles. Religious books account for thirty-nine of the ninety-nine English vernacular titles (39.4%). At this time, Latin as a printed language remained popular among particular audiences, specifically learned religious professionals and for teaching in schools. As a whole, however, English was the language of those

buying books for variety or leisure. In English, Scott provided simple medical and scientific texts, psalm books, bibles, printed laws and news, and even books on women's issues.<sup>33</sup> These books were clearly designed for a wider, English-reading market.

When examining the titles on Scott's list and their subject distribution, it is immediately apparent that though school books may have been his steady and reliable sellers, the majority of the ordered stock contains a great deal of variety. Of the 316 titles (97.8%) which may confidently be assigned to a subject category, religious books represent the largest single category with 121 titles (38.3%). School books are the second largest category with 107 titles (33.9%). These are then followed, in order, by almanacs with thirty (9.5%), poetry with twenty-two (7%), laws and injunctions with twelve (3.8%), music books and bibles with eight each (2.5%), political works with six (1.9%), and books of cookery, drama, history, literature, news, philosophy, science, geography, agriculture, medicine, women's issues, and dictionaries with only a one or a few copies each.

When one analyzes the number of copies against subject categories, it becomes even more certain that, though school books were an important staple of his trade, a range of subjects intended for a leisure audience were Scott's most popular sellers. Of the 4,748 copies (89.4%) where subject categories can be assigned, only 1,073 are school books (22.6%), of which 120 were by classical authors (2.5%). The single most popular subject category is poetry, which accounts for 1,752 copies (36.9%), over one third of all the stock ordered by Scott over these few years. Religious works are the second largest category with 1,302 copies (27.4%), which is still a significant proportion of the stock.

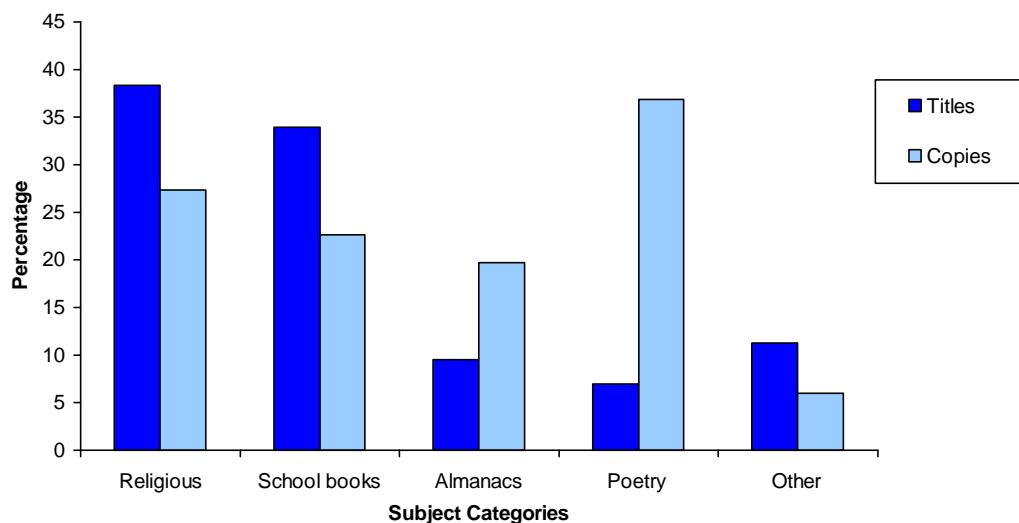
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<sup>33</sup> Examples of such texts include Scott, 'duos the Seven sorowes of Wemen', Inventory no. 148; and 'sex in landem vituperium mulierorum', Inventory no. 310.

This is followed, in order, by almanacs with 933 (19.7%), music books with 217 (4.6%), and political works with forty-six (1%). The remaining subjects contain only a few copies each.

The large number of poetical works is particularly striking. What we may see here, in a crowded market with several booksellers trying to make their way, is an attempt to establish a niche market. In a town where many booksellers were settled, it helped to have a known specialism that would draw customers into the shop. Whether this was a successful strategy, or a source of the financial difficulties that led to the confrontation with Veale, is more difficult to say.

### Distribution of Subjects in Robert Scott's Shop



The school books on Scott's stock-list favour contemporary authors over classical writers, with works by John Stanbridge, Desiderius Erasmus and William Lily. Lily's

grammar was a particularly popular work, having been ordered twenty-six times between July 1568 and November 1570. In total, Robert Scott ordered 189 copies of Lily's *A short introduction of grammar*, which represents 36% of all non-catechismal school books. Classical authors, such as Cicero, Ovid, Terence and Virgil, also appear on the stock-list but with few copies. Cicero, with thirty-nine copies, was the most frequently-stocked classical author, followed by Terence with a mere twenty-eight copies.

One would expect to find more classical authors on Robert Scott's stock-list. Elizabethan grammar-school education was still structured around a menu of texts by classical authors, as can clearly be discerned by a surviving educational ordinance laying out the curriculum of the Norwich school. Dating from 1566, almost contemporary with Scott's shop, it includes the works of several Greek and Latin authors.<sup>34</sup> Scott's list contains a number of the recommended authors and works, such as Cicero's *De Officiis* and *Epistolae ad Atticum*.<sup>35</sup> The list, however, does not contain the majority of the recommended authors and items. Prominent works missing from Scott's list includes Thomas Linacre's grammar, Erasmus's *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia*, Caesar's *Commentarii*, and titles by Homer, Juvenal and Lucian. William Lily's grammar appears in Scott's list, but not on the list of prescribed works. Either the grammar schools in Norwich were ignoring the educational ordinance, or they were getting their supplies from another of the Norwich booksellers.

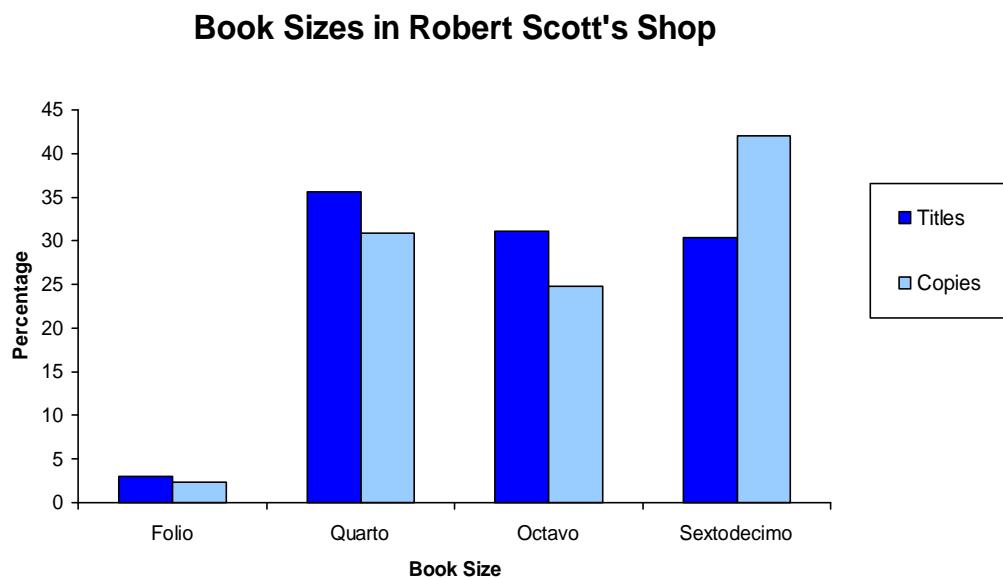
Robert Scott preferred to stock works in small formats. Of the 135 known title formats, a mere four (3%) were in folio. Forty-eight (35.6%) were in quarto, forty-two (31.1%) in octavo, and forty-one (30.4%) in sextodecimo. This preference is reflected in

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<sup>34</sup> H. W. Saunders, *History of the Norwich Grammar School* (Norwich, 1932), pp. 144-148.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Scott, 'Officiorum Ciceronis', Inventory nos. 91, 203, 281, 288, 304 and 321; and 'Epistolarum Ciceronis', Inventory nos. 86, 118 and 330.

the analysis of copies as well. Folios account for only seventeen copies (2.3%), quartos for 230 copies (30.9%), octavos for 185 copies (24.8%), and sextodecimos, the largest quantity, for 313 copies (42%). Nearly half of Scott's delivered stock was in a small size. Most of the sextodecimos found on Scott's list were primers and other school books. Particularly, the copies of works by Cicero and Terence were delivered in small formats. Scott's shop clearly supplied customers of far more modest means than was the case with Mores's shop a generation before in York.



Only about half of the printing locations of the works can be identified. Of the 176 titles where the printing city has been identified, 152 titles (86.4%) had been printed in London. This may be a misleading figure, however. The books purchased by Scott for which we have records come from only one man, Abraham Veale, who was based in London as a wholesaler. It is possible that he received Continental editions from

elsewhere. There were nineteen titles (11%) printed in Antwerp, nearly all from Christophe Plantin's presses and all in Latin. The German cities of Cologne and Frankfurt combined account for three titles (1.7%), and Zurich accounts for one. These four titles were also in Latin. Due to the considerable number of Latin works ordered by Scott, one would expect to find more works printed outside London, especially the Netherlands, where Norwich had such strong trade connections.

Looking at the dates of publication of the stock, it is obvious that Robert Scott was aware of the newest materials being printed in London. Of the 167 titles where dates can be confidently assigned, eighty-three titles (49.7%) ordered were recently printed between 1568 and 1570. It shows that not only did Robert Scott keep abreast of what was being printed in London, but also that books printed in London were quickly disseminated into nearby provincial towns like Norwich. By 1570, customers in the city could have the newest, most popular, most fashionable books in their possession within a few months of printing. This is a remarkable change from just years earlier, especially when compared to the average age of a book found in Neville Mores's shop in 1538, which was about 25 years. Only two titles (1.2%) delivered to Scott were printed before 1560. Ten titles (6%) were printed 1560-1565, twenty-nine titles (17.4%) were printed 1564-1566, and forty-three titles (25.7%), were printed in the year 1567 alone.

Robert Scott was an unsuccessful Norwich stationer. He was unable to pay his debts to his wholesaler, Abraham Veale, and it is evident that financial difficulties plagued his business. His ordering patterns reflect these financial struggles, highlighted by his demonstrable lack of start-up capital. In general, he ordered small numbers of titles time and again, as seen when he ordered William Lily's grammar in bundles of only

six or twelve copies. Scott was forced to order the same titles every two months to replenish stock because he did not have the capital to do so in bulk. This is indicative of rapid turnover and easy sales for these staple titles. But it is also a sign that Scott was hampered by an extremely modest capital. Either he was unable to afford to purchase in bulk or Veale was not prepared to advance him a more generous line of credit – wisely as it turned out.

Without having this available capital, Scott consequently had to pay more money in shipping costs to have small bundles delivered regularly, rather than the alternative of large bundles infrequently. This may be another reason for the prevalence of smaller format sizes – perhaps it was not his customers but Scott himself who could not afford to purchase folios. The case of Robert Scott of Norwich provides an example of a provincial bookseller operating towards the bottom end of the market in a provincial town now able to sustain several bookshops.

### **James Backhouse, Kirkby Lonsdale, 1578**

James Backhouse's inventory, found adjoined to his will in the registry of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, is different from many of the stock lists that will be discussed.<sup>36</sup> Backhouse was not a stationer, nor did his profession exclusively tie him to the book trade. Rather, Backhouse was a tradesman, whose shop included a sizable variety of materials and was valued at £278 6s. 8d. In Backhouse's lists, cloth and clothing-related items are the majority of his material stock. Despite the “geographical isolation” and “economic backwardness” of the area in the sixteenth century, Backhouse

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<sup>36</sup> Lancashire Records Office, Probate Records (W/RW/F/R315A/3); and James Raine, *Wills and Inventories from the Registry of the Archdeaconry of Richmond, extending over portions of the counties of York, Westmorland, Cumberland, and Lancaster* (London, 1853), pp. 275-281.

was able, somewhat remarkably, to supply his customers with Spanish silks, French garters, Norwich lace, Oxford gloves, Turkish purses and other worldly goods.<sup>37</sup>

Backhouse's inventory is no doubt a useful resource for historians studying sixteenth-century fashion and clothing, but our concern here is with the printed books contained within his shop. There are a total of twenty-seven titles and 127 copies. This is a small number of works, especially when compared with other provincial stationers of the time. It is important, however, that we do not neglect these non-book trade professionals who were selling books. While extant evidence is fairly sparse, inventories such as Backhouse's are invaluable when attempting to gain a comprehensive view of book consumption in the provinces.

Unfortunately, the twenty-seven titles provided are given too vague a description to be properly identified. With descriptions such as "Salme boocke", "Virgell", and "Dyalogues", the identification of specific editions or exact title is impossible.<sup>38</sup> Despite this, the book stock may be analyzed according to subject category and cost. School books represent the overwhelming majority of book stocked by Backhouse. Of the twenty-four identifiable titles, twenty-one are school books (87.5%). Of those school books, seven are by classical authors (29.2% of the total). Backhouse also sells three religious titles, all psalm books, in his shop (12.5%). The prevalence of school books is more pronounced when one analyzed subject categories according to copy. School books comprise 115 of the 119 identifiable copies (96.6%). Eighteen of these school book were written by classical authors (15.1% of the total), and a mere four copies of religious books were held (3.4%).

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<sup>37</sup> Andrew B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (Liverpool, 1978), p. 84.

<sup>38</sup> Backhouse, 'Salme boocke', Inventory no. 387; 'Virgell', Inventory no. 400; and 'Dyalogues', Inventory no. 402.

The value of school books totalled £2 10*d.*, which averages to 7.7*d.* per copy.

The value of the religious works was 4*s.*, averaging 12*d.* per copy. The cost of the books, namely the school books, was significantly higher than in other towns. This is most likely due to the additional cost of carting the books to Kirkby Lonsdale. Transportation difficulties would have assuredly driven up prices. While the Tyne Gap linked the area to Newcastle, another road linked east into Yorkshire, and one ran from nearby Kendal south into Lancaster, as late as 1634 the roads around Kirby Lonsdale and Kendal had been described as “nothing but a most confus’d mixture of Rockes and Boggs”. Even by 1698, over a century after Backhouse’s death, the roads in the area were described as “being very hilly, stony, and moorish”.<sup>39</sup> Neither was travelling by water a viable option in the Westmorland area, as the nearby Cumberland ports had not been developed before 1600. When Francis Walsingham was providing subsidies to outports in 1585, no port in either Westmorland or Cumberland was even mentioned.<sup>40</sup>

In 1578, Kirkby Lonsdale’s reading population had been almost exclusively interested in school books. No titles are contained that would suggest reading had become a leisure activity. One reason for this may be because James Backhouse was not a bookseller. Undoubtedly, his customers would have primarily interested in other wares, though it appears as though his bookshop was supplying a school with their books, even though there is no school recorded at Kirkby Lonsdale at this time. There is no evidence to suggest that a bookseller or stationer had been working in Kirkby Lonsdale, so Backhouse’s books would have been the only books available locally. If we are to assume that the town did not have an active stationer, then the only, or at least most

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<sup>39</sup> Appleby, *Famine*, p. 84.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

convenient, method of acquiring books would have been through these general shops that sold a bit of everything. Backhouse's inventory exemplifies the outer margins of the provincial book trade in the middle of the sixteenth century. In a town which was troublesome to reach by both land and by water, and which had no grammar school until 1591, a local shop owner was still able to offer a substantial selection of books for sale.<sup>41</sup> That in itself is a measure of the extent of the provincial bookselling network.

### **Roger Ward, Shrewsbury, 1585**

Because of the wool and cloth trades, Tudor Shrewsbury was a prosperous place. Shropshire and Welsh textiles were exported abroad, either through London or Bristol. Even during the Reformation, membership of the town's Drapers' Company remained consistent, and the Company expanded rapidly in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>42</sup> As well as taking advantage of this economic and trade prosperity in the second half of the sixteenth century, the town's booksellers would have benefited from the establishment of Shrewsbury School in 1552, which brought an influx of students from outside the town. In a school list of 1562, there are 266 male students, of which 133 are 'townsboys' and the remaining 133 reside from outside the area. In 1570, Shrewsbury School enrolled 663 students, only 106 of whom came from the town.<sup>43</sup> The school is of vital importance to Shrewsbury's booksellers in this period because it generated a great demand for school books and classical texts.

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<sup>41</sup> Richard Gilbert, *Liber Scholasticus: or, An account of the fellowships, scholarships, and exhibitions, at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge* (London, 1829), p. 269.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Corwin Mendenhall, *The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1953), pp.79-83.

<sup>43</sup> J. Basil Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School, 1552-1952* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 3-7.

Roger Ward was a well-known Elizabeth printer and bookseller who had shops in both London and Shrewsbury.<sup>44</sup> A Salop man himself, Ward served his apprenticeship in London under Thomas Marsh, beginning in 1566, and his first entry into the Stationers' Registry is eleven years later, on 8 July 1577.<sup>45</sup> Ward's legacy and notoriety, however, is not due to any greatness of craft; instead, Roger Ward is remembered by history for his struggles against the privilege and patent system of the English book world. Along with other notable printers, such as John Wolfe and Robert Waldegrave, Ward revolted against the established system by setting up secret presses and openly printing pirated materials. In February 1582, Ward was in prison in Woodstreet Counter for some undisclosed Stationers' dispute when he was called before the Court of the Star Chamber to respond to a separate complaint from another Stationer. John Day asserted that Ward conspired to print 10,000 copies of *The A.B.C. with the Little Catechism*, for which Day alone held the lucrative privilege of printing. According to court records, Ward obtained the necessary paper from Abraham Newman and Thomas Man, bribed one of Thomas Purfoot's apprentices to furnish type from Day's printing house, and even hired a Frenchman to cut a new woodcut version of Day's printing device. Ward's demeanour throughout the proceeding was "insolent and unco-operative". Through proceedings continued until 10 July, no record remains regarding the case's outcome. By December 1582, Ward was imprisoned in Ludgate, which may have been a result of the proceedings, or perhaps some similar offence.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of foreign printers of English books, 1557-1640* (London, 1910), p. 411.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Roger, 'Roger Ward's Shrewsbury Stock: an Inventory of 1585', *The Library* 13 (1958), pp. 247-268.

The surviving records on Roger Ward's life and career read as a list of crimes and offences. On 24 February 1583, Ward was fined for illegally printing *A Sermon of Repentance* by Arthur Dent, and later on 27 August 1583, Ward was accused of violating William Seres's patent to print "the *little primer* and the usuall *psalter*".<sup>47</sup> In 1584/1585, Ward found himself in Woodstreet Counter once more and appears to have remained there until 19 October 1586.<sup>48</sup> In 1587/1588, Ward was again arrested on account of a printing press he had established in Southwark, and in 1589/1590, Ward's press and type were destroyed for printing unauthorized works.<sup>49</sup> By 1591, Ward had returned to Southwark and resumed illegally printing Dent's *Sermon*, and, once again, his presses were seized, his type was defaced, and he served another term in prison.<sup>50</sup> Despite his dire financial situation due to his time in prison and the continual destruction of his property, Ward was able to raise enough money by 1594 or 1595 to establish two secret presses. Again, the Wardens ordered the destruction of Ward's presses and type.<sup>51</sup> This is the final mention of Roger Ward's life and career. The only other reference is in relation to Ward's widow, who took on an apprentice, on 6 March 1598.<sup>52</sup>

This story of incessant conflict with the hierarchy of the London Stationers' Company makes it all the more interesting that Ward should have embarked in 1585 on another ambitious business venture. Perhaps his turbulent and by now fractured relations with the printing establishment in London hint at the reason he now yearned to set up a major new venture in his home town. Whatever his motives, Ward certainly planned on a

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<sup>47</sup> Edward Arber (ed.), *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640 A.D.*, 5 Vols. (1875-1894), Vol. II, pp. 785-786 and 854.

<sup>48</sup> Arber, *Stationers' Company I*, p. 510.

<sup>49</sup> Arber, *Stationers' Company I*, pp. 526-527, 529, and 541.

<sup>50</sup> Arber, *Stationers' Company I*, p. 555.

<sup>51</sup> Arber, *Stationers' Company I*, p. 571 and 575.

<sup>52</sup> Arber, *Stationers' Company II*, p. 224.

grand scale. He was able to draw on his undoubted talent for raising money to persuade a Shrewsbury draper to make him a substantial loan. With this money in hand, Ward then furnished his bookshop with a large and expensive stock. It is the collapse of the partnership with his financial backer which led to the completion of Ward's inventory.

A clue to the reason for Roger Ward's imprisonment in 1585 comes to us through a Chancery record in the National Archives. The writ asserts that Ward owed £240 to John Betton, a Shrewsbury draper, and Ward, who was unable to pay, was to be imprisoned and have all of his lands and goods in Shrewsbury confiscated in order to repay the debt owed to Betton.<sup>53</sup> Included with this writ is a detailed inventory of Ward's Shrewsbury bookshop. Roger Ward's stock-list is perhaps the most challenging list to identify titles from, due to the potential preponderance of pirated or illegal works. In a few cases, it is clear when a pirated title is listed; for instance, when 'Dentes Sermones' appear on the inventory.<sup>54</sup>

Roger Ward's stock-list contains a total of 520 entries comprising 2,180 copies. Unfortunately, a number of the listings are illegible and others are simply described as 'bookes', which leaves us with 496 titles that may be identified. While no prices are provided, which precludes most economic analysis, this inventory shows that by 1585, English printing had come to dominate the bookshops, and English increasingly became the prevailing language of the printed works. Of the 416 works where the language may

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<sup>53</sup> National Archives, Chancery Records (C 152/32, 25-27 Eliz.).

<sup>54</sup> The Shrewsbury shop contained a number of works known to have been pirated by Ward, such as Arthur Dent's *A sermon of repentaunce*, which had been illegally printed by the stationer in 1583 and 1591.

be identified, 312 are in English (75%), 102 in Latin (24.5%), eight in Greek (1.9%), eight in French (1.9%), and one each in Dutch and German.<sup>55</sup>

As English became the dominant language of print in England, so too had London become the dominant print centre for the country's provincial booksellers. Of the 365 entries where the location of printing may be identified on Ward's stock-list, 337 titles (92.3%) had been printed in England, of which 333 were from London (98.8%). France accounts for thirteen entries (3.6%) – six books from Paris, six from Lyons, and a single title from Troyes. Aside from the French printing, Ward's shop held copies of works printed in the Netherlands (Antwerp and Louvain), Switzerland (Basel, Geneva, and Lausanne), Venice, and Wittenberg. Despite only possessing one or two editions from each of these locations, the presence of these books demonstrates the continuing need to import certain types of print, and this ensured that some sort of connections between printers and booksellers in England and the Continent were maintained. While the London print industry was able to provide adequately for the demand for English print, the production of Latin works remained insufficient for local needs, so the Continental print centres remained important to the English provincial book trade. In Ward's shop, all of the works printed outside England were in a language other than English. While Latin, apart from English, was obviously the most common print language on Ward's list, a number of titles in French and German are present as well.

Despite the necessity of importing Latin works, it is also noteworthy that the majority of Latin titles in Ward's stock had been printed in England. Of the 102 Latin titles, fifty-two can be identified as having definitely been printed in England. There are

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<sup>55</sup> Some works are printed in multiple languages (for instance, Latin and Greek), and where this happens, I have counted the work twice, once in the Latin category and once in the Greek, which is why the percentages total greater than 100.

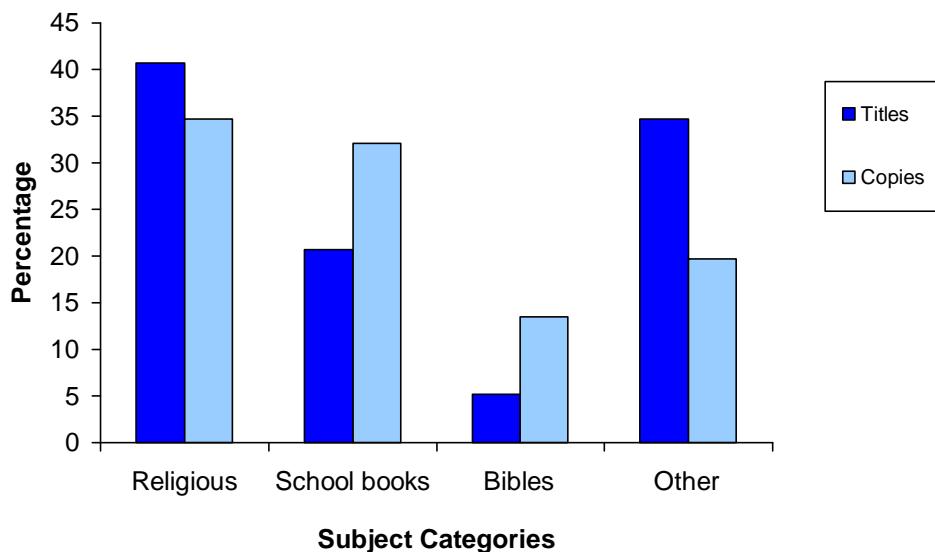
a number of Latin titles where no printing location can be confidently assigned, and, though most of these will have come from the Continent, a number of them must surely have been printed in England. It is reasonable to assume from the identifiable data on the list that at least half of all Latin print present in Roger Ward's inventory was printed in England. This, combined with its dominance over printing in English, shows London's increasing ability to satisfy the demand for printed books in provincial England. It was a significant shift in the course of fifty years.

Roger Ward's stock-list shows a great diversity of subject matter as well. Amongst the 469 titles that may be identified, nearly all subject categories are represented. The largest group is made up of religious works, of which there are 191 titles (40.7%). This is followed by school books with ninety-seven titles (20.7%). These two groups combined account for 61.4% of titles and are the only two that make up a substantial proportion of the total stock. The remaining 38.6% of Ward's titles cover a great miscellany of subjects. Roger Ward provided his customers with everything from bibles, legal and political works to books of cookery, literature, music, and medicine. This was a large and diverse book-buying population, and Ward was making a bold bid to become the principal supplier of their books.

The statistics are fairly similar when analyzed by copy rather than title. Here, we see that religious works and school books were held in equal numbers in Ward's shop. Of the 1977 identified copies, religious works account for 686 copies (34.7%) and school books for 635 copies (32.1%). We also see the proportion of biblical texts increase from twenty-four titles (5.2%) to 266 copies (13.5%). Aside from this notable exception, the

remaining twenty-two subjects remain proportionally equivalent between the titles offered and the copies held, deviating only one or two percentage points.

### Distribution of Subjects in Roger Ward's Shop



Format is difficult to discern from Roger Ward's stock-list. Many of the titles identified on the list may be one of a number of editions, and many of these were printed in different formats. While it is still possible and beneficial to analyze these works based on language, printing location, and subject matter, the analysis of format and printing dates becomes a bit more tenuous. To avoid too much speculation, this study will examine only the formats that can be identified with certainty, which limits the study to only 126 of the 458 entries. Ward's shop definitely contained fifteen folios (11.9%), sixty-nine quartos (54.8%), thirty-five octavos (27.8%), and six sextodecimos (4.8%). While our data sampling is small, it is likely that these percentages are similar to the total,

with perhaps an increase in octavos. The distribution of the formats is very much what we would expect to find in a bookshop like Ward's.

Analyzing Ward's inventory by publication year is easier and provides a more accurate picture. Part of the problem with identifying specific editions on this list is that multiple editions were often printed within a year or two or, on occasion, even within the same year. While this may have posed a problem in determining the exact date of publication, this study will use a dating range to resolve this issue. Examining Ward's stock-list, 339 titles can be dated confidently. Twenty-six editions were printed between 1584-1585 (7.7%), and 109 between 1580-1583 (32.3%). This means that approximately 40% of Ward's stock had been printed within the previous five years. Ward's shop held 109 titles printed between 1575-1579 (32.2%), meaning nearly three-fourths of his entire stock was less than ten years old.

Much of the stock in Roger Ward's shop is intended for those connected to Shrewsbury School. From the grammars, school books, and classical authors for the students to more advanced theological tracts and medical works for alumni heading to university or careers as headmasters or teachers, Ward's stock would have provided them with the essential current texts. Shrewsbury School was an important and lucrative market of steady buyers who would have provided Ward with a consistent source of income. To Ward, the potential financial benefits of printing and selling illegal and privileged materials would have certainly outweighed the risks of punishment. This is likely to be why Ward routinely established presses, always returning to his illegal practices after each of his prison sentences.

### **Christopher Hunt, Exeter, 1603**

Late Tudor and early Stuart Exeter was one of the five largest provincial towns in England. Scholars estimate that the cathedral city had a population of between 5,000-8,000 people, and by 1600, Exeter had become increasingly urbanized, with more people living in the city than ever before.<sup>56</sup> Geographically, Exeter was a port town located near both the English and Bristol channels, allowing important trading connections to develop with Continental Europe and, in the seventeenth century, across the Atlantic. The town also had close trading links with other parts of England. Exeter was easily connected to many of the great English waterways, such as the Severn into Wales, the Avon into Bristol, and, by extension, the Thames into London via the Kennett.<sup>57</sup>

For a provincial English bookseller, Exeter would have been an attractive city, and evidence suggests that booksellers had been working continuously within the city walls since 1573/4.<sup>58</sup> The town's proximity to waterways linking it to both London and Europe would have made bringing in stock from the English and Continental print houses relatively quick and affordable. Because of the cathedral and growing urban population, there would have been a significant market. It is unsurprising that Christopher Hunt, after learning his trade in London, would have been made a stationer and freeman in Exeter in 1593. Though very little is known of his life, Hunt had an active relationship with at least one London printer, as there is record of Hunt requesting the publication of two books, *Examen de ingenios: the examination of men's wits* by John Huarte and

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<sup>56</sup> Jonathon Barry, 'South-West' in Peter Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. II: 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 70.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>58</sup> Ian Maxted, 'The structure of the 17<sup>th</sup> century book trade in Exeter', *Exeter Working Papers in Book History*, Devon Libraries Local Studies, <http://bookhistory.blogspot.com/2007/01/devon-book-38.html>.

*Godfrey of Bulliogne, or the recoverie of Hierusalem* by Torquato Tasso, from Adam Islip in 1594.<sup>59</sup>

The only other surviving source from Christopher Hunt is a book list from August 1603 discovered in 1953 in the binding of a 1637 edition of *Certaine Sermons* by Thomas Gataker.<sup>60</sup> There is some debate as to what the book list actually represents. Were these books physically for sale in his shop, or a list of books he intended purchasing? Was this a list of books he had recently sold, or a list of books representing something else entirely? G.K. Hunter confidently asserted it was either a list of works the bookseller would have liked to purchase or a random list of works with no real significance.<sup>61</sup> However, the evidence suggests otherwise. Though there is no way to know for certain, particular clues within the list itself may help narrow the possibilities.

The names and locations of customers and their payments are clearly noted in connection to many of the works, with some of the customer information preceding the titles and other information written directly alongside, which seems to demonstrate that the list contains significance to the seller. This fact also discounts the likelihood that this is merely a list of books housed in Hunt's shop. Hunter also hypothesizes that Christopher Hunt was merely copying the titles of works from a recent catalogue, such as Francis Meres's 1598 *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury*. This is a dubious interpretation of the information provided by the book list, because a number of titles are given multiple

<sup>59</sup> Ian Maxted, 'The establishment of the Exeter book trade', *Exeter Working Papers in Book History*, Devon Libraries Local Studies, <http://bookhistory.blogspot.com/2007/01/devon-book-34.html>.

<sup>60</sup> T.W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Love's Labor's Won: New Evidence from the Account Books of an Elizabethan Bookseller* (Carbondale, 1957), p. vii. Stock-list found in Thomas Gataker, *Certaine sermons* (London, 1637), STC 11652b bound together with Thomas Gataker, *Saint Stevens last will and testament* (London, 1638), STC 11673 in the University Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

<sup>61</sup> G.K. Hunter, review of 'Shakespere's Love's Labor's Won' by T.W. Baldwin, *Review of English Studies* 10 (1959), pp. 412-413.

copies, such as “4 dod on ye comandments in qto”.<sup>62</sup> If Hunt had been copying titles from a catalogue, multiple copies would not have been recorded. Instead, it is highly probable that either this list contains books purchased from the shop or, alternatively, customer orders placed for books required, which Hunt intended to order.

Christopher Hunt’s book list has received a great deal of attention from Shakespeare historians because of a controversial title found on the list. A purportedly lost work of Shakespeare’s entitled *Love’s Labour’s Won* appears under the heading “interludes and tragedyes” in the second leaf of the book list. The only other contemporary source to mention this work is Francis Meres’s 1598 *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury*, with the entry,

for Comedy...witnes his *Getleme of Verona*, his *Errors*, his  
*Love labors lost*, his *Love labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*.<sup>63</sup>

These titles were printed in conjunction with six of Shakespeare’s early tragedies. This has led scholars to theorize that the play is either lost, or an earlier name, or part of a double title given to one of his well-known comedies. While the intricacies of these debates are too complex to explore in detail here, most scholars agree that it was a Shakespeare play that had existed, perhaps as a sequel to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, but is currently known by another title; however, there are many diverse opinions as to what comedy *Love’s Labour’s Won* has become.<sup>64</sup>

While Christopher Hunt’s book list has garnered a great deal of attention from those interested in Shakespeare and his plays there has been no attempt, to date, to

<sup>62</sup> Hunt, ‘4 dod on ye comandments in qto’, Inventory no. 997.

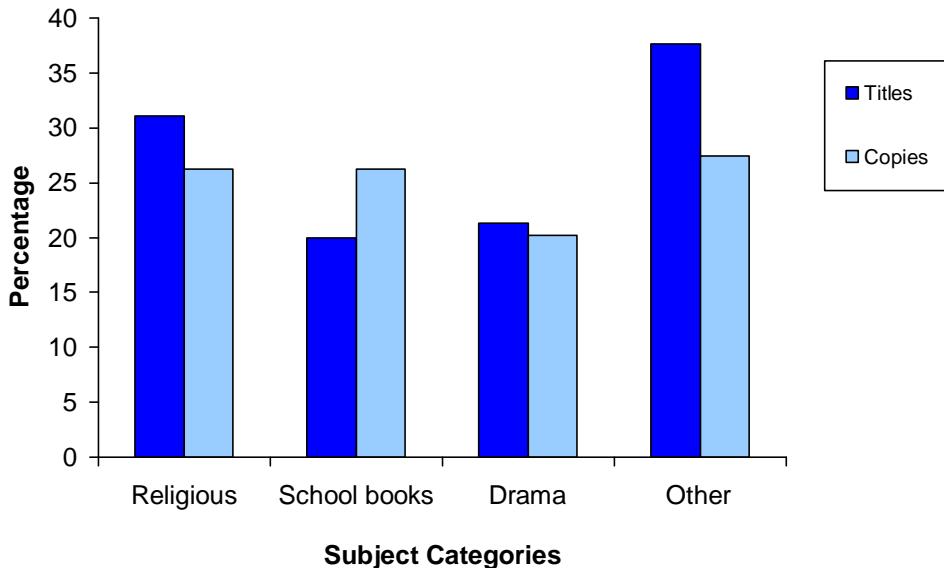
<sup>63</sup> Francis Meres, *Palladis tamia, Wits treasury being the second part of Wits common wealth* (London, 1598), STC 17834.

<sup>64</sup> The most convincing arguments are in favour of *All’s Well that Ends Well* or *Much Ado About Nothing*. See Henry Woudhuysen (ed.), *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (London, 2001).

scrutinize or analyze the list as a whole. Hunt's book list is important for what it tells us of the provincial book trade and reading interests of his customers in the areas surrounding Exeter in 1603.

One of the notable features of Hunt's stock-list is the large number of plays and dramatic works. The list contains sixty-three entries or titles representing eighty-six copies. Of the sixty-one titles it is possible to categorize, thirteen (21.3%) are works of drama. This is significantly higher than any of the other stock-lists in this study. Only religious works, of which there are nineteen titles (31.1%), account for more entries, and school books, which are regularly one of the most popular categories, amount to only 20% of the total. In short, 62.4% of Hunt's total stock-list is school books, religious, and drama works. The remaining 37.6% is divided between a number of themes: political works, histories, law books, literature, news books, poetry, science, medicinal texts, and dictionaries. None of these categories account for more than five titles, and all are less than 10% of the total stock listed. When analyzing the number of copies, the results look very similar. Both school books and religious works are plentiful, each with twenty-two copies (26.2%), but dramas were well-represented with seventeen copies, or 20.2% of the total.

### Distribution of Subjects in Christopher Hunt's Shop



Though Shakespeare is listed as the author of more dramatic works than any single author, what is striking is that the majority of the plays are comedies. One play in particular, *Jack Juggler*, claims to be written for a performance by children. The religious print on Hunt's list is mostly sermons, accounting for eleven of the nineteen religious entries (59.7%). Bishop Anthony Rudd has three works on the list, which also includes sermons by Gervase Babington, Thomas Bilson, Thomas Blague and others. Unsurprisingly for 1603, the list shows an interest in the new monarch, including two separate entries for a text on the Gowrie conspiracy and a history of Scotland, including a genealogy of kings.<sup>65</sup>

An overwhelming majority of the books on Hunt's list were in English. Of the fifty-five titles where the language may be identified, between forty-four and fifty-one

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<sup>65</sup> Hunt, 'govryes conspiracye', Inventory nos. 991 and 996; and 'naration of ye kings coming out of scotland', Inventory no. 945.

titles were in English (80.0-92.7%). A small number of school books were in Latin, totalling between four and eleven editions (7.3-20.0%), including one work in both Latin and Greek. The vast majority of the books were printed in London. Some titles, such as ‘ovids epistels’, may have been printed abroad, but these were also books that were printed in Latin in London by this time. We know that Hunt had business connections with stationers in the capital, mostly obviously Adam Islip. While we cannot discount the possibility that some of these works came from Europe, given the existing information, it seems unlikely.

The publication dates of books found on Hunt’s list show that the bookseller, and probably his customers, were interested in the latest works. Fifteen entries (30.0%) can be dated to 1603, the same year in which the list was written. An additional eleven entries were from 1600-1602 (22.0%), meaning 52% of the works listed by Hunt were printed in the previous three years. This shows that not only was there a demand for newly printed material, but also that booksellers were aware of the new works. Christopher Hunt, residing in Exeter, was kept up-to-date with printing in London. Consequently, Hunt’s customers would be able to remain current with important news and trends in literature.

Christopher Hunt’s book list reveals more than just a lost Shakespearean work. It demonstrates that the reading public in and around Exeter was interested in non-professional, leisure pursuits, such as drama and current events. It exemplifies how, by the seventeenth century, the English book market was predominantly a vernacular one, and works were primarily printed in London and transported from there to provincial book shops.

### Roger Sankey, Ormskirk, 1613

Like James Backhouse in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1578, Roger Sankey was not a book trade professional. His will, dated 1613, labels Sankey as a gentleman haberdasher and mercer.<sup>66</sup> The shop inventory adjoined to his will shows that Sankey, like Backhouse, dealt mainly in cloth, including over a dozen types of fabric and lace. In the midst of the inventory's entries for thread, buttons, and even gunpowder, there are a number of book titles recorded. Despite not being his primary trade, Roger Sankey was selling books in Ormskirk before 1613.

This section will be brief because there are only a few titles, and the generic descriptions of the works prevent the identification of specific editions. In total, twelve entries with over sixty-five copies appear in Sankey's shop, with a value of £1 14*s.* 2*d.* Nearly all of these works are school books, such as 'fontense puerilis', 'axedince' and 'horne booke'. The average price per copy, where available, shows that buying a grammar from Sankey would have been more expensive than its counterpart in either Exeter or London. For instance, a copy of 'terrence' averages 10*d.* per copy, while in York in 1616 works by Terence averaged 8*d.* Similarly, a copy of an unspecified Greek grammar costs over 1*s.*, which is much more expensive than other contemporary book shops like in 1616 York, when a Greek grammar cost as little as 3*d.* and 4*d.* It is unclear as to why Sankey's books were more expensive than in other provincial towns. Like Kirkby Lonsdale, Ormskirk is in a difficult location, and most likely this additional expense was the result of transportation costs.

Sankey's stock-list is remarkably similar to James Backhouse's list of books. Neither were book trade professionals, yet books proved to be a valued commodity to

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<sup>66</sup> Lancashire Records Office (WCW, 1613 Roger Sankey).

supplement their primary trade in cloth. Both shops demonstrate that one need not visit a bookseller's shop to obtain reading material, and, though they only provide us with a limited amount of information, they should not be ignored when analyzing the provincial book trade.

### **Michael Harte, Exeter, 1615**

The surviving biographical information on Michael Harte is a series of entries marking his progress in the ranks of the Stationers' Company. Harte, the son of an Exeter shoemaker, was apprenticed to London printer John Windet on 29 September 1585, eventually being admitted as a freeman to the Company on 5 October 1592. Soon after, Harte returned to Exeter, where he became a freeman on 31 December 1593, and set up his shop as a bookseller and bookbinder in the parish of St Martin. Harte is recorded as employing one apprentice, John Moungwell, who himself became a freeman in 1603/4. The registers of St Martin record Harte's burial on 12 November 1615.<sup>67</sup>

After his death, John Moungwell, Harte's former apprentice, took an inventory of all Harte's possessions, including the shop.<sup>68</sup> The inventory is dated 9 December 1615 and contains seventy-eight entries for books comprising a total of over 4,000 copies. The total value of the inventory, including household goods, is £165 14s. 11d., with the book stock valued at £103 8s. 2d., or 71% of the total. The inventory of the shop begins by listing specific book titles, along with quantity and value. Unfortunately, half-way through the stock-list, the appraisers lost interest in recording titles for the books found in Harte's shop, recording items such as '340 bookees in viii°' or '54 Stitch bookees in the

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<sup>67</sup> Ian Maxted, *The Devon Book Trade: A Biographical Dictionary* (Exeter, 1991), p. 78.

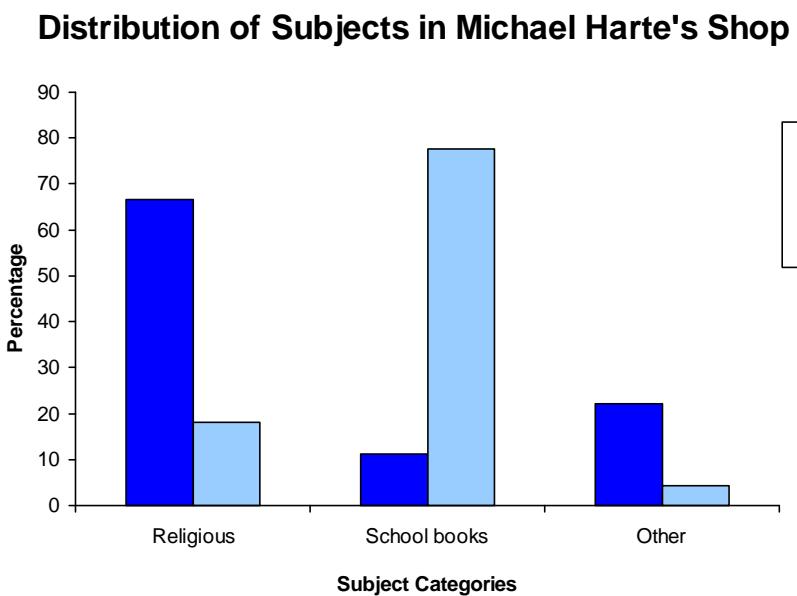
<sup>68</sup> Devon Records Office, Exeter Court of Orphans (DRO/ECA, Vol. 144, pp. 129-134).

Chest'. Frustrating as this may be, in many of the cases where only 'bookes' are defined, values and sometimes formats are still provided. Because of this, the detailed analysis will be focused upon the first portion of the stock-list, where editions may be identified and the most information extracted. The second half of the inventory will not be discarded; despite the fact that a detailed analysis would be fruitless, some observations and trends can still be noted.

Harte's stock is composed mostly of English titles. Of the thirty-two titles where language can be assigned, twenty-five of them were in English (78.1%). Harte held four titles in Latin (12.5%), two in French (6.3%), and one in Hebrew (3.1%). Not surprisingly given the prevalence of English material, nearly all of the books were printed in England. Only one title, a Latin work by Juan de Pineda, was printed outside England (in Mainz). The remaining titles were printed either in London (88.5%) or Cambridge (7.7%). This preference for English material printed in London or the university towns follows the trend of the other seventeenth-century book-lists. Even though we do not know all of the titles in Harte's shop, we would expect the character of the unknown items to be very similar.

When we analyze the available data by title, religious works were the most popular by a considerable margin, accounting for twenty-four titles (66.7%). The remaining 33.3% of the stock are divided between a rich variety of different subjects: school books, bibles, philosophy, political tracts, law books, military handbooks, histories, travel works, and dictionaries. When examined by copies rather than titles, a remarkably different picture emerges. School books, which account for only four entries (11.1%), compose 199 copies, or 77.7% of the total number of copies. Religious works,

which were the most popular subject matter by title, only comprise forty-six copies (18.0%). The remaining stock represents less than 2% of the total. This shows that Harte supplied his customers with a wide selection of religious materials, preferring to stock a small number of copies of different books. With school books, Harte appears more concerned with quantity in stock rather than variety. Perhaps Harte was trying to satisfy both customer demands – school books for students and a range of religious works for customers with differing theological interests.



In many of the entries where the assessors neglected to include a title, they still provided a format size for many of the books. It is often unclear how many titles are contained within each entry, so the analysis of formats will focus upon copies instead. 2,969 copies, over half of the total, are given a format by the appraisers. There are 244 folios (8.2%), 706 quartos (23.8%), and 1696 octavos (57.1%), 180 duodecimos (6.1%),

and 143 sextodecimos (4.8%). The unrecorded formats were probably a smaller size, because the larger folios and quartos would have been more expensive and valuable and, thus, more likely to be listed by individual title. Of the remaining entries without a format given, a number of the quantities are large, including 310 and 400 copies. These entries in particular are most likely small formats.

While Michael Harte's stock-list is independently valuable within this study, its real worth can be seen in comparison with another provincial list, as it happens exactly contemporary with Michael Harte: the stock-list of John Foster of York.

### **John Foster, York, 1616**

Despite a decrease in population in the middle of the sixteenth century, at the turn of the seventeenth century, York had a growing population of approximately 11,000-12,000.<sup>69</sup> The literate population was also expanding, marked by the foundation of two grammar schools in the city after 1575. Quantifying literacy rates is generally problematic, but using the admittedly controversial method of counting signatures in official documents, it would appear that for the years 1585-1594, the literacy rate would average 42-43%, and certainly this proportion would have risen by 1616.<sup>70</sup> Between the city's population growth and the increase in literacy, the book trade in York flourished. As many as six stationers were practicing their trade near the Minster at the same time as John Foster.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Palliser, *Tudor York*, p. 113.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>71</sup> John Barnard and Maureen Bell, *The Early Seventeenth-Century York Book Trade and John Foster's Inventory of 1616* (Leeds, 1994), p. 4.

John Foster was a member of a stationer's family, and he worked as a bookseller and bookbinder. Foster inherited his shop from his 'cousin' Anthony Foster, who was in business from about 1580 until his death in 1610. John Foster only possessed the shop for six years before he died at about the age of thirty-two, and the surviving inventory was taken at his death. Because of the short amount of time he maintained the shop, John Foster alone was not responsible for the contents of the shop, as it likely contained copies purchased by Anthony Foster as well. His shop was located in the Minster Yard, which had become a centre for the book trade in York from about 1572-1573. Due to its proximity, it is clear that many of Foster's customers had associations to the Minster. In fact, Anthony Foster was known to have provided the Minster with books between 1580 and 1607, as the Fabric Rolls note payment for paper books, psalters, and communion books.

John Foster's probate inventory was first transcribed by Robert Davies in 1868.<sup>72</sup> More recently, John Barnard and Maureen Bell re-transcribed the inventory in *The Early Seventeenth-Century York Book Trade and John Foster's Inventory of 1616*. While their work has been valuable, this study has been able to identify further titles and, in some cases, narrow and improve upon some listed by Barnard and Bell. This study has also benefited from using more recently available bibliographic resources such as *Early English Books Online*.

Foster's inventory has a total value of £163 15s. 8d., of which £144 16s. 4d. is book stock (88.4%).<sup>73</sup> The stock is made of 1,033 titles and 3,462 copies and is more diverse and varied than any of the stock-lists previously discussed. Foster's stock-list is

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<sup>72</sup> Davies, *A Memoir of the York Press*.

<sup>73</sup> York Minster Library (L1.17[38]).

also about double the size of the stock of Ward's shop in Shrewsbury. While 473 of the 796 identifiable titles are in English (59.4%), Foster's shop contained books in a total of eight other languages. Latin works were the second largest category, with 278 titles (34.9%). There were also twenty-eight books in Greek (3.5%), twenty-six in French (3.3%), nine in Hebrew (1.1%). The earlier stock-lists had titles in English and Latin, with perhaps a few titles in either French or Greek, but Foster's stock included languages previously unseen on the lists, namely Dutch, Italian, Spanish and Aramaic, though he only retained a few copies of each.

The overwhelming majority of books on John Foster's stock-list were printed in England. Of the 671 titles with identifiable print locations, 569 originated from English printing centres (84.8%). Between 531 and 546 of these were from London (93.3-96.0%), about thirteen to twenty works were from Cambridge (2.3-3.5%), and between eight and eleven from Oxford (1.4-1.9%). London print accounts for about 80% of the total of Foster's stock. While it would be expected that London produced nearly all of the printing of English materials, London also yielded more than half of the Latin works as well (53.9%).

Through the majority of Foster's stock was printed in England, he did hold a significant proportion of books printed in Continental Europe and elsewhere in Britain. At least 102 titles had been printed outside England (15.2%). Approximately one-third of these foreign books came from German printing centres, representing thirty-three titles from eleven different cities (32.4%). Switzerland produced a similar number of Foster's books, with twenty-eight titles (27.5%), nearly all of these printed in either Basel or Geneva. Twelve works originated in France (11.8%), ten from Italy (9.8%), and

nine from the Netherlands (8.8%). Edinburgh printed between nine and fourteen titles (8.8-13.7%), which is more than Oxford, and Dublin accounts for a single work.

Foster, in marked contrast to the other provincial booksellers we have considered thus far, seems to have had direct contact with European centres of bookselling. Most likely, Foster made these contacts through the Frankfurt fair.<sup>74</sup> In his stock, Foster possessed a total of twenty-five copies of two book fair catalogues.<sup>75</sup> Barnard and Bell have suggested that the catalogues may be earlier, unrecorded editions of a Frankfurt fair catalogue.<sup>76</sup> Though there is no further evidence to link Foster with Frankfurt, this period did witness a marked increase in interest in the fair among English book merchants. Historically, England represented a very small proportion of titles at any given year of the fair, particularly when compared to France, Italy, the Netherlands, and German speaking countries. The period of 1610-1619, however, saw a peak in English interest in the Frankfurt fair, as was evident in the number of titles listed in the fair's catalogue. In fact, this period marked a 400% increase in English participation compared to any of the previous decades.<sup>77</sup> Most of those involved will have been major London wholesalers. The evidence from Foster's inventory provides clear if tentative evidence that this involvement also extended to provincial booksellers.

Though the range and variety of Foster's stock is striking, nearly two-thirds of his stock is composed of school books and religious materials.<sup>78</sup> Bibles and other religious works account for 493 titles (52.0%) and 1031 copies (34.5%), and school books make

<sup>74</sup> John L. Flood, “‘Omnium totius orbis emporiorum compendium’: the Frankfurt Fair in the early modern period” in Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (eds.), *Fairs, Markets, and the Itinerant Book Trade* (London, 2007).

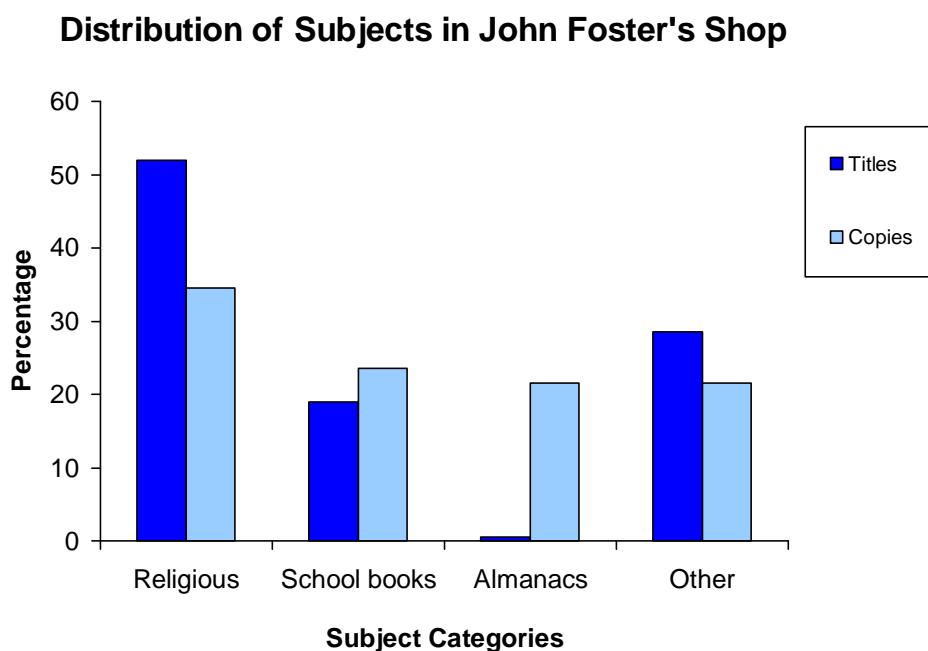
<sup>75</sup> Foster, ‘Cattaloges of the Martes xxiv’, Inventory no. 2102.

<sup>76</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 70.

<sup>77</sup> Flood, ‘Frankfurt Fair’, p. 26.

<sup>78</sup> In total, Foster's stock contained twenty-eight subjects.

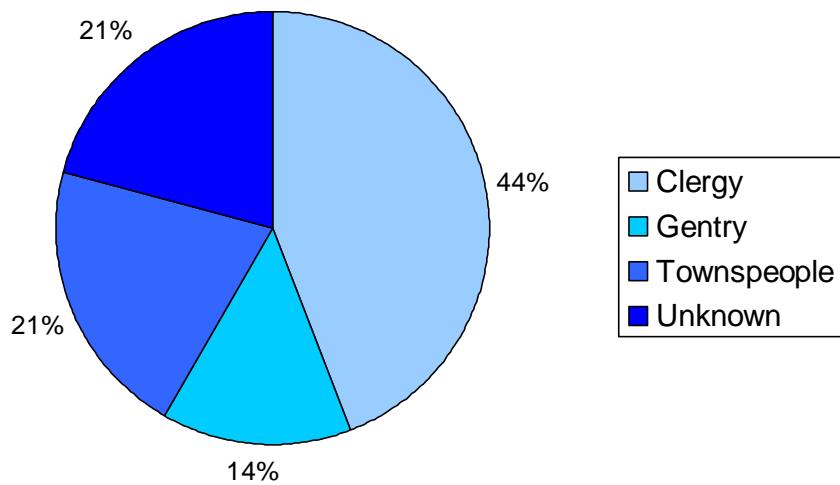
up 180 titles (19.0%) and 707 copies (23.6%). Approximately half of both the titles and copies of school books were the works of classical authors. Foster's stock contains a large number of almanacs, with six titles accounting for 610 copies (20.4%). Foster's shop also held a fair number of works on law, political issues, ordinances, philosophy, music, poetry, history, travel, and literature. Scientific, medicinal, agricultural works, dictionaries, and catalogues were found in similar numbers. The shop also contained a few copies of news books, drama, architecture, military handbooks, astrology and witchcraft. Books stocked for female readers can also be found, such as cookery books, devotional prayers, and parenting manuals.



The range of subject materials available suggests a similarly diverse customer base. The books in Foster's shop would have appealed to clergy, gentry, professionals,

students and literate townspeople. Included with the inventory was a list of people who owed Foster money. Though no indication is given for what the debts were for, it is likely that the majority of debts were related to his business. The debtor's list, which contains forty-three names, is composed of nineteen clergy (44.2%), six gentry or professionals (14.0%), and nine townspeople (20.9%). Vicars and rectors could be counted as Foster's customers, along with an attorney, a High Sheriff, a gentleman, a merchant, a draper, and a wife. Twenty-eight debtors were from York (65.1%) and fifteen, mostly clergymen, were from outside the city (34.9%), residing as far away as Leeds and Thorne, near Hull. Combined, the clergymen owed £11 3s. 6d., compared to the townspeople who owed a total of £3 2s. 7d. Many clergymen were given substantial amounts of credit, with five owing amounts greater than £1.

### John Foster's Debtors



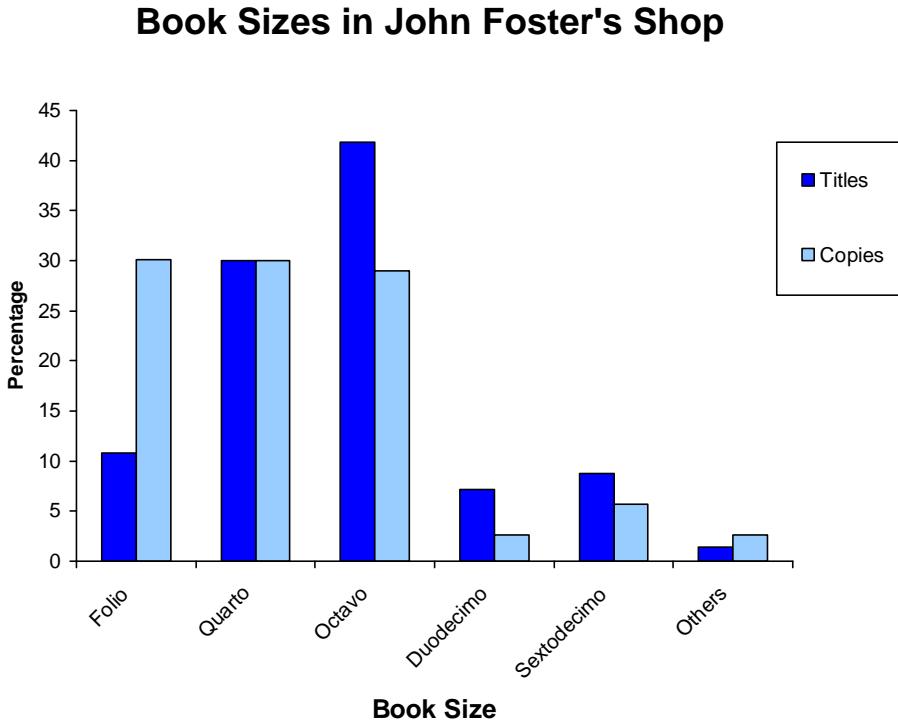
There is evidence of another customer of John Foster's shop, though his name is not among the debtor's list. Anthony Higgin, the dean of Ripon, has inscribed '*Emptus Eboraci*' in a number of his books found in Ripon Cathedral Library.<sup>79</sup> In a copy of Erasmus, there is the notation '*Liber Anth. Higgin emptus a bibliopola Eboracensi, Forstero*'. Two other books are inscribed with similar marks, each noting the books' purchase in York in 1586 and 1589, respectively.<sup>80</sup> These will have been bought for the shop in the period of its ownership by John's cousin Anthony.

John Foster's inventory is organized by book size, which likely correlates with the organization of his shop. This is the earliest provincial inventory to assign formats for all the books found in the shop, including those of the smallest sizes. The other inventories either neglect to mention books of this size or describe them generally as 'small books'. Foster's inventory is extraordinarily valuable in this regard, because of the ability to analyze formats with complete confidence. Foster's shop contained 111 folios (10.8%), 306 quartos (30.0%), 431 octavos (41.8%), seventy-four duodecimos (7.2%), ninety-one sextodecimos (8.8%), nine vicesimo-quartos, and ten trigesimo-segundos. Nearly three-quarters of Foster's stock is in either quarto or octavo. With a total stock value of £144. 16s. 4d., folios, which make up only 10.8% of the total stock, represent approximately 30.1% of the total stock value.

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<sup>79</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 18.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



Religious works were not only the most popular works on Foster's stock-list, but they also made up the highest value of his stock. There are 492 religious titles with 1,045 copies, giving us a total value of £68 4s. 2d., which is 47.1% of the total stock value. This means the average price per copy for a religious work would be approximately 13d. Though one expects bibles to cost a considerable amount, they are not the only expensive religious works in Foster's stock. Theological works and biblical commentaries were routinely valued at a few shillings, and even some sermons were expensive, such as those by Edwin Sandys which cost 20d.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the number of copies, school books represented a relatively small proportion of Foster's total stock value. The 707 copies of school books only amount to

<sup>81</sup> Foster, 'Bishopp Sandes Sermons ij', Inventory no. 1230; and 'Bishopp Sandes Sermons iiij', Inventory no. 1893.

£27 7s. 5d., or 18.9% of the total value of the entire stock. Accordingly, the average price per copy for a school book on Foster's inventory was 7d. In contrast, the scientific books cost on average approximately 3s. 2d., and history and law books 2s. 3d. each.

When analyzing the cost of stock, it is imperative to know how contemporary the books were. A substantial 105 titles (10%) can be pinpointed to having been published within the three years before Foster's death in November 1616, and 338 of the identified titles (32.6%) had been published in the previous decade. Although one-third of Foster's stock had been recently published, the rest of the data reflects a different trend. Only 561 titles (54.2%) can be dated after 1586, which means that nearly half of Foster's stock was published over thirty years before. Based on what we know about John Foster and the origins of his shop, it is reasonable to conclude that he simply inherited the works. These 177 copies of "old" books are mostly grammars, dictionaries, and other school books, and their total value amounts to £3 19s. 3d., or less than 3% of the total stock.

Books that had lingered a long time in the shop obviously had a decreasing chance of a profitable sale. For this reason, old stock was often heavily discounted in valuations. Examples of the disposals of the large warehouses of accumulated stock from major Continental printing houses suggest the discounting was heavy: sometimes sheets of un-saleable old titles were valued only for their re-use as scrap paper.<sup>82</sup>

John Foster's shop was extraordinarily successful, and Foster was able to ply the trades of bookbinder and bookseller without having to supplement his shop with sideline businesses. According to his list of debtors, Foster was able to afford his customers £19 10s. 6d. of credit. The inventory does not contain mention of any debt owed by Foster.

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<sup>82</sup> Ian Maclean, 'Murder, Debt and Retribution in the Italico-Franco-Spanish Book Trade: The Beraud-Michel-Ruiz Affair, 1586-1591' in Ian Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place* (London, 2009), p. 238.

This is noteworthy, because one would expect to find some debt, particularly to members of the London book trade. Foster's shop was successful because it sold books at reasonable prices and met the needs of a wide variety of customers thanks to a large and varied stock.<sup>83</sup>

### **Thomas James, Norwich, 1629**

The population of Norwich had climbed from about 16,000 in the 1570s to as many as 25,000 in the 1620s, despite three major plague outbreaks in the late 1580s, 1603, and 1625-1626.<sup>84</sup> Though Norwich was primarily known for its textile industry, other trades were thriving in the city, including the book trade. There were four stationers in Norwich city centre around 1630. Each of these men, Thomas James, Thomas Carre, Edward Martin, and Christopher Ponder, were booksellers and bookbinders, each owning a shop around Market Place near the parish of St Peter Mancroft.<sup>85</sup>

The probate inventory of Thomas James survives in the Norwich Consistory Court Inventories from 1629.<sup>86</sup> The inventory has a total value of £18 19s. 11d. James owned a small shop with a value of £8 11d. and appears to have plied his trade as a bookbinder more successfully than that of a bookseller. Only eleven titles and over thirty-four copies are found in the shop, with a stock value of £4 1s., while his bookbinding equipment is valued at £3 19s. 11d. Because James is recorded as being

<sup>83</sup> See Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 32 for a comparison of Foster's prices with those in London and Dublin. Foster's prices are most comparable with London's, but in many cases Foster has the cheaper prices.

<sup>84</sup> John Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich* (Chichester, 1988), pp. 28-29.

<sup>85</sup> Stoker, 'Norwich Book Trades', p. 469.

<sup>86</sup> Norwich Consistory Court Inventories (INV/35/104).

both a bookseller and bookbinder, it is unclear which book stock he sold, which books were in his shop to be bound, or which books were to be both bound and sold by the stationer. James had purchased his freedom for £3 6s. 8d. on 10 March 1622/23, suggesting that he was financially comfortable. At the time of his death seven years later, however, James owned little property and his inventory had a modest assessment. No other information on Thomas James survives, so the reason for the adverse trend in his finances is not clear.

In May 1629, James's shop only contained school books and religious works. It may be that the bibles and theological works present in the inventory were meant to be bound, and perhaps it is only the school books which were meant for direct sale to the customer. From the quantities enumerated in the probate inventory, James had at least sixteen school books, at least fifteen bibles and one theological work, a nearly equal division between school books and religious materials. If our theory on James's business practices is correct, this would mean that approximately half of his income came from the selling of books with the other half being from the binding of books.

The small scale of James's business becomes apparent when comparing it to another Norwich bookshop from 1603. Thomas Gilbert, another bookbinder-bookseller, died in 1603 with an inventory valued at £166 3s. 4d.<sup>87</sup> Gilbert was a man who faced regular financial difficulties and had been forced to borrow money from the Cambridge Chest charity on numerous occasions between 1582 and 1591.<sup>88</sup> Despite these difficulties, Gilbert was apparently able to recover his fortunes, and the value of his shop far exceeded the scope and worth of James's shop at the time of his death. James may

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<sup>87</sup> Norwich Consistory Court Inventories (INV 19/210).

<sup>88</sup> Stoker, 'Norwich Book Trades', pp. 79-105.

have suffered from the same difficulties as Robert Scott, never having enough start-up capital to make his business truly successful, or it may have been poor decisions that prevented him from making a better living. The example of Thomas James shows that even though many provincial stationers had lucrative shops and had prospered in the book trade, there were still other stationers, as late as 1630, who found the book trade business difficult and financially exhausting.

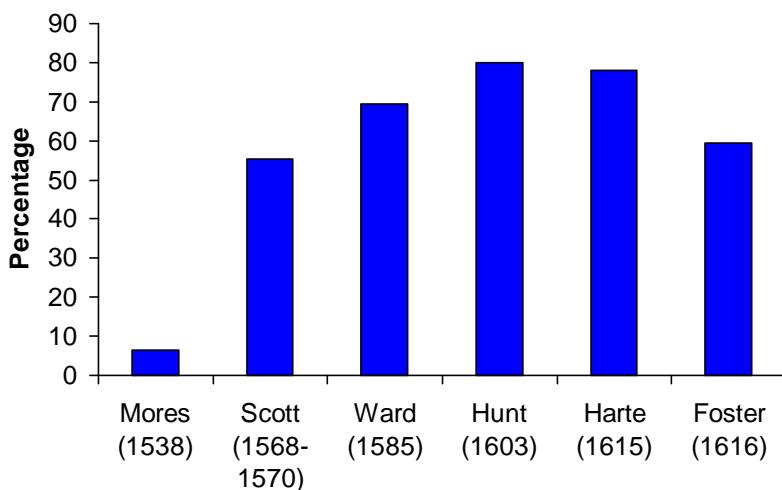
### **Conclusion**

The sources collected for this study are, as the preceding survey will have demonstrated, very varied. Some offer much more detail than others and a number are frustratingly vague and oblique. They also reveal individuals with very different positions in local society. Some, like John Foster of York, took over a well-entrenched local business, with a large and varied stock. At the other end of the scale were general merchants who counted a few books among their stock, operating in towns too small to have a specialist bookseller. Roger Ward's bold and unsuccessful speculation contrasts with others who understood their own markets very well. A number were clearly one of several businesses in towns large enough to sustain several bookshops. This local competition dictated their particular strategies.

Even taking into account these local particularities, it is clear that the provincial book trade had experienced significant changes and transitions between the 1530s and 1620s. One major change was the language of print. In the first half of the sixteenth century, most of the stock found in a bookseller's shop would have been in Latin. In the 1560s and 1570s, books printed in English had become increasingly popular, so that, by

the seventeenth century, English was the predominant language. Print transitioned from Latin to English because of the spread of literacy and the progression of reading as a leisure activity.

**Proportion of English Stock in Provincial Bookshops**



Another reason for the prevalence of imported Latin books in the first half of the sixteenth century was London's inability to supply England with enough printed materials. As a result, booksellers were forced to look abroad and import works with which to furnish their shops. As the century wore on, London printing expanded and attracted many native-born tradesmen. As we have seen from examples in Exeter and York, by the seventeenth century, London was able to meet the provincial towns' demands for both English and Latin texts. Receiving books from London rather than

importing them would have been more cost-effective for the provincial booksellers, and allowed some men to function in the trade with an extremely limited capital.

The growth in literacy had an enormous impact on the provincial book trade. Beginning in the 1540s, grammar schools were being established across England. These grammar schools led to an increase in lay readership, where literacy functioned not only as a job skill but also as a means of personal enrichment and entertainment. Grammar schools also created a great demand for printed materials – school books for the students and other reading materials for the length of their lives. Women were learning to read in increased numbers. The expansion and diversity of the literate population meant that booksellers would have increased numbers of customers who demanded a wide range of printed materials.

This expansion can be charted in the range of stock held by each bookseller. In the first half of the sixteenth century, booksellers' customers were restricted largely to clergy and other professionals who required texts for their professional lives. By the seventeenth century, booksellers held a great variety of materials, including literature, poetry and drama, reflecting a broader range of customers. Professional works were still available, however, which shows that specialised customers were not excluded, but rather incorporated into the diverse customer base.

Neville Mores's and John Foster's York inventories provide an excellent example of the development of the provincial book trade throughout this period. Mores was a Frenchman whose shop was filled with theological, liturgical and legal books in Latin. Foster was a native Englishman whose shop contained a far greater range of material, primarily in English. Mores's shop had very few recently published works, while 10% of

Foster's shop had been published in the previous three years, suggesting a higher stock turnover. Mores catered to a specialised customer base made up of largely professionals and clergy, compared to Foster, who was supplying books to a large and varied professional and lay clientele, whose reading had become a leisure activity. The book trade in York had undergone an incredible transformation in eighty years, and this transformation can be seen across many English towns.

Despite the multitude of changes, some aspects of the provincial book trade remained the same. The stock-lists show that provincial booksellers preferred to keep a small number of copies for each title. This may have been for practical reasons, such as available space in a shop, or it may have been a business decision to provide as wide a range of titles as was possible on a limited capital base. As we will see, booksellers in both London and the university towns stocked for larger quantities of individual titles than their provincial counterparts.

The inventories we have discussed in this chapter offer what is undoubtedly a fragmentary and episodic view of the provincial book trade. But it is sufficiently clear that during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the network of stationers active in the English counties underwent a significant expansion. More booksellers offered a wider range of books to a wider range of customers. For all that, this was still a very limited service compared to that which was available in the capital or the university towns. English provincial booksellers operated under significant disadvantages. London booksellers could commission books directly from the printers; they could obtain publications very quickly; they had easy access to Continental centres of production. Obtaining their stock was far more difficult for provincial stationers. This becomes

readily apparent when we turn to a closer look at the economics of the trade, and the interlocking network of connections that bound provincial stationers to London, Oxford and Cambridge.

### III.

#### The Economics of the Provincial Book Trade

The English book trade was economically precarious in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Printing, bookselling, bookbinding and other professions within the trade were all dependent on customers whose own disposable income could fluctuate quite wildly, and in difficult economic times buying books was an expendable luxury. Bad times brought hardships for stationers. Though this was true of all who worked in trades which dealt with materials not strictly necessary for subsistence, the book trade also witnessed significant longer term developments, which also had profound impact on the economics of the industry. Books became cheaper and more abundant. Printers brought to the market a wider range of titles in a wider range of subjects. Customers in the English counties also rushed to sample these newly available wares. The more successful provincial booksellers would be those who could ride out intermittent crises of the bad economy, while remaining alert to changes in their readers' tastes.

Start-up capital was a necessity for any early modern printing or bookselling business. Even though initial capital was particularly essential for printers, who were constantly juggling large, difficult and expensive print runs with those that were smaller and cheaper, booksellers also required a significant amount of money or credit to invest in books for their shops.<sup>1</sup> The example of Robert Scott in Norwich demonstrates how debilitating a lack of start-up capital could be to a bookselling business. Scott received approximately two small shipments of books each month, averaging only £1 1s. 10d. per order, for the years 1568-1570. With sufficient investment capital, Scott would have

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<sup>1</sup> Raven, *The Business of Books*, p. 17.

been able to purchase enough popular texts for his shop in larger, more infrequent orders, and this would have saved him money in the long run, in such areas as transportation costs.<sup>2</sup>

Against this, the more wealthy and successful provincial booksellers were capable of offering great amounts of credit to their customers. In 1616, John Foster in York had £19 10s. 6d. outstanding from customer debt, and, in 1572, John Sheres in Cambridge, incredibly, had over £300 owed to him at his death.<sup>3</sup> This suggests that many booksellers did not receive payment for goods at the time of purchase. Booksellers like Foster and Sheres would have been able to bear this burden for a time because they had available income from their shops and outside interests to maintain their businesses. Poorer booksellers like Robert Scott, whose shop existed on an order-to-order basis, would have either demanded payment for goods at the time of sale or extended credit, no doubt reluctantly, in the hope of building their customer base. Neither records from Scott nor any of the less prosperous provincial booksellers contain any suggestion of a debtor's list. This does not positively refute their existence, but it is likely, given the financial hardships of many booksellers, that any debts incurred by customers would have been short-term and infrequent. This may have caused additional problems for the poorer provincial booksellers; their inability to offer credit terms may have encouraged their customers to seek booksellers who were better equipped to accommodate them.

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<sup>2</sup> In the years 1568-1570, Scott ordered Lily's grammar a total of twenty-six times. Only one order exceeded twelve copies; see Scott, 'xxv Accidencias lingue latine', Inventory no. 83.

<sup>3</sup> David Pearson, 'A Cambridge Bookseller's Accounts of 1572' in David McKitterick (ed.), *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1986-1990), pp. 230-236.

### **Book Prices**

One major challenge of this study is to evaluate the sale prices of books on each of the booksellers' stock-lists. In some cases, such as Christopher Hunt's 1603 Exeter list and Roger Ward 1585 Shrewsbury list, no values or prices were recorded. In the lists where values are present, caution must be exercised because price is determined by many factors extraneous to the text. In the case of bound books, the quality of the binding could have a radical impact on the valuation. It is also sometimes by no means clear whether the value reflects the cost, wholesale or selling price. Despite these factors and differences in available data, comparing available values does yield some interesting trends.

Neville Mores's 1538 York stock-list notes the unbound value for the works in his shop. The 126 volumes in Mores's shop amounted to £3 3s. 10d., of which the average price per copy was 6.1d. Religious titles were the most expensive works in the shop, averaging 2s. 1.6d. per copy, while school books were the cheapest titles, with a mean of 2.1d. per copy. Most of Mores's stock was imported from the Continent because it was more cost effective for him to do so. The average price per copy of a title printed in England was 13.8-23.2d., which is expensive compared to the titles from France (7.6-9.2d.), from Italy (1.5-3.8d.), and from Germany and Switzerland (about 2d.).

According to the formats that may be identified, Mores had in stock ten folios, representing 28.6% of the total, sixteen quartos (45.7%), and nine octavos (25.7%). No smaller formats were recorded and folios represented nearly a third of all formats found in Mores's shop. This reflects the assumed preferences of Mores's customers, who may have used many of the religious or legal books as reference material or may have

possessed more disposable income to spend on larger books. The average price per copy of Mores's available formats is 11.7d. for folio, 9.25d. for quarto, and 3.1d. for octavo. With a total stock value of £3 14s. 8d., the known folios represent 32.2% of the total stock value, while quartos represent 41.7% and octavos 3%. The value proportions are very similar to the stock proportions with regards to the folios and quartos, while the octavos were obviously cheaper to print.

Eighty years later in York, the books in John Foster's bookshop were nearly all bound and ready for sale, and the recorded values of the stock reflect both the size of the book and the quality of the binding. For many of the titles, the type of binding used was documented. In these cases, the values can be cautiously compared to unbound copies, particularly as we can make use of two texts published to guide the trade in such matters: *A generall note of the prices for binding of all sorts of booke*s, printed in London in 1619, and *Booke*s as they are sold bound, published by Thomas Dawson around 1620.<sup>4</sup> These two contemporary items feature price-lists for various books and bindings that may be found in Foster's stock-list.

The average price per copy on Foster's inventory is 10d., which is not significantly higher than the 6.1d. for unbound works in Mores's shop. Is the value difference merely due to whether a book was bound or unbound, or were books, on average, cheaper in 1616 than in 1538 York? To answer this question, a close examination of the unbound books as well as an attempt to estimate the potential value of the bindings in John Foster's shop is necessary.

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<sup>4</sup> Mirjam Foot, 'Some Bookbinders' Price Lists of the Seventeenth & Eighteenth Centuries' in Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Economics of the British Book trade, 1605-1939* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 139-145.

The unbound books on Foster's stock-list only appear in the smaller sizes of duodecimo and sextodecimo. With respect to the bound books, Foster's shop contained seventeen copies of books in 'gilt & fillites' in sextodecimo. The prices for these biblical and religious works ranged from 3*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* per copy. This is a very wide range with a mean value of 10.7*d.* and a median value of 9*d.* According to *A generall note*, this binding of a sextodecimo book would range from 8*d.* for a book of psalms to 1*s.* for a testament and psalms in London in 1619.<sup>5</sup> London binding prices may have been different from those in York, but, as Foster also bound books in his shop, the prices are unlikely to have differed significantly. The sextodecimo books in Foster's shop bound in 'gilt & fillites' were small works (identifiable numbers suggest they each comprised only about a dozen sheets).<sup>6</sup> This would indicate that prices for the binding of these smaller works would have been closer to 8*d.* than 1*s.* By removing the cost of the binding, the books in Foster's shop actually appear to be less expensive than those in Mores's shop eighty years previous. This conclusion is supported by comparing other bindings, such as those with a 'plaine' binding, in 'gilt', 'Cross gilt', and others.

Thomas Downes's *Bookes as they are sold bound* provides prices for bound books in both London and Dublin.<sup>7</sup> Unsurprisingly, book prices in Dublin were higher than those in London, and most of the titles received a mark-up of over 20% compared to the same titles in London. The price of cheaper works, such as school books, could be as much as 50% higher in Dublin. The prices found on John Foster's stock-list more closely resemble prices in London rather than prices in Dublin. In fact, many of the London

<sup>5</sup> Foot, 'Some Bookbinders', p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> One example of this is John Fisher's *The Kings Psalmes*, which was printed on twelve sheets. Foster, 'Kinges Psalmes xij ph. j', Inventory no. 1602.

<sup>7</sup> Foot, 'Some Bookbinders', pp. 144-145.

prices on Downes's list are exactly the same for titles on Foster's inventory. For instance, in both lists, the price of a book of biblical commentary and psalms in sextodecimo was 1*s.* 10*d.* In general, Foster's prices only vary by one or two pence from the prices provided for London.

Foster's shop held a wider range of book sizes than Mores's shop; it contained 111 folios (10.8%), 306 quartos (30.0%), 431 octavos (41.8%), seventy-four duodecimos (7.2%), ninety-one sextodecimos (8.8%), nine vingesimo-quartos, and ten trigesimo-segundos. The average folio in Foster's shop cost 7*s.* 1.8*d.*, quartos averaged 2*s.* 8.8*d.*, octavos averaged 12.7*d.*, duodecimos averaged 14.5*d.*, and sextodecimos were the cheapest at 10.9*d.* As the sizes became smaller than sextodecimo, and the average price increased. The average price of vingesimo-quartos was 2*s.* 1*d.*, and the trigesimo-segundos was 2*s.* 3*d.* These are both similar in price to a quarto and double that of the octavos and sextodecimos. With a total stock value of £144. 16*s.* 4*d.*, folios are approximately 30.1% of the total stock, with quartos accounting for 30%, octavos 29%, duodecimos 2.6%, sextodecimos 5.7%, vingesimo-quartos and trigesimo-segundos each less than 1%. It is worth emphasizing that folios, which make up only 10.8% of the total stock, account for 30.1% of the stock's total value. At the same time, the most popular format, octavos, are much cheaper and account for only 29% of the total stock value, less than that of the folios. Both in Foster's and Mores's shop, folios made up approximately one-third of the total stock value. Similarly, while octavos feature in prominent numbers on both stock-lists, the proportional value is significantly lower than larger formats. Foster's stock demonstrates the growth and expansion of the book trade in York. The increased availability of smaller formats indicates a demand for cheap, portable print.

Books were still a luxury item; however, by the seventeenth century, books and print had become reasonable luxuries.<sup>8</sup>

In his “Notes on English Retail Book-prices”, Frances R. Johnson compiled 521 individual prices for books from 1550 to 1640. According to his research, Johnson found that between the years 1560-1635, prices for books printed in England remained consistent in a range of approximately .45-.55d. per sheet. After a sharp rise due to the debasement of the coinage in 1545, books in the 1560s cost an average of .45d. per sheet, and, from 1560-1600, prices ranged from .40d.-.50d. per sheet. Prices reached the upper limits of this range as the seventeenth century neared, and they had increased between 1600-1635 to about .45d.-.55d. per sheet. Only after 1635 did the price per sheet increase, and book prices jumped by 40%, even though there had been no significant increase in general prices in the same period. The prices per sheet found by Johnson generally correspond to the maximum price of .50d. set by ordinance of the Stationers’ Company in January 1598.<sup>9</sup>

Johnson’s research, however, does not claim to be comprehensive; instead, he calls for further work to be done and more prices to be gathered.<sup>10</sup> This current study on the stock of provincial booksellers can contribute significantly to this task. The available provincial stock-lists generally support Johnson’s conclusions. Johnson’s data almost exclusively comes from London, and, expectedly, the provincial average price per sheet would be higher. According to Johnson, London booksellers received books from London printers at a cost of 20% less than the expected retail price. Provincial

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<sup>8</sup> Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, pp. 324-326.

<sup>9</sup> Frances R. Johnson, ‘Notes on English Retail Book-prices, 1550-1640’ *The Library*, 5<sup>th</sup> Series 5, no. 2 (September 1950), pp. 89-90.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

booksellers, on the other hand, would receive their goods for marginally less than the London retail cost, once transportation charges were allowed for.<sup>11</sup> While Johnson's research suggests a price of about one-half pence per sheet, provincial averages would be higher.

The best evidence for price per sheet can be found on John Foster's 1616 York stock-list, because the formats and values are specifically noted upon the inventory. The average price per sheet equated to .82d., which is far higher than the .45-.55d. estimated in Johnson's "Notes on English Book-prices". The inference to be drawn from this, however, is less dramatic than may appear. Johnson does admit than many types of books would have been more costly per sheet than this range. Examples given include law books averaging .80d. per sheet, music books around 2d. per sheet, and many popular poets' works. Shakespeare's first folio cost .85d. per sheet, and his *Venus and Adonis* was 1.5d. per sheet.<sup>12</sup> Despite initial appearances, Foster's stock does not significantly deviate from Johnson's theory. Many of the most expensive sheets in Foster's list include music books, law books, theological texts and histories. The median price per sheet, which provides a more accurate assessment of the inventory, was .52d. and well within the limits of Johnson's range.

The books on John Foster's stock-list adhere to the principles established in "Notes on English Book-prices" demonstrating that, despite Johnson's exclusive focus on London and university prices, his work may usefully be applied to provincial prices as well. The small sample of information provided by Michael Harte's 1615 Exeter inventory also follows this pattern. The average price per sheet on Harte's list is .46d.

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<sup>11</sup> Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail Book-prices', p. 93.

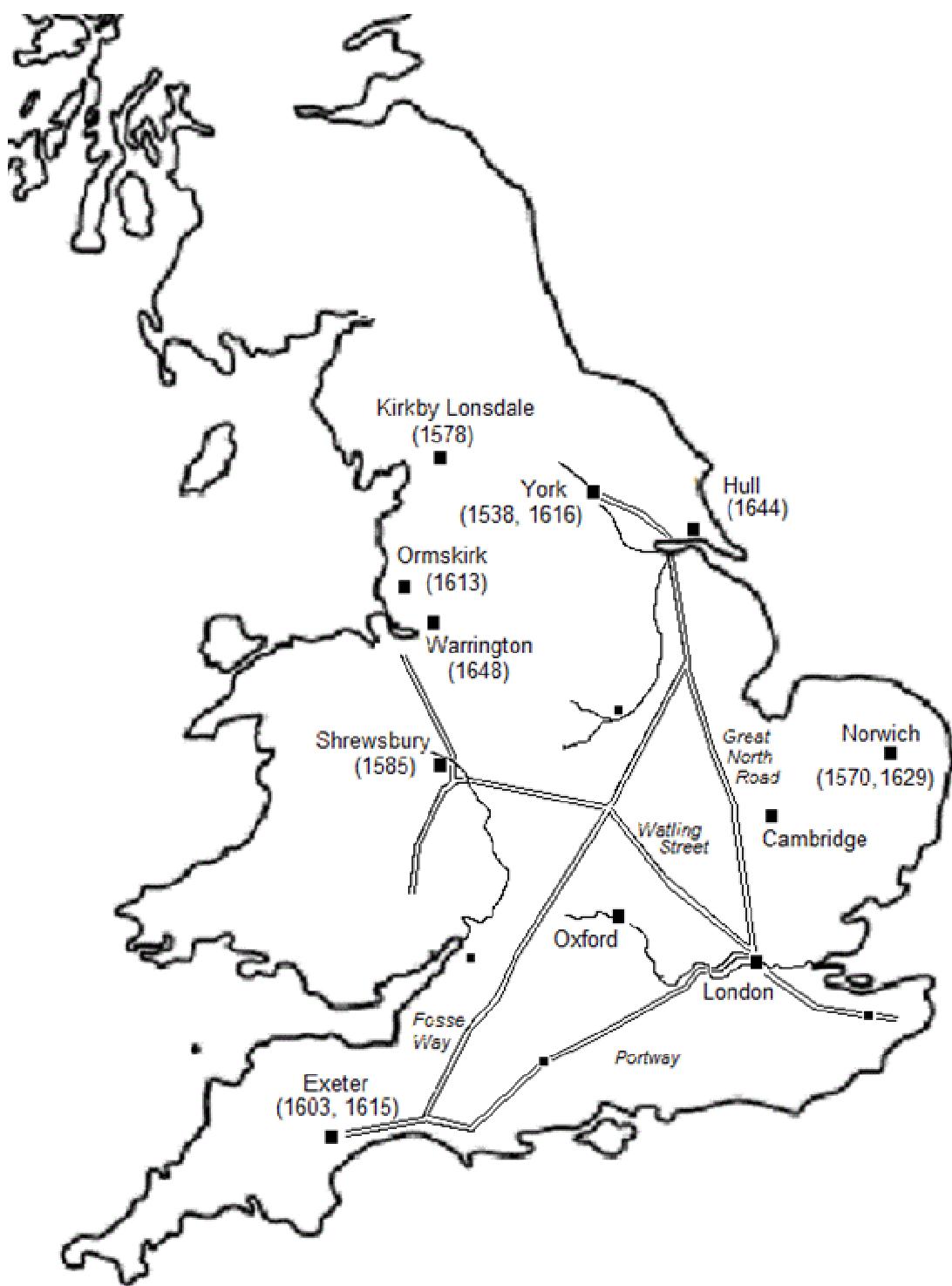
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

Unfortunately, these are the only two provincial stock-lists to have formats and values recorded at least in part. For the remaining provincial lists, the formats and page numbers are wholly dependent upon my identification of the work, and, in many cases, a particular edition cannot be deduced. Where reasonable certainty does exist, the majority of the works follow Johnson's model of price per copy.<sup>13</sup>

Any further detailed price comparisons between Michael Harte's and John Foster's inventories are impossible, because many of the items on Harte's list are recorded as groups of books of an unknown number. Also, in the majority of instances, no indication is given whether a book is bound or unbound, making any comparison of prices exceedingly difficult. There are, however, a few items where a binding is recorded, and, although this is a small sample, it does indicate provincial booksellers maintained prices very similar to those found in London. In a number of cases, the price for similar titles differs only by a few pence. For example, an edition of Robert Dallington's *Aphorismes* was valued at 4s. in Exeter and 4s. 6d. in York, and John King's *Lecture upon Jonas* cost 2s. 6d. in Exeter and 3s. in York. There are a number of similar titles where it is unknown whether a book is bound or the type of binding, and in these cases price differs drastically. One example is Gervase Babington's *Works*, which was valued at 7s. 6d. in Exeter and 12s. in York. This disparity is likely due to the binding, though a differential in the quality of paper could also impact dramatically on price. The prices found in Exeter in 1615 closely resemble the prices in York in 1616. Both of these provincial stock-lists have more in common with the values seen on a binding price list in London rather than Dublin.

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<sup>13</sup> Some examples of this include Harte, 'it 1 Dallingtons Aphorismes in fo', Inventory no. 1032 (.47d.); Harte, 'it 1 Maloonett upon the profitts', Inventory no. 1048 (.52d.); Foster, 'Pope Joan j', Inventory no. 1805 (.47d.); and Foster, 'Ordringe of Bees j', Inventory no. 1823 (.5d.).



**Roads and Waterways in England**

### **Transporting Goods**

One reason why print was more expensive in Dublin compared to London and English provincial towns was likely due to the transportation costs of delivering material to Ireland. Most book stock that originated in London or Continental printing centres would have reached Ireland via Bristol. Many examples of goods destined for transportation across the Irish Sea can be seen in the customs books of Bristol in the sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Most of the titles were cheap school books, primers and other books for children. Though these were inexpensive titles, routing via Bristol meant that books being transported to Dublin would have incurred additional custom fees, which consequently made the purchasing price more expensive in Ireland than its English provincial counterparts. Although there is no extant data which specifies transportation costs for Dublin or English provincial booksellers during this period, these costs would have been a significant factor in the retail prices of the books and it is worth taking a moment to expand upon this topic.

Most scholars agree that water transport was cheaper and easier than land carriage.<sup>15</sup> The maintenance of roads was largely the responsibility of the locality, and many of the roads across England were in dire need of repair in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>16</sup> Heavily-trafficked roads in Sussex and the Midlands had particularly bad reputations in the seventeenth century, while the old Roman roads and

<sup>14</sup> Susan Flavin and Evan Jones (eds.), *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent, 1503-1601: The Evidence of the Exchequer Customs Accounts* (Bristol, 2009); and Susan Flavin and Evan Jones (eds.), *Glossary of commodities, weights and measures found in the sixteenth-century Bristol customs accounts* (Bristol, 2009), pp. 9-10.

<sup>15</sup> Joan Parkes, *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1925); Virginia LaMar, *Travel and Roads in England* (Washington DC, 1960); T.S. Willan, *River Navigation in England, 1600-1750* (London, 1964).

<sup>16</sup> LaMar, *Travel and Roads*, p. 8.

those in Dover and Norfolk were generally viewed in a positive light.<sup>17</sup> In many instances in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, parliamentary legislation directed roads of poor condition to be paved.<sup>18</sup> Water transport was less expensive and usually quicker than land carriage over long distances. In addition, much labour was concentrated on the improvement of English waterways in the seventeenth century, potentially making water transport a more viable option for the movement of books.<sup>19</sup>

Although the costs of transport remained fairly stable for several hundred years, throughout the preceding centuries, by 1542, prices had risen steeply. In the twelfth century, the costs of transporting corn averaged about 1*d.* per mile, with heavier goods costing 2*d.* per mile. This remained relatively constant throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. With the debasement of the coinage, prices rose rapidly in the mid-sixteenth century. In 1542, the cost of carriage doubled to 2*d.* per mile. The increase continued, and in 1583 the cost had risen to 5*d.* per mile. In 1635, the cost had risen to 8*d.* per mile, eight times greater than the previous one hundred years.<sup>20</sup>

Horses and carts served as the most common form of land transportation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> T.S. Willan has calculated that the cost of land carriage for bulky items such as books normally ranged from 4*d.*-12*d.* per ton per mile.<sup>22</sup> For cumbersome goods like books, couriers would have used the major roads as much as possible, because these may have been in a better state of repair and upkeep than less travelled or rural roads. As we have seen in previous chapters, in the latter half of the

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<sup>17</sup> Parkes, *Travel in England*, pp. 6-14.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Beale, *A History of the Post in England from the Romans to the Stuarts* (Aldershot, 1998), p. 187.

<sup>19</sup> T.S. Willan, *River Navigation in England, 1600-1750* (London, 1964), pp. 6, 114-118.

<sup>20</sup> Beale, *Post in England*, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup> LaMar, *Travel and Roads*, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> T.S. Willan, *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Manchester, 1976), p. 7.

sixteenth century and seventeenth century, the majority of the booksellers' stocks had been printed in London and distributed to the provincial towns. This was consistent with developments in the wider economy: after 1500, about 80% of English trade passed through the capital.<sup>23</sup>

From London, one could reach the larger provincial towns by main roads. To travel from London to York on land, one would travel upon the Great North Road via Lincoln. To reach Exeter by land, one could travel southwest on the Portway to Dorchester, and connect to Exeter using lesser roads. Watling Street would have been an especially useful road, because it provided direct connection as far southwest as Dover, through Canterbury and London, to St. Alban's and even as far northeast as Wroxeter and Chester, a route now covered by the M2 and M5 motorways.<sup>24</sup> Junctions along Watling Street connected to roads that would lead to many provincial towns in England, such as Exeter, Gloucester, Lincoln, York, Chichester and Dorchester, and even north into Scotland.

Though road travel to other towns, such as Norwich, was certainly possible, those not accessible along the old Roman roads posed far greater challenges to wayfarers. In 1599, William Kemp, a famous comedian and Shakespearean actor, danced a morris dance between London and Norwich on a bet. The distance between the two cities was approximately one hundred miles, which Kemp travelled in nine non-consecutive days, gaining the title "Nine day wonder". In 1600, to chronicle his experience, Kemp penned *Kemps nine daies wonder*. In the work, Kemp detailed his journey and occasionally expounded upon the horrid road conditions. According to Kempe, "the way were rotten";

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<sup>23</sup> Beale, *Post in England*, p. 109.

<sup>24</sup> Bob Stafford, *Watling Street – A Journey through Roman Britain*, 23 July 2007, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A24369951> [10 Oct 2009].

the road had been “full of deep holes” and one of his companions even fell into a pothole waist-high on the way to Braintree and required the help of another to be freed.<sup>25</sup> Even though it was possible to reach Norwich from London in just over a week, it would have been much more difficult travelling with animals and carts filled with books.

Transporting goods by road was always attended by unpredictable risks. Clues to the condition of roads can be found in sixteenth-century guides for travellers. In his *The Post of the World* (1576), Richard Rowland begins with “A godly prayer very needfull to be used and sayde before any Jorney to be taken in hand.”<sup>26</sup> Rowland continues to recommend seven specific roadways, most originating in London. Included in the recommendation are the routes from London to Oxford, London to York, from York to Berwick, and London to Bristol. Many of these roadways were potentially used by provincial booksellers to transport books. Other works, such as William Smith’s *The Particular Description of England with the Portratures of Certaine of the Cheiffest Citties and Townes*, recommend similar routes and variations into the seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup>

In Robert Scott’s case, information survives detailing how often he received book shipments from London to Norwich, and he had frequent deliveries. It is unknown how often the other booksellers would have received their goods, and this likely depended on the books’ point of origin. Orders placed to Continental Europe would have been less frequent than those to local printing centres. Also, books would have arrived much more quickly in major towns or port cities than those in more rural areas. There were regular carrier services through the major road routes. There were weekly services from

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<sup>25</sup> William Kemp, *Kemps nine daies wonder* (London, 1600), STC 14923, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Beale, *Post in England*, p. 166.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Southampton to Winchester and Salisbury as well as from London to Hampshire.<sup>28</sup> There were likely to be similarly regular journeys to places like York, Bristol and Exeter. James Backhouse, in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1578, may have received his goods as infrequently as twice per year. No information exists for Backhouse specifically, but Stephen Bateman transported cloth from Kendal to Southampton in May and September of each year in the sixteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Kirkby Lonsdale sits very near Kendal, and it is likely his books and other goods passed through here on their way to Kirkby Lonsdale, as water carriage was virtually impossible. The town was in a difficult location, being not only isolated but also ‘very hilly, stony, and moorish’.<sup>30</sup> There would have been no regular routes to Kirkby Lonsdale, but a bi-annual supply, like Bateman’s cloth, seems reasonable.

Because road carriage was potentially very dangerous, water carriage would have been the preferred means of shipping books to provincial towns in England. Any of the port cities would have had the opportunity to receive shipments of books from Continental Europe, but, in the late sixteenth century and seventeenth century, books were more likely to have been transported from London. During these centuries, there were five major tidal waterways that allowed passage: the Yorkshire Ouse, Great Ouse, River Trent, River Severn and the River Thames.<sup>31</sup> The Yorkshire Ouse flows through the city of York into the sea, but it also connects to the River Trent, which flows through the Midlands, through Nottingham, north to Goole. The River Severn, another important

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<sup>28</sup> Beale, *Post in England*, p. 108.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>30</sup> Appleby, *Famine*, p. 84.

<sup>31</sup> Willan, *The Inland Trade*, p. 15.

waterway for the provincial booksellers, flows through Gloucester, Bristol and Shrewsbury, but it also connects to the River Avon, allowing travel to Bath.

Transporting goods by waterway was cheaper than by road, particularly if the transport involved long distances. The cost may have been as low as 1*d.* per ton per mile, with high costs usually limited to small rivers and waterways.<sup>32</sup> By these estimates, one could conclude that water carriage was about 3*d.*-11*d.* cheaper per ton per mile. This could be a substantial sum for a struggling provincial bookseller. There is some evidence for pricing with respect to both land and water travel. In Kent in 1600, the cost of possessing one's own cart and two horses was about £49 16*s.* a year, which included the associated costs, such as pasture, hay and servant's wages. Alternatively, investing in a boat and instruments would have a yearly cost of about £1 12*s.* 4*d.*<sup>33</sup> While this second figure seems quite low, the costs for repairs and upkeep of the boat would have been incurred more frequently. For instance, oars, which were known to have cost 3*s.*, were likely to last for only two years. In 1635, William Brereton shipped a 'firkin' of soap, three dozen stone bottles filled with wine, and a 'cloakbag' along the River Severn from Bristol to Shrewsbury. In total, the price of the shipment was 2*s.* 6*d.*<sup>34</sup>

Provincial booksellers in major English towns like Exeter, Norwich, York and Shrewsbury would have favoured waterways over roadways to transport their stock from London. Not only was this method more cost effective, the goods were likely to have arrived more quickly. The horrible road conditions of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which included deep potholes and large mud patches, would have made moving books and printed sheets a chore. In instances such as Ormskirk, where Roger

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<sup>32</sup> Willan, *River Navigation*, p. 118.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103 and 120.

Sankey would have had to transport his books by road via nearby Kendal, the travel difficulties manifest themselves in the increased copy price. Though there were inherent risks to water transport, such as the potential for sheets to become damaged by water, the lower cost and seventeenth-century improvements would have made it a more attractive form of carriage.

### **Wages**

When assessing what stock to order from their London business associates, provincial booksellers had to consider their customer base. This was likely to be far more restricted than in the metropolis. The lower density of population meant that the number of those who could read would be quite low, and not all of those who could read would have been able to afford to collect books. The most regular customers of the provincial booksellers were likely to be the towns' increasingly prosperous, but numerically limited professional classes. Could they also hope for sales from among the broader mass of tradesmen and wage-earners?

Though wages are difficult to determine for this time period, Henry Phelps Brown and Shelia Hopkins attempted this task in *A Perspective of Wages and Prices*. Examining the wages of building craftsmen and labourers in southern England, Brown and Hopkins found that from 1530-1560, craftsmen's wages rose from about 6d. to around 10d. a day. For the same time, labourers' wages increased from 4d. to 6d. and would rise to 8d. by 1580.<sup>35</sup> Many of the peak periods of rising wages follow the trends of inflation. For instance, from the period from the Reformation to the Restoration,

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<sup>35</sup> Henry Phelps Brown and Shelia V. Hopkins, *A Perspective on Wages and Prices* (London, 1981), p. 4.

wages increased by 86%, but during the years 1532-1580, a period marked by high levels of inflation, wages increased by 146%.<sup>36</sup>

Knowing the day wages of potential booksellers' customers is valuable, but only limited conclusions can be extrapolated from this data. We can make little of the raw data on wages without having some idea how people spent their money. Unless we know how much people spent on other necessities, such as food and clothing, it is impossible to calculate how much surplus income could be available for discretionary spending, like books. Little work has been done on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rents, but it is clear that they followed the trend of inflation. Between 1566 and 1651, some rents in Essex increased by over three times, and in Lincolnshire rents doubled.<sup>37</sup> Contemporaries believed the inflation had been caused by the rising prices of rents, and the evidence does suggest that rents rose independently and this was not a reaction to increasing prices elsewhere.<sup>38</sup>

Even with such fragmentary data, we can draw some broad conclusions. Even without much specific information, it is clear that expensive books would have been well beyond the means of lower paid workers. For instance, a labourer in 1580 with a daily wage of 8d. would be unlikely to have money for books. Though it is possible that they would have been able to scrimp and save in order to buy a bible or other important religious work, it is unlikely that this occupational group would have spent a large sum on literature, poetry, or other leisure works. Excluding religious print, labourers would have been much more likely to buy cheaper, small-format works. Similarly, just because

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Eric Kerridge, 'The Movement of Rent, 1540-1640' in E.M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *Essays in Economic History*, Vol. 2 (London, 1962), p. 209.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209-211.

a wealthy member of the gentry could afford expensive folios, this does not discount them from buying the same cheap print easily afforded by the lower classes. Most in society were able to own some kind of printed work, but it was only the wealthier members who could afford to own the impressive folios that accounted for up to 40% of a provincial booksellers' shop value.

John Foster's list of debtors in 1616 for his shop in York may be representative of the clientele of other provincial booksellers. Clergy, gentry and middle class professionals make up the majority of his list. We also know that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the numbers of people in these occupational groups grew. In particular, the rising numbers of gentry and the expanding middle class were likely one of the major causes of the successful expansion of the book trade to the provincial towns.<sup>39</sup> Though these newly expanding groups probably composed the majority of a bookseller's business, the appearance of penny ballads, almanacs and other cheap print suggest that poorer members of society may have been included in their list of customers as well.

There are a number of reasons why books became more affordable in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As the sixteenth century transitioned into the seventeenth, London as a print centre dominated the trade of books in English and began to offer a wider selection of formats for the reader. At the same time, provincial booksellers were becoming more reliant on London as a source of print rather than importing works from the Continent, largely due to the increased interest in vernacular print and the production of cheap, small works. In most circumstances, shipping books

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<sup>39</sup> For more information on the role of the gentry and middle class in religious affairs and the book trade, see F.J. Levy, 'How Information Spread Among the Gentry, 1550-1640', *Journal of British Studies* 21, no. 2 (Spring, 1982), pp. 11-34.

from London to provincial towns would have been more cost effective than importing from abroad.

Even with this potential new market, this was a challenging customer base. Many of the gentry, merchant and clergy customers had friends and professional contacts in the capital. They were increasingly used to utilising the carrier services to send for luxury clothes and food stuffs, to dispatch and receive correspondence. It would be equally simple to add to these communications a request for the dispatch of books. This was particularly the case if those dwelling in the English counties were seeking to obtain expensive titles, or scholarly works published abroad. To propose themselves as the intermediary in these transactions, provincial booksellers had to demonstrate that they could provide a reliable service through their own connections in the London book trade; they also, it might be thought, had to maintain sufficiently clean and respectable premises that encouraged a high-born customer to entertain adding them to the roster of tradesmen they were prepared to patronise. These were challenging conditions, and it helps explain why we will find so few really expensive books in the provincial booksellers' stock. Only with clergy customers would the trade have been of sufficient volume to justify stocking large books in the hope of a walk-in sale.

The challenges facing the provincial booksellers appear in stark relief when we contrast their business conditions with those of bookshops in London and the university towns, Oxford and Cambridge. Although booksellers faced considerable competition in these busy markets, the volume of trade encouraged more affluent tradesmen to enter the market, and take on a far larger stock. The conditions of trade could not have been more different.

**IV.**  
**The Provincial Book Trade in Perspective**

Though the English book trade experienced a period of expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, individual towns experienced this growth differently. London was the centre of the English book trade and dominated the production and distribution of printed materials in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For this reason as well as the wide availability of source material, most of the previous research on bookselling and the English book trade focuses on the capital. Provincial booksellers looked to London for much of their stock. The provincial book trade was not only an extension of the London trade but was also largely dependent upon the capital for its stock.

Oxford and Cambridge are a special case, and as of yet they have thus far been excluded from this survey because of their very particular situation. As university towns, the booksellers benefited from the regular demand for books from the literate and educated faculty and students. In addition, both Oxford and Cambridge established modest printing industries, unlike any other provincial town of this period.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter will compare the provincial book trade to its counterparts in London and the university towns. Though London, Oxford and Cambridge fall largely outside the scope of this work, it is impossible to comprehend fully the early modern English book trade without their inclusion for perspective. These centres of learning and publication were deeply influential in the development of the provincial book economy. Provincial booksellers looked to London for much of their stock. In addition, many of their customers would have been men educated at Oxford and Cambridge, whose book-

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<sup>1</sup>Colin Clair, *A History of Printing in Britain* (London, 1965); and David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press, Vol. I: Printing and the Book Trade in Cambridge, 1534-1698* (Cambridge, 1992).

buying habits (and libraries) may have largely been formed in these years. This left its imprint on the relationship between the bookshops in the provincial towns and their customers.

### **Pre-1550**

As we have seen, the early development of the provincial bookselling network was relatively slow and halting. There were few provincial shops, and these were restricted to the larger towns, like York and Norwich. Even in these larger provincial towns, the bookshops were much smaller and held fewer books than their counterparts in London, Oxford and Cambridge. The stock offered by provincial booksellers and indeed those in the universities was limited, relying heavily upon Continental imports in Latin. In contrast, in the 1530s, London booksellers began to offer an assortment of stock, including titles printed domestically in English.

As examples of the early development of bookshops outside London it is interesting to compare Neville Mores's York bookshop with that of an Oxford bookseller, John Dorne. Dorne's inventory, which included 1,952 entries, is recorded in an account book of items sold by his shop in 1520.<sup>2</sup> While this book list only recorded those works that had been purchased, it does bear a striking similarity to the stock of Mores. Dorne was a Dutchman, a foreigner like Mores, and much like Mores's stock, his shop was stocked primarily with Latin works. It is impossible from Dorne's descriptions to determine the print origin of the majority of the works, but, because of the high number of Latin books, it may be inferred that many of the titles were printed abroad. In many

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<sup>2</sup> F. Madan, 'The Daily Ledger of John Dorne, 1520' in C.R.L. Fletcher (ed.), *Collectanea*, 1<sup>st</sup> series (Oxford, 1885), pp. 73-177.

cases we can be certain, because Dorne noted certain titles as being from ‘*lion*’ (Lyon) and ‘*rowan*’ (Rouen).

Unsurprisingly, John Dorne sold mostly school books (58.9%), namely those by John Stanbridge and Robert Whitington, followed by religious works (15.5%) and calendars (7.7%). Unlike Mores, Dorne only sold eleven law books. This divergence would be mostly due to geographic differences. Mores, whose shop was located near the Minster, would have had more customers interested in legal texts, while Dorne, whose shop was in a university town, would have had a greater much need for school books. Despite the small size of Mores’s shop, the two booksellers held or sold twelve of the same works, including Bernardus Bottonus’s *Casus longi super decretales*, Jacobus de Varagine’s *De Sanctis* and *Sermones quadragesimales*, Bonaventura’s *Sermones quattuor nouissimorum*, and Innocent III’s *De officio Misce*.

A comparison of prices for these works is problematic because nearly all of Dorne’s books were bound before sold, while Mores’s books were recorded as unbound in their values. The prices on Dorne’s list reflect this premium, and it is difficult to compare the values in both shops because the types of bindings are not known. In only one of the twelve titles are both books recorded as unbound, and here their prices are similar. For Aesop’s *Fables*, Neville Mores’s price was 2*d.*, and in Oxford eighteen years earlier John Dorne charged a customer 3*d.* for the same title. It is unlikely that the value would have changed significantly over this time, and it is likely that the prices in both shops would have been similar.

In these years, it seems the most striking contrasts are not between Dorne’s and Mores’s shop, but between these two small specialist businesses and what might be found

in London. There are two important bookseller stock-lists from 1530s London that will serve as comparison to Neville Mores's 1538 York inventory. The first stock-list appears as a fragment of an account book for a London bookseller in 1530s. William A. Jackson, who transcribed the fragment in *The Colophon* presumes that it belongs to Wynkyn de Worde, largely because many of the books may have been printed by de Worde, and that it is from the year 1535.<sup>3</sup> All that can be ascertained is that the accounts were taken some time after 1534, because Robert Toy is mentioned as a stationer, but before 1542, because the accounts are contained in the binding of a 1541 copy of Thomas Elyot's *Image of Governance*. The only reason that Jackson places the date at 1535 is because de Worde died in 1535. Only fourteen editions of the sixty-five entries may be attributed to de Worde, so this assignment seems unfounded. Because the credit Jackson gives to de Worde is dubious, it is better to treat this fragment as being from an anonymous London bookseller and leave the dating open from between 1534-1541.

Like Neville Mores's shop, this anonymous bookseller sold to a specialised market; unlike Mores's shop, however, this London bookshop of the 1530s sold mostly carols and ballads, indicating a popular rather than professional clientele. The accounts include twenty-one entries for carols, composing 235 copies, and six entries for ballads, accounting for thirty-nine copies. With a total of sixty-five entries and 336 copies, carols and ballads make up over two-thirds of the bookseller's sold stock. The shop also sold twenty copies of school books, including a 'long premer' that may have been the Sarum primer, which customarily received the description 'totaliter ad longum' or 'set out a

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<sup>3</sup> William A. Jackson, 'A London Bookseller's Ledger of 1535', *The Colophon* 1, no. 4 (1936), pp. 498-509.

long'.<sup>4</sup> One copy of the ballad *Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudesle* was sold for 2*d.*, an entry for ‘A play’ and John Lydgate’s poem *The Churl and the Bird* are also present. These titles, combined with the plethora of carols and ballads sold, suggest customers were interested in reading as a form of entertainment rather than professional necessity, as seen with Mores’s stock-list. There were no law books recorded, and only a few religious titles appear. The extent of the religious works sold by the anonymous bookseller were five copies of individual saint’s lives, twelve copies of a ‘sermons of misrule’ and a single copy of a music book of hymns and sequences.

From the evidence of the bookseller’s account fragment, the majority of the stock sold consisted of carols, ballads and other printed entertainment. Though school books and perhaps a single dictionary, ‘spanysshe & englysshe’, were also sold, there is a notable absence of the legal and theological texts found on Neville Mores’s stock-list in York. There are two possible conclusions one may deduce from this evidence. The first is that, in London during the 1530s, there was a significant literate population who were attracted to printed works for entertainment or leisurely pursuits and had the means with which to purchase this type of print. The second, and more likely, explanation is that both Mores’s stock-list and the anonymous bookseller’s accounts represent the same trend of specialised bookselling. While Mores’s shop dealt primarily with law and theological works intended for customers affiliated with York Minster, the 1530s London bookseller concentrated his trade on the cheaper and smaller print with a universal appeal: ballads, carols, school books, and saints’ lives.

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<sup>4</sup> Jackson, ‘A London Bookseller’s Ledger’, p. 504.

This trend of specialisation can also be seen in John Rastell's stock-list of 1538.<sup>5</sup>

Rastell, a popular London printer and bookseller, was imprisoned in 1536 for his reformed religious ideas and died there that same year. His inventory, which was taken two years after his death, shows that Rastell's shop primarily dealt in law books, school books and plays. Of the 4,251 copies held in Rastell's shop, there were 974 law books (22.9%), 1,281 copies of school books (30.1%), and 1,184 plays (27.9%). These three subjects account for 80.9% of the total stock found in Rastell's shop. The remaining books include religious texts, works of literature, astrological and other scientific works.

It is very strange that John Rastell, an outspoken Protestant, would only have 130 religious books in his stock (3.1%). William Rastell, John's son, a devout Catholic and successor to his father's printing business, may have removed many of the more controversial religious books from the shop in the two years following John's death before a stock-list had been recorded. It is also possible John himself removed many of the Protestant works that would have been undoubtedly part of his stock. In 1534, John Rastell wrote to Thomas Cromwell to lament how his business had suffered due to his political and religious stance. He explains to Cromwell that his print production had been reduced by a quarter and that he lost profits in the amount of £26.<sup>6</sup> In an effort to restore his business, Rastell may have been forced to part with his reformed literature. The religious texts found in the stock-list include a number of titles by Erasmus, bibles, psalters and a life of St Thomas Becket. An indication of Rastell's religious persuasion can only be seen in the prevalence of English and French testaments, gospels and psalms.

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<sup>5</sup> National Archive, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (Prob 2/692); and R.J. Roberts, 'John Rastell's Inventory of 1538' *The Library*, 6<sup>th</sup> Series 1 (1979), pp. 34-42.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives, State Papers (SP 1/85/2885).

The vast proportion of the religious works stocked by Rastell were printed in English (94.6%).

Like Neville Mores of York, a large portion of Rastell's business was in the sale of law books. While Mores's shop dealt equally in legal commentaries and statute books, Rastell's contained almost exclusively statute books in his stock. Before he entered the print and book trade, Rastell had been a practicing lawyer and M.P. since 1529. Rastell had a natural interest in law and had been the printer of many of the statute books found in his shop. Mores's shop, however, was better located in order to attract many lawyers as customers, and Rastell may have had such large numbers of law books because he was distributing them to other booksellers like Mores rather than selling the entire stock himself. None of Rastell's copies found their way into Mores's shop, because the York bookseller received the majority of his law books and commentaries from the Continent.

The second focus and specialisation of Rastell's shop was in the sale of plays and other dramatic works. Rastell had a personal interest in drama, having himself been the author of two titles found in his stock: *Of gentylnes and noblyte* and *A new commodye in englysh*. The most popular play in his shop was *Necromantia* by Lucian of Samosata, of which there are 500 copies. This was printed in 1530 by a printer other than Rastell, so this title was likely for sale rather than distribution. While law books were Rastell's printing specialisation, plays and interludes were certainly the specialty of his bookshop.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the market for printed books was relatively restricted – less so in London, perhaps, but here booksellers faced more competition. All the booksellers for whom we have inventories concentrated to a degree on particular markets, but the reasons for this market specialisation were different in, or

outside, London. The London booksellers sought a niche in a crowded market. In Oxford and York, Dorne and Mores concentrated on their core markets. It was only in the second half of the century that booksellers outside London could be more ambitious.

### **Elizabethan**

The formation of the Stationers' Company in 1557 fundamentally altered the structures of the English book trade. This single city institution would dominate the English book trade for centuries to come, entrusted as it was with national responsibilities for regulation of the trade. The effect was to consolidate economic power in the hands of an elite band of publishers, who between them dominated the production of books throughout the country. This also had its impact on the provincial trade. On the one hand, provincial booksellers could take advantage of an efficient supply of particularly English language titles. On the other, the scale of their businesses did not approach that of the largest London firms. As we have seen, they generally operated at a far lower level of capitalization, and this imposed significant restrictions.

An interesting transitional instance between the characteristics of the bookshops of the first and second halves of the sixteenth century is provided by the inventory of a bookshop belonging to William and Humphrey Powell in 1553.<sup>7</sup> The Powells were successfully taken to court by William Towley for the recovery of goods amounting to £250 that had been received by the Powells in June 1553. Unfortunately, little survives regarding the lives of these three men, but evidence suggests the Powells acquired Edward Whitchurch's bookshop after he abandoned it in June 1553, only a month before

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<sup>7</sup> National Archives, Court of Common Pleas (CP 40/1156/525).

Mary became queen.<sup>8</sup> If this were the case, Towley may have acted in Whitchurch's stead.

The stock-list is of particular interest because it provides a rare glimpse into a Marian bookshop. Evidence of the new religious regime can already be seen in the shop, which included six copies of two missals and twelve works on individual saints' lives. Many of the saints' lives are old works, many having been printed by either Wynkyn de Worde or Richard Pyson between 1510 and 1520. In fact, the majority of identifiable religious works found on the stock-list were printed before 1535, making the texts over fifteen years old.

The religious books found on the 1553 stock-list completely differ from those inventories of the late 1550s and 1560s, but this is to be expected. What is more striking are the similarities between the Powells' inventory and Robert Scott's 1568-1570 accounts from Norwich. Compared to their predecessors, both shops offered a greater variety of subject matter.<sup>9</sup> In the 1530s and 1540s, religious, school books or law books could amount to 80% of a shop's stock but in the Powells' shop the most abundant category, religious works, only represent 20.3% of their total stock. The largest category in Scott's shop was poetry books, which amounted to 36.9% of the total.

In the 1550s and 1560s, the vernacular began to replace Latin as the favoured language of print in England. Even in 1553 when England returned to Catholicism, English was the most popular language in the Powells' shop, with 47.3% of books. Latin followed with 31.9% of all titles. The Powells' bookshop also contained forty-six titles

<sup>8</sup> Henry Plomer, 'An Inventory of Wynkyn de Worde's House "The Sun in Fleet Street" in 1553' *Transactions of the Bibliographic Society* s3-VI (23), p. 229.

<sup>9</sup> The Powells' shop contained seventeen separate subject categories, and Scott's orders contained as many as twenty categories.

(22.2%) in French, including law French, and one unidentifiable book, ‘*Italin cu comento*’, which was probably printed in Italian. Similarly, in Robert Scott’s shop, 55.3% of books were printed in English with 43.6% of books printed in Latin. As evidenced by these two lists, in the 1550s and 1560s, works in English and Latin were nearly equally available, suggesting these were the decades of transition before English came to dominate the book trade.

In the 1550s and 1560s, London booksellers were increasingly stocking their shops with works from London rather than Continental Europe. Nearly all identifiable works on the Powells’ stock-list had been printed in London. The single exception is a copy of Théophylacte de Bulgarie’s *In oēs diui Pauli Epistolas enarrationes*, which was printed in Paris. Though booksellers in the provincial towns at this time received the majority of their stock from London printers, they also obtained many titles from Continental printers to supplement their stock. In Robert Scott’s shop in Norwich, 86.4% of the books were printed in London. This is an overwhelming majority of the stock, but Scott did import titles from Antwerp, Zurich, Cologne and Frankfurt as well. One edition of a work by Terence was specified as being the Antwerp version of the text. This was undoubtedly the Plantin edition, and it is not unusual for stock-lists in this way to call attention to the publisher’s name if the reputation of the publisher was itself enough to add to the value or esteem of the publication. Indeed, if we compare the Plantin edition with London publications, the difference in typographical sophistication is clear.<sup>10</sup> Scott’s customers were clearly, in this instance, prepared to pay a premium for this fine edition.

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<sup>10</sup> Compare Terence, *Flowres for Latine speaking selected and gathered out of Terence* (London, 1568), STC 23901.3 to Terence, *Flores, seu Formulae loquendi* (Antwerp, 1564), USTC 79523.

The Powells and Scott, in their different ways, open a window on an interesting moment in the English book trade. At this point, their stock was still to a large extent Latin; in this respect a characteristic of the early period of the English market in printed books. But the proportion of vernacular works was increasing, as was the reliance on books published in London. Both shops also offered a more varied stock. In the last third of the sixteenth century, all of these trends would be reinforced.

What would become possible in the Elizabethan trade becomes clear if we continue this analysis of Robert Scott's Norwich stock by comparing it with the stock of Roger Ward fifteen years later. Interestingly, there is surprisingly little overlap between the two lists. Robert Scott's 1570 Norwich stock only holds thirteen of the same titles found in Roger Ward's 1585 Shrewsbury shop, nine of which were school books. There are also only fourteen authors that may be found on both stock-lists, and they include classical authors Aesop, Cicero and Ovid, humanists Erasmus and Castellion, and contemporaries Thomas Becon and Edward Dering. Both of these businesses appealed primarily to students, and school books composed the majority of each bookseller's stock. One would expect to see more than thirteen similar titles and fourteen authors upon the lists. While Scott stocked his shop with large numbers of grammars by William Lily and Nicholaus Clenardus, Ward preferred to offer a wider range of school books in smaller quantities, including those by Battista Spagnoli, Joannes Ravisius Textor, and Paolo Manuzio. Only one school book in Ward's shop numbered greater than sixteen copies, '*confabulatiuncula puerilis*', of which Ward had fifty-nine copies.

Though religious print was popular in both Scott and Ward's shops, the types and style of religious works varied. Nearly all the religious materials in Scott's shop were

psalters and catechisms. Ward's shop, on the other hand, contained a variety of material, such as private prayers written by Edward Dering and Arthur Dent, biblical commentaries by Bèze and Calvin, sermons, and catechisms. There are also numerous apologetic works on Protestantism and the Church of England as well as literature attacking the Catholic Church, none of which appear on Scott's stock-list. As in the case of school books, Roger Ward's shop in Shrewsbury contained a greater assortment of religious works, while Robert Scott dealt primarily in instructional materials.

Though there is little surviving evidence, the religious works on Scott's stock-list imply that he was supplying these works to schools and local parishes. If the stock-list is any indication, there was little interest in complex theological matters in Norwich around 1570. The catechisms, as well as the limited copies of devotional works like *Pomander of Prayers* and *The Sickmans Salve*, suggest an audience whose religiosity was still developing and chiefly concerned with day-to-day worship.

Scott's Norwich shop includes a number of printed dramas, calendars and current events, which are all virtually absent from Ward's shop in Shrewsbury a decade later.<sup>11</sup> Scott's stock-list includes four copies of a ballad on the life and death Edmund Bonner, who died in 1569, sixteen copies of a ballad on the defeat of the rebellion in the north, and four copies of an unidentifiable work described as 'Newes out of France'.<sup>12</sup> Ward's Shrewsbury shop was stocked with more mathematic, scientific and astrological books. There was also a greater interest in histories, and the inventory records chronicles by Holinshed, Grafton and Stow.

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<sup>11</sup> Roger Ward must have had more than twenty-two calendars and almanacs in shop, but these may have been in a small size and unrecorded by the assessors.

<sup>12</sup> Henry Plomer, 'Some Elizabethan book sales', *The Library* 7 (1916), pp. 318-323.

Ward's Shrewsbury shop was a highly singular venture. He was a London stationer, and he seems to have brought the values of the metropolis and the universities to a provincial town – with uncertain success. To illuminate just how unusual it was, it is interesting to introduce to this comparison a third shop, that of John Sheres of Cambridge. In the end leaves of Andrew Perne's copy of *Examen recitationum D. Nicolai Selnecceri de libro concordiae*, one finds a number of accounts by the Cambridge bookseller John Sheres. A transcript of these end leaves may be found in David Pearson's "A Cambridge Bookseller's Accounts of 1572" in *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*.<sup>13</sup> In many cases, these accounts indicate titles, individual customers, and the price paid for the books.

A sizable portion of the accounts have been lost, however, when the end leaves were cut in order to fit the book, but enough information remains in the 133 entries to provide a comparison with Robert Scott's shop in Norwich. These lists, though reflecting stock from nearly the same year, look completely different. While Scott ordered school books and calendars, Sheres's accounts detail a diversity of religious works, including biblical commentaries by Calvin, Bèze, Bullinger and Peter Martyr, patristic texts, and bibles in Latin and Greek. These works are far more theological and advanced than the catechisms and small psalms ordered by Scott. Even the bibles acquired by Scott were in English alone, and though 44.6% of his stock was in Latin or Greek, these were exclusively grammars and primers. Comparatively, Sheres's accounts are composed of approximately 80% of Latin works, 9.4% of titles in English, 8.2% in Greek, and a single title in French and Hebrew. Sheres had nearly double the number of Latin titles than

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<sup>13</sup> Pearson, 'A Cambridge Bookseller's Accounts', pp. 230-236.

Scott. Similarly, Sheres's accounts indicate books on law and medicine, subjects that are virtually absent from Scott's shop in Norwich.

This disparity resulted from an unsurprising dissimilarity in their customer base. Robert Scott's business was concerned with school books for students and the new emerging literate population in the town. From the customer names provided by the accounts, it is clear that Sheres's customers were primarily associated with the university. In total, twenty-one of the names may be identified with reasonable certainty, and each one of them had matriculated with the university and had been present around the time the account was taken, and the majority of them had advanced to at least the M.A. degree.<sup>14</sup> Many of the titles sold by John Sheres appear in other Cambridge inventories. For instance, *In librum Proverbiorum commentarii* and *Hiob cum commentariis* may be found in seven inventories from 1576-1614, and *Loci communes* by Musculus occur in fifteen inventories from 1567-1609.<sup>15</sup>

While Robert Scott was in financial trouble with his business, John Sheres was able to offer credit to a number of his customers. The accounts show that Sheres allowed Henry Hayes credit on his bill of 10s. for three months and noted that Anthony Rudd was “to paye Quarterly” for his books. Even at his death in 1581, Sheres, whose estate was valued at nearly £900, had debts “in his dett book” totalling £300 with an additional £260 in “redye money & dett by obligations”.<sup>16</sup> To put this into perspective with provincial booksellers, this amount is almost thirty times greater than the sum owed to John Foster at his death in 1616 York. In the 1570s, it would have been extremely difficult for

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<sup>14</sup> Pearson, ‘Cambridge Bookseller’s Accounts’, pp. 236-238.

<sup>15</sup> Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories, Volume I*, pp. 344-351; and Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories, Volume II*, pp. 144-145, 488, and 563.

<sup>16</sup> Pearson, ‘Cambridge Bookseller’s Accounts’, pp. 239-240.

provincial booksellers outside of Oxford and Cambridge to offer this amount of credit to their customers.

The example of John Sheres's accounts demonstrates why Oxford and Cambridge cannot be considered part of the standard provincial book trade. Because of the extraordinary nature of the market in these towns, including a dramatically different scale of incomes and education, the university booksellers had a distinct advantage over their counterparts in other towns. While there would have certainly been more competition from other stationers in Oxford and Cambridge, the wealth of a literate population alone would have afforded these booksellers ample benefits and greater potential profit.

While Scott's Norwich shop had a completely different profile from that of Sheres's, much of Ward's stock would not have been out of place in a university bookshop. Roger Ward's stock-list can also be compared with the book items found in a will from 1588 Cambridge for a man identified only as Walters. Walters's inventory was valued at £104 5s. 1d., and details 116 titles. This surviving inventory is incomplete, however, because there is £36 13s. 6d. in goods missing from the record, which Elisabeth Leedham-Green assumes would have been book stock.<sup>17</sup> If the missing values were from book stock, Walters's shop would have been of a similar size to Roger Ward's shop in Shrewsbury.

Both of these stock-lists share many of the same titles, including popular titles such as *Bulleins bulwarke*, St. Augustine's *Meditations*, and Becon's *Pomander of prayers*. Other similar titles include William Hunnis's *Seven sobs of a sorrowful soul*, of which Ward held eight copies and Walters a single folio, Niels Hemmingsen's *A posti*, and an anonymous work entitled *A godly garden*, of which both booksellers held a single

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<sup>17</sup> Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, pp. 395-398.

copy. It is more than just the number of titles shared by Ward and Walters that is significant, but it is also the types of books and similar authors that are noteworthy. Both stock-lists include school books by Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Isocrates and Hyperius, catechisms by Calvin and Dering, and numerous books in Greek as well as Latin. Ward's and Walters's shop had a few titles of legal texts, primarily composed of statute books. Both stock-lists favoured popular Protestant authors from the Swiss reformations, such as Théodore de Bèze, Heinrich Bullinger and Jean Calvin. Though they each contained different titles - Ward stocked Calvin's commentaries on Job, Jacob and Esau, and Philippians and Walters preferred commentaries on Jeremiah, Psalms and Acts - the tone of each of the stock-lists is remarkably similar.

There are significant differences between the inventories, such as the proportion of works in English, but overall Ward and Walters's stock-lists share a common market identity. Walters was a successful bookseller in Cambridge whose stock, complete with school books, theological works and scientific texts, filled the needs of his customers, who were likely students or otherwise affiliated with the university.<sup>18</sup> Ward seems to have shared similar aspirations for his Shrewsbury customers. There was certainly reason to hope that an intellectual community could be created in the Shropshire border county. Preachers such as Thomas Lever and Thomas Bentham, fresh from exile in Switzerland, came to preach in Shrewsbury and settled nearby.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Cambridge maintained a strong influence in Shrewsbury School. Thomas Ashton, who was at Cambridge in the 1520s, 1530s and 1540s and became Shrewsbury's schoolmaster in 1561, pushed a Continental-influenced curriculum that was both humanist and

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<sup>18</sup> Walters owned a plate valued at £10 15s. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, p. 395.

<sup>19</sup> Coulton, 'Establishment of Protestantism', p. 313.

Protestant.<sup>20</sup> Many of the students of Shrewsbury School continued their education at university. It is likely that Ward's customers originated from these two groups: those associated with Shrewsbury School and the preachers, godly ministers and their followers. Perhaps the influence of Cambridge in Shrewsbury has been underestimated, affecting the town's wider population, and it may have gone so far to impact the bookshops and their stock, as Roger Ward's inventory suggests.

Ward and Walters's case represents a unique circumstance. In the overwhelming majority of comparisons between provincial and university towns, there are more differences than similarities. Booksellers in Oxford and Cambridge had higher proportions of stock in Latin, Greek and Hebrew than their provincial counterparts, and they were substantially more likely to sell medical, scientific and theological works. Even in the case of school books, which were popular in both the provincial and university towns, the provincial towns preferred to stock primers, grammars and catechisms, while Oxford and Cambridge booksellers' stocks were more advanced, including authors like Aristotle, Quintillianus, and others. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, booksellers from university towns were still importing their stock from abroad, while the provincial booksellers were heavily reliant upon London as a print centre.

One of the major differences between London bookshops and their provincial counterparts in the late sixteenth century was their size. The surviving stock-lists for London come from stationers who were both printers and booksellers. London's printer-booksellers would have not only sold stock from their shop, but they would have also

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<sup>20</sup> Barbara Coulton, 'Establishment of Protestantism in a Provincial Town: A Study of Shrewsbury in the Sixteenth Century', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27, no. 2 (1996), pp. 312-315.

distributed books to other booksellers in London, the provincial towns and potentially abroad.

This is also the case of Henry Bynneman, an influential printer-bookseller who owned three bookshops in London. Bynneman died in 1583, and his probate inventory survives because he owed £1000 in debts to Richard Hutton at the time of his death.<sup>21</sup> The inventory for Bynneman's main shop provides titles and values for all works, yet no specific works are listed for the other two smaller shops. The total value for all Bynneman's shops and goods was £791 12s. 9d., of which stock from his main shop amounts to £607 1d. The second shop's stock was valued at £34 10s., and the third had a value of £39 10s., both of which were considerably smaller in size than the main shop. Because Bynneman's main shop is the only one detailed by the assessors, all analysis will be conducted based upon this shop alone.

Henry Bynneman's London shop was notably larger than Roger Ward's Shrewsbury shop of 1585. While Roger Ward's shop contained 520 titles and 2,180 copies, Bynneman's was approximately seven times larger, containing 15,712 copies in only 103 titles. 88.9% of Bynneman's stock was printed by the printer himself or in a joint venture with Ralph Newberry, while Roger Ward, also a London printer, held only nine titles that he had printed. While Ward held a larger number of titles with only a few copies each, Bynneman's shop was filled with large quantities of copies of a few titles. Twenty-seven titles in Bynneman's shop had over 300 corresponding copies, and sixty-four titles had over 100. The largest number of copies for a single title was 928 copies of *The first foure booke of Virgils Aeneis*, which had been printed in 1583. Since this title

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<sup>21</sup> National Archives, Chancery Records (C 152/36, 34 Eliz.); and Mark Eccles, 'Bynneman's Books' *The Library*, 5<sup>th</sup> Series 12, No. 2 (June 1957), pp. 81-92.

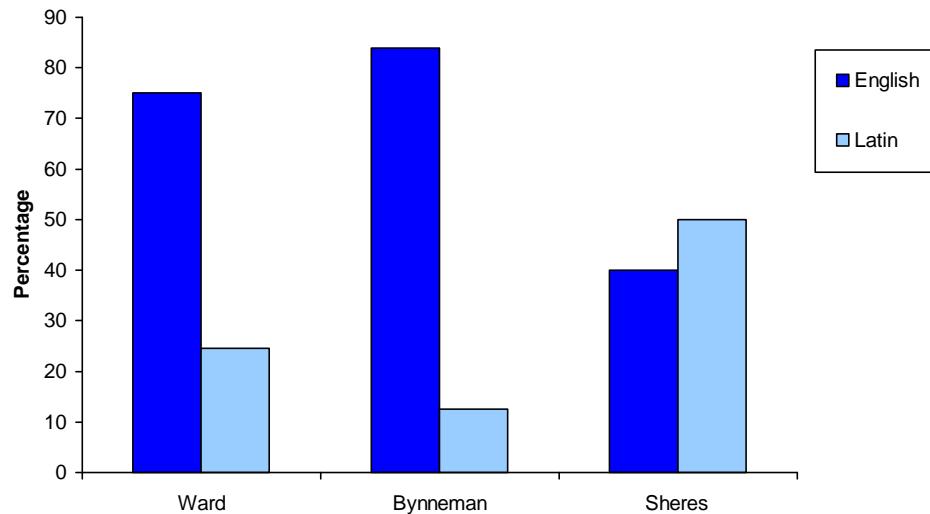
was so recently printed, it may be assumed to have had a print run of 1,000 copies, indicating that Bynneman had sold or distributed seventy-two copies of this text before his death.

All of Bynneman's identifiable stock was printed in London. Other than printing nearly 90% of the books himself, Bynneman also held six titles from Thomas East, two from Henry Wykes, and a single title printed by Henry Denham. Roger Ward's books, on the other hand, were printed by over thirty different printers, 95% of which were in England. Interestingly, Bynneman was the fourth most common printer in Ward's inventory, having printed twenty-one of the titles that appear, following only Thomas Vautrollier, Thomas Dawson and John Charlewood in popularity. Bynneman had printed significantly more of the titles in Ward's shop than Ward himself.

Despite the dominance of London as a print centre for the capital's booksellers, provincial stationers like Ward continued to import many works. Ward specifically imported texts from France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy, and combined these imported works made up 5% of his total stock. Despite the small number of imports, Ward was able to obtain the titles he required from a great variety of Continental cities and printers.

With so many books being printed in London, it is no wonder that the majority of both Bynneman's and Ward's stock was printed in English. Of the eighty-seven titles on Bynneman's stock-list where language may be properly assigned, seventy-three were printed in English (83.9%), eleven in Latin (12.6%), and single titles in French, Greek and Hebrew (1.1% each). Comparatively, Ward's stock-list shows a relatively low proportion of works in English (75%) and a higher percentage of books in Latin (24.5%).

**Language Distribution in the Shops of Ward, Bynneman and Sheres**



Though both bookshops demonstrate an increased diversity in subject matter compared to shops of earlier decades, Ward offered a wider range of subjects than Bynneman. Ward's inventory includes titles in architecture, philosophy, astrology, calendars, political tracts and ordinances. Though Bynneman did not print any calendars or ordinances, they are suspiciously absent from his shop. These may be included in the 'lots' of books where only composite values are given, and this is likely to be the case for calendars in particular.

Though Ward's shop had many titles printed by Bynneman, the two bookshops shared only ten titles in common. Six of these titles were printed by Bynneman: *Margarita theological* by Johann Spangenberg, *The eglogs of the Poet Mantuan Carmelite*, *Anglorum praelia* by Christopher Ockland, *Siuqila too good, to be true* and *A persuasion from papistrie* by Thomas Lupton, and *The golden Aphroditis* by John Grange. The remaining four titles common to both bookshops were *The booke of nurture*

by Hugh Rhodes, *The image of both Churches* by John Bale, *The newe jewell of health* by Conrad Gesner, and multiple copies of Cicero's *Epistles*.

Bynneman's London bookshop of 1583 was significantly larger than Ward's Shrewsbury shop of 1585, and it held more copies per title. All of the books from Bynneman's shop had been printed in London, the majority being printed by Bynneman himself, and nearly 90% of the titles were printed in English. Conversely, Ward's shop held a large number of titles but a small number of copies. Though the majority of works in Ward's shop were printed in London, he imported a small percentage of his stock from Europe and had a much higher proportion of texts in Latin. Despite these important differences, many striking similarities can be seen between Bynneman's and Ward's shops in the broader view of the English book trade. Both shops were heavily reliant upon London for the overwhelming majority of their stock. To meet the needs of a rapidly increasing, diversified literate population, both booksellers offered a wide selection of subject categories, from theological tracts to school books, law books to literature, military handbooks to music books, and chronicles to news books.

### **Seventeenth Century**

The stock-lists surviving from the seventeenth century show further steady growth in the availability of books outside the capital. Booksellers were now able to offer a much broader range of stock in a larger number of places. Whereas in the Elizabethan period Ward's Shrewsbury shop seems to have been something of an aberration, in the seventeenth century several provincial towns boasted bookshops with a wide range of subject matter. Some of these were clearly now functioning in markets which, like

London a half century before, were becoming increasingly crowded. For this reason, bookshops developed their own specialisations: not because, like Mores's in 1530s York, the market was very limited, but because they needed to establish a market niche against local competition.

This can be most effectively demonstrated in a comparison of two provincial stock-lists: the inventories of Michael Harte in 1615 Exeter and John Foster in 1616 York. The sizes of the shops are similar, with Harte's shop holding approximately 3,800 copies and Foster's containing 3,462 copies. The total stock values are also comparable. Harte's stock was valued at £103 8s. 2d. (71% of the total), and Foster's stock had a value of £144 16s. 4d. (88.4% of the total). The total value of the shops, including book stock, bookbinding equipment and other items, are nearly the same, with Harte's totalling £165 14s. 11d. and Foster's £163 15s. 8d., equating to a difference of less than £2. Due to the highly comparable nature of these inventories, Harte's and Foster's stock-lists will provide an excellent examination of the similarities and differences of the English provincial book trade in the early seventeenth century.

	<b>Michael Harte (Exeter, 1615)</b>	<b>John Foster (York, 1616)</b>
<b>Number of Copies</b>	3,800	3,462
<b>Total Shop Value</b>	£165 14s. 11d.	£163 15s. 8d.
<b>Total Stock Value</b>	£103 8s. 2d.	£144 16s. 4d.
<b>% of Shop made up of Stock</b>	71%	88.4%

As the analysis in the previous chapter has shown, there was more diverse subject matter available in Foster's York shop than in Exeter around 1615. Though it is impossible to know specific numbers of what was available in Exeter, given the extant data, Foster's shop in York contained a higher proportion of religious works than Harte's in Exeter (23.3% vs. 18%), while Harte's shop held a significantly higher percentage of school books (77.7% vs. 20.3%).

Foster's shop had a great variety of religious material as well as a range of Protestant and Catholic printed works. As discussed in the previous chapter, the religious stock in Foster's shop reflected the cultural and religious experiences of York. There were also many works on death and salvation, such as Arthur Dent's *Pathway to Heaven*, Richard Bernard's *Staff of Comfort*, William Leighton's *Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soul*, and the incredibly popular *Sickman's Salve* by Thomas Becon to name a few. The preoccupation with death and salvation was likely a result of recent outbreaks of plague within the city. In 1581, there had been an outbreak of 'gaol fever', and, in 1604, the mayor of York pleaded with his fellow magistrates to remain in the city:

The infection doth so greatly increase in this city that unless we the magistrates have great care and do take pains in the governing and ruling of this city, and in taking order for the relieving of them, the poorer sort will not be ruled.<sup>22</sup>

A year later, in 1605, the York City Council ordered that merchants should return to the city after the outbreak, but there can be no doubt that the outbreak would have invited York's population to contemplate mortality and the afterlife.<sup>23</sup>

Harte's shop, on the other hand, contained mainly biblical commentaries and works by Calvinist authors, such as Andrew Willet, John King and John Dod. Puritanism

<sup>22</sup> Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 257-304.

<sup>23</sup> 'York City Council Orders the Return of Merchants after Plague, 1605' in Joan Thirsk, and John Phillips Cooper (eds.), *Seventeenth-century Economic Documents* (Oxford, 1974), p. 328.

had established a pronounced presence in the Devon region by the end of the sixteenth century. Notable Puritans such as John Reynolds, member of the Hampton Court Conference, were based in Exeter, and the ‘uncompromising’ Ignatius Jourdain was a bailiff, sheriff and eventual mayor of the city. Jourdain was known to have forged an “energetic personal campaign against vice in his City”, particularly raging against excessive drinking.<sup>24</sup> By 1615, Exeter’s Chamber had enacted strict Sabbath Observance laws, including barring the sale of food and the performance of any manual labour.<sup>25</sup> The presence of Willet, King and Dod as well as other notable Protestant works in Harte’s stock bears witness to this dynamic Puritan influence in the city.

As a port town, the population of Exeter and the merchants that frequented it would have had a natural interest in European affairs. Michael Harte’s bookshop contained histories of France, Spain and the city of Venice, a French dictionary, and essays in French. The interest in Europe suggests that Harte included merchants as his customers, as 15% of his known stock was concerned with the Continent. There was also a ‘parcel’ of books in French, and undoubtedly other such works, so this percentage may properly reflect shop’s proportion of books of European interest.

While John Foster’s stock does contain a small number of similar works, he had his own specialisation; instead, his shop contained a significant proportion of books intended for women. There is much debate over how many women were literate in early modern Europe, but the consensus states that both male and female readership significantly increased by the seventeenth century, though women’s literacy rates were

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<sup>24</sup> Allan Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650-1875* (Manchester, 1962), pp. 1-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

lower than men's.<sup>26</sup> Like men, women were benefiting from the age's 'educational revolution', the wealthier girls benefiting from tutors and private instruction.<sup>27</sup> There were, however, a number of schools dedicated to educating women, as seen in Windsor in the late sixteenth century. These schools, which appealed to the professional class, became more abundant in the seventeenth century, with examples in London, Colchester, Deptford, and Hackney to name a few.<sup>28</sup> Mostly, however, girls were being educated at home, whether formally or informally, and becoming literate in increasing numbers.

There is one important aspect where the two inventories differ. Stock in Harte's Exeter shop was significantly less expensive than works in Foster's shop. The average price per copy in Harte's shop was 6.5d., while Foster's averaged 10d. This is particularly noteworthy when one considers that Harte held a higher proportion of folios than Foster. This may be the case for a number of reasons. First, it is worth deciphering the assessors' value of the books, whether this was the retail, wholesale or cost values of the books. While this is difficult to accomplish, the assessors in both cases were stationers, professionals and knowledgeable in book values, which means their valuations are dependable. According to John Barnard, the best strategy in determining the meaning of the values is to compare them to other known values of the same work.<sup>29</sup> Comparable evidence outside the lists themselves is rare, unfortunately. F.R. Johnson's "Notes on English Book-prices" is occasionally useful in this regard, but few of Foster and Harte's titles are listed.<sup>30</sup> Both shops' values are similar to retail prices given in London, as we

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<sup>26</sup> Jacqueline Eales, *Women in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (London, 1998), p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence Stone, 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640', *Past and Present* 28 (1964), pp. 41-80.

<sup>28</sup> Eales, *Women in Early Modern England*, pp. 38-39; and Rosemary O'Day, *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies* (London, 2007), p. 326.

<sup>29</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 55.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail Book-prices', pp. 83-112.

will see, and this study will be cautiously treating them as retail prices while recognizing the need for further evidence to make a sound conclusion.

If one accepts that both Harte's and Foster's valuations represent retail prices, there is a need to examine closely why the shop prices differ so significantly between Exeter and York. The most plausible explanation would be the differential cost of transportation. If Harte's books mostly reached Exeter by ship, Foster's made their way north along the Great North Road. This would more than account for this price differential.

Harte's and Foster's shops, though separated by many hundred miles, were similar in this: they both demonstrate the increasing diversification of the book stock available outside London in the early seventeenth century. Each sought to build their markets by offering particular types of books appropriate to the local clientele, but each also had a considerable general stock. The contrast with fifty years before is striking, as is the contrast with a surviving Cambridge list of the same period. An inventory of William Hammond's Cambridge shop in 1609 shows a business recognizably similar to that of Elizabethan Cambridge.<sup>31</sup> Hammond's inventory was compiled because he was in debt to the widow Mary Wright. The inventory, consequently, only represents a portion of Hammond's stock, the suitable number and value of books to cover his debt to Wright. It is composed of ninety-six individual titles with a total of 112 copies. The value of the works amounts to £3 7*s.* 6*d.*

The types of books found in Hammond's inventory are very similar to those found in the shops of sixteenth-century university booksellers. Nearly the entirety of the stock was in the scholastic languages of Latin, Greek and Hebrew (96.9%). Latin alone

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<sup>31</sup> Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, pp. 564-566.

accounted for 84.4% of Hammond's stock. There were only three titles printed in the vernacular: a French grammar, a collection of statutes and a work by Thomas Cranmer responding to Stephen Gardiner, both in English. Given the languages of the works, it is likely that the majority of the stock had been printed abroad. Compared to the provincial stock-lists of Christopher Hunt and Michael Harte of Exeter and John Foster of York, this is a significantly larger number of works in classical languages for seventeenth-century provincial England. Hunt's 1603 inventory contained about 80.0-92.7% of its titles in English. Harte's 1615 stock-list had a slightly smaller number of English works, accounting for at least 78.1% of the total, and in Foster's 1616 inventory, about 59.4% were in English. In each of the provincial instances, English was the most popular language. In Hammond's list, however, only two English titles appear which barely represents 2% of the total. Even in Foster's shop, where the bookseller kept a high number of books printed in classical languages, only Latin works make up any significant proportion with just over one-third (34.9%).

In Cambridge, Hammond had stock better suited to an academic clientele, who would have been interested in classical languages and more advanced works. When analyzing the Latin titles found on each of the four stock-lists, Hammond's inventory contains more difficult texts than those found on the other lists. While grammars feature prominently on the provincial lists, Hammond's stock was full of the works of Aristotle. Grammars are of course not absent, as Hammond's inventory lists four: one in Latin, one in Hebrew and two in Greek. There are also remarkably few religious works found on Hammond's list. There are only eleven religious works (11.5%), four of which were bibles. Instead, there are large numbers of legal and political works. Religious works

consistently rank as the most popular subject category found on provincial booksellers' stock-lists, and Hunt's, Harte's and Foster's lists are no exception. Hammond's inventory is notable for the relative lack of religious material.

### **A Glimpse into the Future**

By the early seventeenth century, booksellers were firmly established in England's provincial cities. Many of the larger cities had a sufficiently extensive book-buying public to sustain several shops, operating in competition with one another. Several of the booksellers we have studied clearly made a decent living, helped by imaginative business strategies. This success can be further contextualized if we glance ahead to the 1640s, after many of these stationers had ceased trading. This was an unusually troubled decade. The political crises and then the fighting of the Civil War inevitably disrupted trade. We can see an echo of this in the surviving booksellers' inventories. Although these fall outside the main concern of this dissertation and have not been subjected to detailed analysis, they are introduced here to illustrate what seems to have been a significant contraction in the provincial book trade in these years. These remarks are based on three stock-lists: from 1644 York, 1644 Hull and 1648 Warrington.

In May 1644, Mark Foster of York died and had a short inventory of his shop recorded and submitted with his probate. Mark Foster's shop was located "under the shadow of the Minster", and it is likely that his shop inhabited the same space as John Foster's thirty years earlier.<sup>32</sup> The relationship between the two Fosters is unclear, though their surnames may suggest some kind of familial bond. If this was the case, Mark and John Foster would have been distant relatives, as the records and wills from

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<sup>32</sup> Richard Welford, 'Bookseller's Stock, Seventeenth Century', *Notes and Queries* 29, no. 45 (1898), p. 45.

both men's families neglect to show common relatives. It is possible that these were two different lines of Fosters, sharing the same surname but without familial relation.

Mark Foster occupied "what had been [John] Foster's shop but not necessarily his business".<sup>33</sup> Mark Foster's shop was significantly smaller than his predecessors, valuing £25 12s. The number of titles and descriptions of the books are not included, providing only the values by 'foreshelf' in the shop. From these basic descriptions, the value of Mark Foster's stock was £22, and the value of his binding tools was £1 11s. 4d. Though the shop is a much smaller size, the proportions of stock and binding tools relates very closely to John Foster's, as you can see by the chart provided. Also, Mark appears to have dealt in a second-hand book trade or inherited a number of titles, as his inventory states that he held twelve short shelves of old bound books "at the low end of the shop".<sup>34</sup>

Two major factors contributed to why John Foster had a considerably larger bookshop than Mark Foster, who occupied the same selling space thirty years later. First, Mark Foster died at a young age. Having been baptized in 1617, Mark Foster would have been about twenty-seven years old at his death in 1644, leaving only a short amount of time to accumulate stock. Also, Mark Foster's inventory was made on 2 May 1644, about a month after Parliamentarians began their siege at York.<sup>35</sup> This siege would have restricted goods and communication to and from outside the city, being detrimental to business, and possibly an explanation for Foster's meagre stock. While these two factors are the primary causes for the size differential between the two Fosters' shops, there may have been another contributing factor. In Peter Clark's work on book ownership in Kent, he argues that the 1590s and 1600s had experienced a 'breakthrough' of book ownership

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<sup>33</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trades*, p. 37.

<sup>34</sup> Welford, 'Bookseller's Stock', p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trades*, p. 39.

among all townspeople.<sup>36</sup> If these decades did witness an explosion of interest in book ownership, this may account for the large shops of Foster and Harte. It may also explain why provincial bookshops decreased in size by the 1620s, this decrease lasting until the eighteenth century. For instance, when trying to compare both Harte and Foster to other provincial lists of similar shop size and value, the first example appears in John Benson's shop of Penrith in 1698.<sup>37</sup> It may have been that the combination of increased numbers of provincial booksellers and decreased or steady interest in book ownership in the middle of the seventeenth century resulted in smaller sized book shops.

	<b>John Foster (York, 1616)</b>	<b>Mark Foster (York, 1644)</b>
<b>Total Shop Value</b>	£163 15s. 8d.	£25 12s. 0d.
<b>Total Stock Value</b>	£144 16s. 4d.	£22 0s. 0d.
<b>Value of Binding Tools</b>	£8 6s. 6d.	£1 11s.4d.

There also survives an inventory from Hull in 1644 in the Hull City Archives.<sup>38</sup> John Awdley was a bookseller in the town who was regularly absent from his business. In February 1644, the Mayor and Burgesses of Hull sued Awdley for £40, the price of his bond, because "he is gone out of the town and is not now to be found".<sup>39</sup> Consequently, an inventory was taken of his goods on 29 July 1644, by seven men of differing trades, such as mercers, a goldsmith and a merchant. None of the men were stationers or

<sup>36</sup> Clark, 'The Ownership of Books in England'.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Isaac, 'An inventory of books sold by a seventeenth-century Penrith grocer', in *History of the Book Trade in the North* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> Hull City Records Office (BRS/39 and BRS/39/1).

<sup>39</sup> C.W. Chilton, 'The Inventory of a Provincial Bookseller's Stock of 1644', *The Library* s6-I, no. 2 (1979), p.126.

professionals of the book trade, and the descriptions of the books are often vague and unclear.

C.W. Chilton has published a transcription of the inventory in the *Library* journal and, because this list is beyond the scope of my research's primary focus, I will be basing much of the comparisons on Chilton's identifications. John Awdley's stock contained 832 copies, but only 160 or so of the titles may be identified because of the descriptions of the assessors. The stock consisted of mostly school books (44%), including classical authors and Greek texts that corresponded with the curriculum in Hull's grammar school.<sup>40</sup> In John Foster's 1616 shop, school books represented about 20% of stock, while Harte's shop in Exeter 77% of identifiable books were school books.

There is a great diversity of subject matter in Awdley's stock-list, much like that of John Foster. There are a number of books of literature, poetry, law, medicine, travel, and others. The largest proportion of Awdley's stock was in religious works (46.3%), which is similar to Foster's (38.7%). Also, like Foster, Harte and other seventeenth-century booksellers, the majority of Awdley's stock was printed in England, including many of the Latin texts. There were only a few titles that had been printed abroad, most of which originated from Dutch and Swiss printing centres, with three titles coming from Germany and one each from Paris and Urbino. Despite some Latin and Greek texts, the majority of the stock was printed in English intended for those wishing to read in their vernacular.

Though much of his stock is recently published, John Awdley's shop contained a number of the same titles that may be found on Foster's inventory. Excluding popular

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<sup>40</sup> Chilton, 'Provincial Bookseller's Stock', pp. 129-142; and John Lawson, *A Town Grammar School through Six Centuries* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 112-117.

school books, like works by Cicero and Ovid, Awdley and Foster share nine titles in common: Jean Calvin's *Institutes*, Henry Swinburne's *A brief treatise of testaments and last willes*, Gervase Markham's *Cheape and good husbandry*, Lewis Bayly's *The practise of pietie*, Mathurin Cordier's *Corderius dialogues*, Samuel Smith's *Davids blessed man*, John Hart's *The burning bush not consumed*, Lancelot Andrewes's *Totura Torti*, and Thomas Sorocold's *Supplications of saints*.

Robert Booth was a stationer in Warrington from the early seventeenth century until his death in 1648.<sup>41</sup> Little is known of Booth, but he maintained a substantial stock of 239 titles and over 1,100 copies. His stock, like those of many other provincial booksellers, was composed of a large selection of school books, such as *ABC's* and *Accidences*, many of which were from classical authors including Cicero, Ovid, Seneca, Terence and Virgil to name a few. A unique characteristic of Booth's school books is the high numbers of Greek titles, including three copies of Clenard's Greek grammar, six copies of Aesop's *Fables*, eight copies of a Greek bible, and many others.

Booth's stock has much in common with John Foster's stock in 1616 York. Like Foster, Booth's shop was made up of a great variety of subject categories, but school books and religious works were the most popular types of print. Booth, like Foster, held copies of popular religious works such as Thomas Becon's *The Sickmans Salve* and *Davids Blessed Man* by Samuel Smith. There was also an interest in travel and the New World. While Foster's shop contained André Thevet's *The new found worlde* and Marc Lescarbot's *Noua Francia*, Booth's shop contained John Brereton's *A brief and true Relation of the Discovery of the North Part of Virginia*. Booth's shop, like Foster's, held

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<sup>41</sup> W.H. Rylands, 'Booksellers and Stationers in Warrington', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 37 (1888 for 1885), pp. 74-115.

histories, like Thomas May's *Henry II*, and books on hobbies, like Henry Peacham's *Art of Drawing*. There may be indications of a second-hand book trade or inherited a large number of titles, as Booth's shop contained 118 'olde books'. While there are many similarities in the subject matter found on both Booth's and Foster's stock-lists, the copy price of Booth's stock was significantly more expensive than John Foster's thirty years earlier.

As one might expect, the extant booksellers' stock-lists for the 1640s provide evidence of the general economic difficulties in those years. At a time when the London printers were pouring out ever-increasing numbers of political pamphlets, the general business of provincial tradesmen was badly disrupted. Provincial booksellers would have found it increasingly difficult to obtain stock and carry on normal business relations with their contacts in the capital. This being the case, it is important to recognise the degrees of continuity between this decade and the early seventeenth century. The reliance on London remained, despite the political differences. Similarly, the shops of the 1640s, though smaller, continued to stock a wide range of material. In this respect, we can see that the changes charted in this chapter were irreversible.

**V.**  
**School books**

In the next three chapters, we turn to a more detailed examination of the marketplace for books in English provincial towns. As we've seen, over the course of a century and a half from the beginning of the sixteenth century, the business of provincial booksellers did witness a steady expansion. By the seventeenth century, they were able to carry both a larger stock and a far larger range of titles. Whereas the most ambitious attempt to open a large general shop in the provinces, Roger Ward's shop in Shrewsbury, had been a spectacular failure, by the seventeenth century provincial shops were prospering by catering to a wide variety of tastes for a diverse clientele.

For all that, the steady core of their business remained the reliable markets that had been the bedrock of the trade almost from the first days of print: the markets in religious books and school books. The following chapters will examine these markets in more detail, explaining why these trades played such a large part in underpinning the provincial book market and how they changed over time. This will be contrasted with one market, in which provincial booksellers made only a modest impact, the market for large books of history, science and medicine. These contrasts help further elucidate the relationship between the provincial trade and the wider national and international book market.

The sixteenth century witnessed a rapid expansion in the number of grammar schools throughout England.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of new schools had far-reaching effects on Tudor and Stuart England, contributing to a significant increase of literacy across most levels of society. This increase in literacy had a direct effect on the book trade by providing booksellers with a wider, more diverse customer base. The establishment of grammar schools had another direct effect on the English book trade. These new schools brought new students, whose required reading formed a new market for school books. Every bookseller in provincial England depended heavily upon school books as reliable sellers to increase their profits, perhaps even to keep them solvent. School books were a staple of the early modern English book trade.

Even before the Reformation, there is evidence of a significant growth in the number of grammar schools. This increase, which began around the turn of the sixteenth century, is evident in the diocese of York. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the number of grammar schools remained fairly constant. Beginning in 1500, however, there is clear evidence of an educational boom. In the period of 1501-1525, the number of grammar schools in the diocese of York had doubled. There were at least three times as many grammar schools at the beginning of the sixteenth century than as at any previous time.<sup>2</sup>

Though this increase in the number of schools began before the Reformation, the educational movement progressed rapidly after 1540. In Yorkshire, there were approximately twenty-five grammar schools established before 1500, while fifteen or sixteen additional schools were established during the reign of Elizabeth alone. It has

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<sup>1</sup> Jo Ann Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548: Learning, Literacy and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton, 1985), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-102.

been estimated that there were 300–400 endowed schools in England between 1560 and 1640, with potentially as many schools which did not enjoy the same official status.<sup>3</sup>

With the increase in the number of grammar schools, education expanded and became accessible to larger portions of society. With more schools available, more students were able to take advantage of education. The number of students each school taught varied widely, but typically ranged from about fifty to a hundred students in larger towns. The school in Norwich in 1566 had ninety or one hundred students, Ipswich had just over one hundred students in the 1570s, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne had eighty students in 1577, which was about one quarter of all school-aged boys in the town.<sup>4</sup> Shrewsbury School had significantly more students than other provincial grammar schools. In 1581, Shrewsbury School had 360 students, meaning it had more students than the Merchant Taylors' school had in London (250 in the 1560s and 275 in the 1650s).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ian Green, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education* (Aldershot, 2009), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> G.K. Blyth, *The Norwich Guide and Directory* (London, 1842), pp. 175–176; I.E. Gray and W.E. Potter, *Ipswich School, 1400–1950* (Ipswich, 1950), p. 39; and Brian Mains and Anthony Tuck (eds.), *Royal Grammar School Newcastle upon Tyne: A History of the School in its Community* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1986), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> J. Basil Oldham, *A History of Shrewsbury School, 1552–1952* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 7 and 28; and H.B. Wilson, *The History of Merchant-Taylors' School from its foundation to the present time, Vol. 1* (London, 1812), p. 323.

School Location	Year	No. of Students
London (Merchant Taylors') <sup>6</sup>	1560s	250
Norwich <sup>7</sup>	1566	90-100
Ipswich <sup>8</sup>	1570s	100+
Newcastle-upon-Tyne <sup>9</sup>	1577	80
Shrewsbury <sup>10</sup>	1581	360
Scarborough & Dedham <sup>11</sup>	Late 1500s	20-30
London (Merchant Taylors') <sup>12</sup>	1650s	275

Though we know that there were grammar schools spread through England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, what is more difficult to ascertain is the curricula for these schools. The grammar school curricula that do survive are remarkably similar and emphasize classical and humanist learning. Before the Reformation, English schools largely focused upon Latin learning. Taking their cue from Cardinal Wolsey's 1528 statutes and the curricula at Eton and Winchester in 1530, students read Stanbridge's *Accidence* as well as Lily's grammar at the beginning of their education, progressing towards works in Latin by classical authors, such as Cicero, and humanist authors, such as Erasmus and Valla.<sup>13</sup> After 1540, the works of Erasmus, Valla and Vives no longer feature so prominently in curricula, though they did regain some popularity in the seventeenth century. Instead, texts from classical authors and English grammarians form the basis of grammar school curricula in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, *Merchant-Taylors' School*, p. 323.

<sup>7</sup> Blyth, *Norwich Guide*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>8</sup> Gray and Potter, *Ipswich School*, p. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Mains and Tuck (eds.), *Royal Grammar School Newcastle upon Tyne*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Oldham, *Shrewsbury School*, pp. 7 and 28.

<sup>11</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *Merchant-Taylors' School*, p. 323.

<sup>13</sup> Moran, *Growth of English Schooling*, p. 63.

In early modern England, students began their grammar school studies by learning from school books and catechisms printed in English.<sup>14</sup> These beginners would study using *The ABCs with Catechism* and *The English Schoolmaster* along with other English grammars, primers, spelling books and hornbooks. Judging from the texts used, the purpose of the first form of a grammar school in England was to teach the students the alphabet, how to read, and perhaps how to write in English. At the same time, these works instructed the students on the Christian catechism. This ensured that anyone who was able to read or write would have been familiar with the tenets of the Christian faith. Catechisms included basic statements of belief such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed. English grammars and catechisms were absolutely essential in early modern education. Not only were they used by students of grammar schools or other formal schools, they were also used by students intent on educating themselves, and those who received instruction from family members or neighbours.

Although all of these English grammars and catechisms shared a common purpose, some were more widely used in grammar schools. The most popular English grammar in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century was *The ABCs with Catechism*, which went through hundreds of editions from 1536-1729.<sup>15</sup> *The ABCs with Catechism* could be found in several variant forms, depending on which of the additional texts were included with the basic texts. Most editions, however, included the Lord's Prayer, graces before meals, and questions and answers on religious topics.

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<sup>14</sup> See Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 40-41; M. Claire Cross, 'The Free Grammar School of Leicester' in H.P.R. Finberg, *Department of English Local History, Occasional Papers, No. 4* (Leicester, 1953), pp. 26-27; and H.W. Saunders, *History of the Norwich Grammar School* (Norwich, 1932), pp. 144-148 for grammar school curricula.

<sup>15</sup> Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 183-184.

The popularity of *The ABCs with Catechism* can be seen in the stock-lists from provincial booksellers. Robert Scott in Norwich ordered a total of eighty-one copies of *The ABCs with Catechism*, while Roger Ward had twenty-five copies available in his shop in 1585.<sup>16</sup> John Foster's 1616 York shop contained 192 copies of the text, and almost certainly Michael Harte's 198 untitled school books in 1615 Exeter would have included some copies of *The ABCs with Catechism*. Even in the small town of Kirkby Lonsdale, James Backhouse's shop contained over fifteen copies in 1578. Considering provincial booksellers generally preferred to hold only a small number of copies per title, the number of available copies of *The ABCs with Catechism* is significant. For a provincial bookseller to hold nearly 200 copies of one title shows that the title was a high-volume seller. Certainly, some of these booksellers would have been the official supplier of the local grammar school. In contrast, when *The ABCs with Catechism* is absent from stock, it likely indicates that this privilege was held by another bookseller.

Hornbooks were another educational tool used to instruct beginners. Hornbooks, popular from the fifteenth century, were used to teach students the alphabet and how to read.<sup>17</sup> The hornbook was a piece of parchment attached to a wooden board or paddle. Written upon the parchment would be lessons, such as the letters of the alphabet or simple word combinations. Many of these hornbooks also taught elements of catechism as well, including common features like the Lord's Prayer and Apostle's Creed.<sup>18</sup> Hornbooks appear less frequently in the provincial inventories than *The ABCs with Catechism*; in total, only three stock-lists contain copies of hornbooks. John Foster's

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<sup>16</sup> Scott, 'sex libros Alphabeticos noues Abces', Inventory no. 161, 'viginti et quinque libros Alphabeticos vocotos the Halfe Abces', Inventory no. 267, 'quinquaginta libros Alphabeticos vocatos Abces', Inventory no. 348; and Ward, '25 A.B.C. single Dussin', Inventory no. 847.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew W. Tuer, *History of the Horn Book* (London, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> Tuer, *Horn Book*.

1616 York stock contained eight copies, while there were only two copies in Roger Sankey's Ormskirk shop and a single copy in Christopher Hunt's Exeter shop.<sup>19</sup> Not only do hornbooks appear less frequently in stock-lists, but, when hornbooks are present, there are only a few copies. If we look specifically at John Foster's shop, which contained both types of school books, the significant differences become readily apparent – 192 copies of *The ABCs with Catechism* compared to eight hornbooks.

Once a student had grasped the fundamental competencies of reading and writing in English, they would begin to learn Latin. The texts used to teach students the basics and rules of Latin varied from school to school, but usually included works such as *Sententiae Pueriles*, *Confabulaciones Pueriles*, Aesop's *Fables*, or Latin works by Cato. Each of these works contained short phrases or sentences that allowed students to expand their Latin vocabulary while mastering the more technical aspects of the language.<sup>20</sup>

The *Sententiae Pueriles* and *Confabulaciones Pueriles* were the first Latin texts a student would have studied after grasping *The ABCs with Catechism*. *Confabulaciones Pueriles* was a student's first Latin conversation book, while *Sententiae Pueriles* contained simple Latin constructs and sentences to help students learn the basic rules of the language. It also included extensive rules of behaviour for children, exercising their command of the language while also encouraging good and moral conduct.<sup>21</sup> Both of these works can be seen on the provincial booksellers' stock-lists. Robert Scott in Norwich ordered a total of forty-two copies of *Confabulaciones Pueriles* over a two year

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<sup>19</sup> Hunt, 'horne absye', Inventory no. 944; Sankey, 'ii Horn book', Inventory no. 1015; and Foster, 'Horne Bookes viij', Inventory no. 1878.

<sup>20</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> Foster Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660* (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 358-359.

period, while Roger Ward in Shrewsbury had sixty-seven copies in his shop in 1585.<sup>22</sup>

*Sententiae Pueriles* occurs much less frequently on the stock-lists, appearing only in Roger Sankey's shop in Ormskirk, which carried nine copies.<sup>23</sup> The title is even absent from the shop of Henry Bynneman, who was in possession of the patent to print *Sententiae Pueriles*.<sup>24</sup>

Aesop's *Fables* was a popular school book in Europe in both the Middle Ages and early modern period. It provided students in the lower forms with basic instruction in Latin, and it was used to teach Latin and Greek in higher forms. The fantasy stories of Aesop gave schoolboys a respite from the rote memorisation of Latin rules and taught them valuable lessons in morality at the same time. Though *Fables* was an incredibly popular text in England, in its original Greek as well as its Latin and English translations, most editions of the work were imported from Continental Europe. Before 1600, there were 625 separate editions of Aesop's *Fables* printed in Europe; only twenty-two of these editions were printed in England (3.5%).<sup>25</sup> Due to the popularity of the text, particularly its use by most schoolboys and girls, this is a strikingly low number. Of these twenty-two editions printed in England, eight were English translations. These English translations may not have been used in the classrooms; instead, they were likely read for entertainment by adults. This suggests that the English book trade in the sixteenth century relied partially on European imports even to meet the demands for popular school books. The booksellers' stock-lists reflect this trend. The bilingual Latin and Greek copies of *Fables* sold from John Dorne's Oxford shop in 1520 as well as John Rastell and

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<sup>22</sup> Scott, 'Puerilium Confabulaciones', Inventory nos. 174, 211, 242 and 364; and Ward, 'Confabulaciones pueriles', Inventory nos. 606 and 849.

<sup>23</sup> Sankey, 'viiiij se... puerilis', Inventory no. 1012.

<sup>24</sup> Watson, *English Grammar Schools*, p. 359.

<sup>25</sup> USTC, search 'Aesop' [25 May 2012]; and USTC, search 'Aesop' and 'England' [25 May 2012].

Neville Mores's copies of the Latin translation certainly would have been imported. Even as late as the 1560s, Robert Scott had ordered one Greek and nine Latin copies from his wholesaler, who regularly supplied the bookseller with Continental editions.

While Latin and Greek translations of Aesop's *Fables* dominated English bookshops in the sixteenth century, by the seventeenth century the English translations had grown in popularity to supplant those printed in Latin and Greek. This trend begins in the late sixteenth century, as James Backhouse's 1578 Kirkby Lonsdale shop contained four copies of Aesop's *Fables* in English, with no copies in either Latin or Greek. In John Foster's 1616 York shop, there were twenty copies of the English translation of Aesop's *Fables* in octavo. In 1631, Thomas Buck, a Cambridge printer, was allowed to print a total of 12,000 copies of the English translation, in three print-runs of 4,000 copies each.<sup>26</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century, Aesop's *Fables* had been reproduced in over fifty English editions.<sup>27</sup> This number is particularly significant when it is compared to the mere eight English editions printed in the sixteenth century, suggesting that the *Fables* transitioned from a widely-used school book to a popular source of entertainment. As English translations of the *Fables* became more popular than the Greek or Latin versions, booksellers would have been able to receive this stock from a local English bookseller rather than import the text from the Continent.

John Stanbridge's *Accidence* was also a popular school book used by students in the early forms. Though it reached the height of its popularity in the 1530s, when political authorities began to prescribe approved school books and curricula, it appeared on booksellers' stock-lists as late as the seventeenth century. The Powell brothers had

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<sup>26</sup> Sydney Castle Roberts, *A History of Cambridge University Press, 1521-1921* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 164-165.

fifty copies of *Accidence* in their shop in 1553, James Backhouse's shop in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1578 had nineteen copies, Roger Ward's Shrewsbury shop in 1585 had eleven copies, Roger Sankey's Ormskirk shop held six copies in 1613, and John Foster's York shop had three in 1616.

John Stanbridge was an English grammarian whose works were produced for an English audience. Though Stanbridge's *Accidence* was a commonly used school book in England, there is little evidence to suggest it was used outside his native country. Before 1600, there were 156 editions of *Accidence* printed, 148 of which were printed in England. Only eight editions were printed outside England: one in Edinburgh, three in Rouen and four in Antwerp.<sup>28</sup> Mostly likely, the editions printed in Rouen and Antwerp were destined to be exported to England, as there were established trading relationships between printers and booksellers in Rouen, Antwerp and England. The edition printed in Edinburgh may have been used in Scotland, but, as seen in the example of Robert Waldegrave, occasionally English printers practiced their trade in Edinburgh, with their copies still destined for an English market.<sup>29</sup>

Another school book that would have been utilized by a substantial number of early modern students was William Lily's *A Shorte Introduction of Grammar*, the most commonly used grammar for three hundred years.<sup>30</sup> The grammar was divided into two parts: the first part was in English and the second part was in Latin. Rather than

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<sup>28</sup> USTC, search 'Stanbridge' [25 May 2012].

<sup>29</sup> Katherine S. Van Eerde, 'Robert Waldegrave: The Printer as Agent and Link Between Sixteenth-Century England and Scotland', *Renaissance Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1981), pp. 40-78.

<sup>30</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, p. 127.

encourage students to gain meaning or understanding from Latin, it instead presented students with a series of rules to memorise.<sup>31</sup>

Lily's grammar, unlike Stanbridge's *Accidence*, may have reached an audience outside England. Only about half of the editions of Lily's grammars were printed in England. In the first half of the sixteenth century, most of the editions were printed in either Paris or Antwerp, and both of these printing centres regularly exported books to England in the sixteenth century.<sup>32</sup> Though many of these editions were largely intended for English consumption, some may have remained on the Continent. By 1570, however, all of Lily's grammars were being printed solely in England.

The only provincial bookseller's stock-list to include copies of Lily's *Grammar* is Robert Scott of Norwich. As we have seen, Scott's stock-list was not an inventory of his shop, but a list of all the books he purchased from his wholesaler, Abraham Veale. This is an important distinction to keep in mind, particularly when we evaluate Lily's *Grammar*. Scott placed thirteen orders for a total of 115 copies of the grammar, which means it must have been a popular title and a reliable seller. The Cambridge bookseller John Sheres also recorded the sale of multiple copies of Lily's *Grammar*. It is interesting that this book tends to feature more in lists of sales and orders than remaining stock. This was the sort of text with which provincial booksellers could achieve rapid turnover and was all the more valuable to their trade for that reason. It is clear that William Lily's *Grammar* was an incredibly popular school book, so much so that it would sell out of a provincial bookseller's shop. Robert Scott ordered more copies of Lily's *Grammar* than almost every other book (second only to 550 copies of 'catechisms').

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<sup>31</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, p. 128.

<sup>32</sup> USTC, search 'Lily, William' [25 May 2012]; and USTC, search 'Lily, William' and 'England' [25 May 2012].

After a student mastered both English and the rudiments of Latin, they would continue their education by studying dialogues and catechisms, such as Alexander Nowell's *Catechism* and humanist dialogues by Erasmus or Vives. The purpose of these textbooks was to help the student learn how to speak Latin and some Greek from texts confidently. The study of catechisms helped to instruct the student further in Christian doctrine.<sup>33</sup>

Nowell's *Catechism* was the most popular catechism in early modern England, and was prescribed by virtually all schools as an integral part of the grammar school curricula. The last thirty years of the sixteenth century saw Nowell's *Catechism* reprinted twenty-five times.<sup>34</sup> The *Catechism* appears often in stock-lists after 1570 – Roger Ward held thirty-four copies, Roger Sankey had four copies, and John Foster held ten copies. Michael Harte's shop certainly would most likely have contained copies of Nowell's *Catechism*, but the lack of titles provided by the inventory makes that impossible to prove.

Once a student had learned how to conduct a dialogue in Latin, they continued their education by learning the basics of Greek and beginning to translate and work with original texts. Greek grammars were used throughout the upper forms in early modern grammar schools, which suggests that the more advanced students might have been able to work with Greek original texts as well as Latin. This focus upon classical learning and reading texts in their original language was one consequence of the humanist influence on sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century education.

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<sup>33</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>34</sup> USTC, search 'Nowell' and 'Catechism' [25 May 2012].

In the booksellers' stock-lists, Greek grammars are rarely identified by specific title or author; most of the time they are recorded simply as 'Greek grammar' or some similar denotation.<sup>35</sup> Though this is problematic for any attempt at detailed analysis, it is striking that every provincial bookshop carried at least one grammar in Greek (the only exception is Michael Harte's inventory which does not provide enough detail to know what language the numerous entries of 'school books' were in). In some cases, however, we do know the specific grammars that were for sale in the bookshop. Nicholas Clenard's *Grammar* in Greek can be found in four of the stock-lists surveyed. A single copy could be found in John Rastell's bookshop in 1538. Robert Scott of Norwich placed three orders for the grammar, for a total of five copies in a two year time span. Five copies were for sale in Roger Ward's shop in 1585 and four in John Foster's shop in 1616.<sup>36</sup>

These copies of Clenard's *Grammar* were intended for upper-form students in the local grammar schools. In the late sixteenth century, ordinances specifically required its use in Shrewsbury School.<sup>37</sup> Although the Norwich Educational Ordinance of 1566 does not mention Clenard's Greek grammar or any other Greek grammar, it does recommend reading the works of Greek authors in their original language.<sup>38</sup> Based on the holdings in Robert Scott's bookshop, it is reasonable to conclude that Clenard's *Grammar* may have been one of the Greek grammars used to teach students the skills they needed to translate the works of classical Greek authors.

<sup>35</sup> Sankey, 'xij greeke grammrs', Inventory no. 1005; and Foster, 'Greek Gramer j', Inventory no. 1403.

<sup>36</sup> Scott, 'Grammaticam Grecam Cleonardi', Inventories nos. 94, 306 and 366; Ward, 'i Clenardes gramar', Inventory no. 598, '4 Clenardes grammars with notes', Inventory no. 600; Foster, 'Clennardes Gramer', Inventory nos. 1394 and 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Watson, *English Grammar Schools*, p. 500.

<sup>38</sup> Saunders, *Norwich Grammar School*, pp. 144-148.

Most of the copies of Clenard's *Grammar* were imported from the Continent, as the text was not printed in London until the end of the sixteenth century. Of 326 European editions of the grammar in the sixteenth century, only six were printed in London. These six English editions were printed from 1582-1599, one edition about every three years.<sup>39</sup> All of the sixteenth-century references from provincial booksellers' stock-lists cited here pre-date these publications

Though copies of Clenard's *Grammar* could be found in bookshops in the seventeenth century, its popularity as a school book peaked in the sixteenth century. By the seventeenth century, it had been replaced by William Camden's *Greek Grammar*. First printed in 1597, the *Greek Grammar* went through about forty reprints before 1691.<sup>40</sup> John Foster in York carried three copies of Camden's *Greek Grammar*, and scholars are left to wonder whether the single copy of a Greek grammar in Christopher Hunt's 1603 Exeter shop or the twelve copies of a Greek grammar in Roger Sankey's Ormskirk shop were Camden or Clenard. If Camden's *Greek Grammar* had already surpassed Clenard's as the primary textbook, as it had after 1620, then these were probably copies of Camden's *Greek Grammar*.

In addition to learning the basics of Greek grammar, students in the higher forms of education would have been expected to read and translate Latin texts from classical authors. If curricula in Norwich, Shrewsbury and Leicester are any indication of the curricula found in other grammar schools in provincial towns, works by Cicero, such as *De Officiis* and *Epistolae ad familiars*, were central to the education of students in these upper forms. No other classical author rivals the dominant influence of Cicero on

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<sup>39</sup> USTC, search 'Clenardus' [25 May 2012].

<sup>40</sup> Watson, *English Grammar Schools*, pp. 500-502.

English education. England is no exception in this regard, as the writings of Cicero were fundamental to education throughout Europe.

Before 1600, approximately 4,144 editions of Cicero's works were printed in Europe; of these, only seventy-five editions were printed in England (1.8%). Compared to other countries like France (44.9%), Italy (17.2%), and the Netherlands (6%), England's percentage seems insignificant.<sup>41</sup> Although England's print output of Cicero's works was minuscule in the context of the European book trade, Cicero's importance to English education should not be underestimated. Particularly in the early sixteenth century, booksellers relied upon Continental imports of Cicero's texts to meet the demand in England. Only as the seventeenth century approached were English printers able to try to satisfy this demand themselves.

Works by Cicero can be found in each of the booksellers' stock-lists surveyed, whether from London, the universities or the provincial towns. In each of these lists, Cicero is overwhelmingly the most popular author of school books, by both title and copy count. These stock-lists do, however, demonstrate a striking shift in the printed language of Cicero's works. Most of the editions of Cicero's works printed in England in the first half of the sixteenth century were Latin publications. In the 1550s and 1560s, there was an increase in the number of English translations of Cicero. All of the eleven editions published in England in the 1550s and the 1560s were printed in English.<sup>42</sup> This shift can be seen in Robert Scott's stock-list from 1568-1570. In total, Scott ordered eleven batches of Cicero for a total of thirty-nine titles. Of these, seventeen copies were in English (43.6%) and twenty-two were in Latin, imported from Antwerp.

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<sup>41</sup> USTC, search 'Cicero' [25 May 2012].

<sup>42</sup> USTC, search 'Cicero', 'England' and '1550-1570' [25 May 2012].

By the 1580s, the wave of English translations of Cicero had run its course. There were thirty-three editions of Cicero printed in England between 1580 and 1600; of these, only two were printed in English (6.1%).<sup>43</sup> These too could be purchased in the provincial bookshops. Roger Ward's Shrewsbury shop in 1585 contained ninety-two copies of Cicero's works, and only one of these was in both English and Latin; the remainder were in Latin alone. John Foster's 1616 York shop contained fifty-one copies of Cicero, and only six of these were in English (11.8%). This suggests that these editions were being sold largely for use in the school room, rather than as part of one growing market in recreational literature.

Even though the popularity of English translations waxed and waned over time, there were still a higher proportion of vernacular translations of classical authors in England than in the other major countries of Europe. Using the example of Cicero, before 1600, 29.6% of all editions printed in England were in English. In France, 10.5% of the editions of Cicero were in French. Similarly, 8.6% of editions printed in Italy were in Italian and a mere 1.6% of Cicero's editions printed in the Netherlands were in Dutch.<sup>44</sup> This is not an isolated example, as England's preference for vernacular editions of classical texts outweighed other European countries. In the example of Ovid's works, in England, 60% of the editions were in English, compared to only 31.5% of French language editions from France, 25.6% of Italian language editions from Italy and 13.5%

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<sup>43</sup> USTC, search 'Cicero', 'England' and '1580-1601' [25 May 2012].

<sup>44</sup> USTC, search 'Cicero', 'England and English', 'France and French', 'Italy and Italian' and 'Low Countries and Dutch' [25 May 2012].

of Dutch language editions from the Netherlands.<sup>45</sup> Even 56.7% of editions of Virgil printed in England were in the vernacular.<sup>46</sup>

Country of Origin	Editions by Cicero printed in the Vernacular (%)	Editions by Ovid printed in the Vernacular (%)
England	29.6	60.5
France	10.6	34.2
Italy	11.1	38.9
The Netherlands	2.2	17.1

School books were absolutely vital to the trade of a provincial bookseller, as they were constant, steady sellers. Although sold for a relatively low cost, the high volume of school books would have allowed the bookseller to have a reliable source of income. There would always be new students who needed copies of *The ABCs with Catechism*, Stanbridge's *Accidence* or Cicero's *Epistles*. Though there was a second hand trade of used school books handed down from one student to other, these books saw heavy use and often fell apart. English schools needed thousands of new copies of school books each year.<sup>47</sup> Every year, perhaps thousands of school books were purchased by local booksellers, many of whom were located in provincial towns. Every bookseller or draper who participated in the book trade sold school books. School books were a safe and reliable source of income in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English book trade.

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<sup>45</sup> USTC, search 'Ovid', 'England and English', 'France and French', 'Italy and Italian' and 'Low Countries and Dutch' [25 May 2012].

<sup>46</sup> USTC, search 'Virgil' and 'England' [25 May 2012].

<sup>47</sup> Green, *Humanism and Protestantism*, p. 47.

**VI.**  
**Specialist Books**

During the course of the sixteenth century, many English scholars put together substantial and valuable collections of books. The evidence from inventories, normally compiled after the owner's decease, reveals the transformation that had occurred since the manuscript era. Whereas in the fourteenth century, few individuals owned more than a handful of books, and an Oxford or Cambridge college library seldom had more than a few hundred, by the late sixteenth century, an individual scholar could amass a sizeable library of one hundred, two hundred or three hundred books.

Some of these collections included an impressive number of scientific or medical texts. John Perman, a surgeon, left 220 books when he died in 1545. These include over one hundred medical books, including texts by all the major authors popular on the continent; Galen, Hippocrates, Avicenna, and modern authors such as Gesner and Champier.<sup>1</sup> David Tolley, who died in 1558, left a similar though smaller collection including at least five separate works by Galen and the *De medica materia* of Dioscorides.<sup>2</sup>

All of these inventories have two things in common. They represent the collections of men educated in the universities, and sometimes making a career there; and the collections are overwhelmingly comprised of books published abroad. The demand for scholarly and specialist texts in Oxford, Cambridge and London made it cost efficient for local booksellers to maintain a stock of expensive texts for use among practitioners of

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<sup>1</sup> Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, pp. 49-55.

<sup>2</sup> R.J. Fehrenback and E.S. Leedham-Green, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book-Lists*, Vol. 3, PLRE 67-86 (Bingampton, NY, 1994), pp. 36-44.

medicine and those who maintained a scholarly interest in science. This was not so in the English provinces. Many graduates of Oxford and Cambridge would in due course settle in the further reaches of the English counties. But the core of their book collections had often been accumulated already during the years of study, and for any additional purchases they may have maintained their connection with booksellers in the capital and the university towns.

This left only a very modest residual market for provincial booksellers. No doubt they would be happy to procure individual books for favoured customers; but they could not take the risk of stocking books of this nature in the hope of a walk-in sale. The few references we have to books of this sort are therefore likely to be the shadowy remains of a small trade; books ordered by customers who then, for some reason, failed to take delivery, or perhaps books received back as second-hand stock from local sales. This then is far from the normal stock of provincial booksellers.

### **Medical Works**

The nature of medical practice in the early modern period created a large and varied market for printed texts. This reflects a basic and enduring schism in the professional treatment of disease.<sup>3</sup> Professional physicians were trained in the universities, and practiced an academic medicine based on a largely Latinate scholarly literature. Their services were expensive and outside the budget of most householders. So in addition to a Latin, scholarly literature, most householders practiced a degree of self-help, adding even to the most modest collections one or two vernacular medical texts. Thus, although medical works appear to draw from a highly specialised market,

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 40-45.

they in fact are split between two different customer bases: the highly technical works for medical professionals, and the more general reference materials for household needs. As we will see, the technical manuals, designed for the professional market, will differ greatly in language, origin and price from the household reference materials.

'Medical books' could include a range of works, from reference texts on how to perform simple treatments to detailed accounts of surgical procedures. The genre also includes everyday texts such as almanacs, the mainstay of many printers, which provided limited direction on concocting remedies and other basic medical treatments.<sup>4</sup> In its treatment of medical books, this study will not discuss works whose topics include animal medicine or husbandry, and it will also exclude works on astrology and almanacs. Certainly these texts had medical value. Guides such as *Cheap and good husbandry* by Gervase Markham and *The first booke of cattell* by Leonard Mascall provided useful veterinary information and were available in John Foster's shop.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, works of astrology were widely available throughout England, and many of these texts provided medicinal information and instruction. But critically, these works do not focus purely on human medicine. Here we follow the guidance of Paul Slack in his work on vernacular medical literature. 'Medical books' are those that are "deliberately and largely devoted to the description, analysis or treatment of human health and disease".<sup>6</sup>

Unlike other European countries, medical texts were a limited component of the English print trade. Of the 12,037 medical books printed before 1600 listed in the

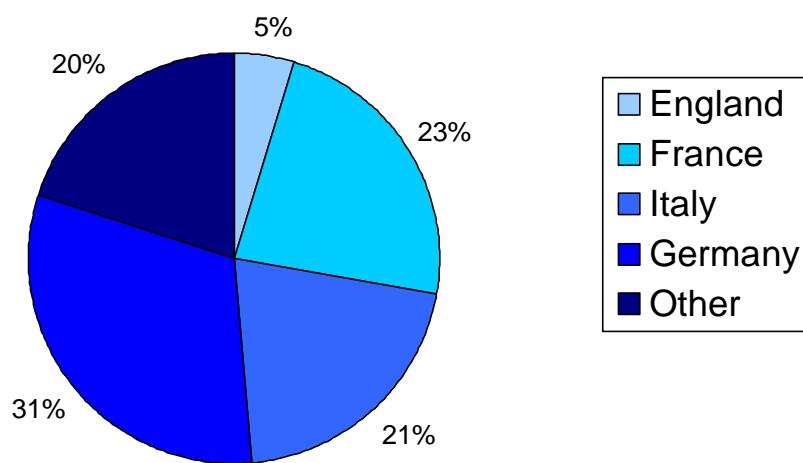
<sup>4</sup> Allan Chapman, 'Astrological Medicine' in Charles Webster (ed.), *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 275.

<sup>5</sup> Foster, 'Markham's Husbandry i', Inventory no. 1266; and Foster, 'Mascall of Chattell ij', Inventory no. 1205.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Slack, 'Mirrors of Health and Treasures of Poor Men: the uses of the vernacular medical literature of Tudor England' in Charles Webster (ed.), *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 238.

*Universal Short Title Catalogue*, only 561 were printed in England (4.7%).<sup>7</sup> This is a very small proportion compared to other European countries. France, for instance, printed 2,787 medical books (23.2%), while Italy produced 2,515 (20.9%) and Germany printed 3,781 medical books (31.4%).<sup>8</sup> English printing centres produced far fewer medical books than their Continental counterparts because England had little role in the Latin book trade. Over half of the medical books produced in Europe in the sixteenth century were printed in Latin.<sup>9</sup> English booksellers imported the majority of their Latin works because English printers simply were not in a position to compete, and the trade in medical books conformed to this model. Of the 561 medical books printed in England, 518 were in English (92.3%).<sup>10</sup>

### Printing of Medical Books in Europe



<sup>7</sup> USTC, search ‘Medical books’ and ‘England’ [25 May 2012].

<sup>8</sup> USTC, search ‘Medical books’, ‘France’, ‘Italy’ and ‘Holy Roman Empire’ [25 May 2012].

<sup>9</sup> USTC, search ‘Medical books’ and ‘Latin’ [25 May 2012].

<sup>10</sup> USTC, search ‘Medical books’, ‘England’ and ‘English’ [25 May 2012].

The prevailing medical culture in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England necessitated that a number of medical texts be available in the vernacular. It was a medical culture that was based on “the transformation of learned medicine into a popularly accessible form, whilst still preserving the impression that there was a learned medicine, a higher level of expertise.”<sup>11</sup> All members of society were expected to have some medical knowledge. It was recommended that people have basic skills, such as how to make a diagnosis or a remedy, so that they might treat themselves if they did not have access to a medical professional.<sup>12</sup>

This knowledge was also necessary because of the inadequacies of English medical provision. Few English doctors received a university education. Doctors who attended university did so abroad, in countries like France and Italy. Many of these doctors would have congregated in London to seek a more lucrative practice, leaving a dearth of educated medical practitioners in the provincial towns. The doctors who did live and work in provincial towns would have received their training as apprentices to barber-surgeons or apothecaries. Norwich, for example, had seventy-five practicing doctors from 1570-1590. Only five of those doctors had attended university (6.7%).<sup>13</sup>

Doctors in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England had poor reputations. They were frequently denounced for their ignorance and often blamed for their inability to treat ailments. Recurring outbreaks of plague further damaged the status of doctors within the community. Early modern medicine was ill-equipped to treat these outbreaks

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<sup>11</sup> Wear, *English Medicine*, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Irma Taavitsainen and Paivi Pahta (eds.), *Medical Writing in Early Modern English* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 114.

<sup>13</sup> Roy Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society in England, 1550-1860* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 6.

and other fatal diseases. During the 1665 plague, more members of the College of Physicians fled from London than those who stayed to treat the sufferers.<sup>14</sup>

Doctors in early modern England largely practiced ‘external medicine’, as few surgeons operated on their patients. Operations were risky procedures before the invention of anaesthetics and the development of sterilization techniques; rather, doctors and surgeons practiced bloodletting, bandaged wounds, pulled teeth, lanced boils and mended broken bones and dislocated joints. Patients who did have serious internal illnesses, such as those of the heart or liver, were treated using medicines and remedies.<sup>15</sup> Many of these treatments could be performed with a basic understanding of medical practices, and the printing of medical texts provided readers with this knowledge.

English provincial booksellers included in their stock a smattering of vernacular medical works printed in England for general public consumption, supplemented with a very small number of imported Latin texts. In total, there are only thirty-one medical titles and thirty-two copies found on the provincial booksellers’ stock-lists. Of these, fifteen were printed in English in London, and fourteen were printed in Latin from all over Europe, including Paris, Lyon, Venice, Antwerp and Frankfurt.

In sixteenth-century Europe, the most renowned medical author was Galen, as sixteenth-century medicine was primarily based on the medical knowledge of the Greeks and Romans.<sup>16</sup> His copious works on the four humours and the balance of human health were published in approximately 590 editions in the sixteenth century alone.<sup>17</sup> Few of those 590 editions found their way into English provincial bookshops. Though there

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<sup>14</sup> Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society*, p. 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Wear, *Knowledge and Practice*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Lane Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in Early Modern England* (Rochester, 2002), pp. 3-4.

were two copies of a work by Galen in John Foster's shop in York in 1616, his works are largely absent in the stock-lists. It is instead Galen's influence as a practitioner and thinker that appears.

For instance, both Roger Ward's and John Foster's shops contain *Guido's Questions* by the fourteenth-century French physician Guy de Chauliac. *Guido's Questions* was the 1579 English translation of a popular anatomy work entitled *Chirurgia magna*. This 1579 edition included the third and fourth 'Booke of Galen', and it is this edition that can be found in both Ward's and Foster's shop.<sup>18</sup> The title itself contains remedy ingredients collected from a variety of Arabic, Greek, medieval and early modern works. It also stresses the importance that all surgeons should have anatomical knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

Another title that appears on multiple stock-lists is Thomas Elyot's *The Castle of Health*. This work, which could be found in Christopher Hunt's Exeter shop in 1603 and Robert Scott's 1568-1570 shop, offered a series of recommendations on diet and exercise. To improve mental health and avoid illness *The Castle of Health* recommends a combination of counselling, healthy diet and herbal remedies.<sup>20</sup> Unlike the anatomical and surgical work of *Guido's Questions*, it is likely that Elyot's *The Castle of Health* would have appealed to both medical professionals and concerned householders.

There were also some medical texts that were solely marketed to householders and women in particular. The best example of this can be seen in the women's guide to midwifery, *The Birth of Mankind*. Divided into four parts, this was the most popular midwifery book of the sixteenth century, with ten editions printed between 1540 and

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<sup>18</sup> Guy de Chauliac, *Guidos questions newly corrected* (London, 1579), STC 12469.

<sup>19</sup> Wear, *Knowledge and Practice*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>20</sup> Donna Woodford, *Understanding King Lear* (Westport, 2004), p. 45.

1604. *The Birth of Mankind* is an English work that uses occasional Latin terms, making it the most advanced technical manual for women. As such, this work demanded a higher level of literacy than the other guides to midwifery.<sup>21</sup> Though only one copy of *The Birth of Mankind* can be found on John Foster's stock-list, it appears in addition to many other 'women's' books that provide evidence of both female literacy and interest in medicine. *The Birth of Mankind* was an early modern bestseller, and as Foster's shop contained numerous works for women, it is likely this work was a recurring and popular item of stock.

In each case, the provincial booksellers chose to stock their shelves with only one or two copies of each medical title. Unlike schools books, which were consistent sellers, medical books were for a specialist market and were unlikely to sell quickly. The books found on the provincial booksellers' stock-lists were not new; instead, many of them had been printed years before. For instance, the sole medical text found on Christopher Hunt's 1603 Exeter inventory was printed in 1595 – eight years earlier. The average age for a medical book in Roger Ward's Shrewsbury inventory of 1585 was nine years, while the average age of the medical books in John Foster's York shop in 1616 was thirty-six years. Foster, in particular, had medical texts dating back to the 1530s and 1540s, while the most recent text was from 1610, six years before the stock-list was created. These were most likely texts that Foster had either received as a part of a bulk local purchase (presumably of a deceased local citizen) or bought second hand. Their presence on his shelves was unlikely to have been part of conscious stocking policy on his part.

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<sup>21</sup> Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (eds.), *Women, Science and Medicine, 1500-1700* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 40-41.

We can also see from Foster's stock-list, that highly technical medical manuals were prohibitively costly for non-medical professionals. For instance, a copy of *Guido's Questions* in quarto was priced at 4s. 8d., and a copy of *Consilia medicinalia* in folio cost 4s. These two titles are particularly costly when compared to other, more accessible medical texts found in the shop. *The Castle of Health*, the dietary guide, had a price of 12d., and the midwifery work *The Birth of Mankind* had a price of 20d. Though these two works were not cheap, they were certainly more accessible to customers with limited budgets than technical manuals, like *Guido's Questions*.

Another striking observation that emerges from an analysis of the medical works in the provincial stock-lists is the absence of those contemporary authors who revolutionized medicine. No stock-list contains the works of Paracelsus, the father of toxicology who rejected the concept of the four humours and promoted the use of chemistry in medicine.<sup>22</sup> There were 249 editions of the works of Paracelsus published in the sixteenth century. Only six of these editions were printed in English, which suggests that English customers would only have had access to his ideas from imported Latin editions. This contrasts with the very high number of contemporary German translations of his works.<sup>23</sup> Other notable medical revolutionaries like Andreas Vesalius, the father of modern anatomy, are also absent from provincial stock-lists.

This brief analysis suggests two things: first, the inherited medical knowledge of the ancients and mediaeval writers continued to dominate the book market in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and, second, there was no viable market for expensive medical texts in provincial England. In private libraries, which will be

<sup>22</sup> Hugh D. Crone, *Paracelsus: the man who defied medicine* (Melbourne, 2004), pp. 175-176.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Webster, *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time* (London, 2008); and USTC, search 'Paracelsus' and 'English' [25 May 2012].

discussed further in a later chapter, the medical books that do appear are found in either the libraries of doctors or the libraries of upper class women or medical professionals such as midwives. Many of the more affluent customers had direct access to the London market. There was little here to encourage provincial booksellers to develop a more substantial stock.

### **Law Books**

Like medical books, the market for law books was highly specialised. Unlike medical books, there was no market beyond the legal profession. There were, however, lawyers in every major town in England, and these lawyers needed statute books and legal codes to practice their craft. Though the market for law books was not large, it was extensive; most provincial booksellers' stock-lists included a selection of legal texts.

In stock-lists from the early sixteenth century, law books make up a significant proportion of the total stock. For instance, in John Rastell's London stock of 1538, 22.9% of his stock was composed of law books. Similarly, in Neville Mores's York shop in 1538, law books accounted for 31.0% of the stock. Even when examining early sixteenth century stock-lists from Oxford and Cambridge, legal texts made up approximately one-quarter to one-third of the total stock. As the sixteenth century progressed, however, the proportion of law books in the total stock declined. Only 3.8% of Robert Scott's orders for his Norwich bookshop were law books. Similarly, law books represented only 3.3% of the total stock of Roger Ward's Shrewsbury shop and a mere 1.5% of John Foster's York stock.

The decline in the proportion of law books found in bookshops in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has less to do with the decreasing popularity of legal texts and more to do with the increased popularity of leisure reading. This can be seen, for instance, when comparing the York shops of Mores and Foster. Both bookshops contained sixteen law books, while Foster's shop held double the number of copies. Mores's stock, however, is much smaller and offered far fewer titles than Foster's did eighty years later, and this is why the proportion of law books is significantly higher in Mores's shop. Law books garnered a higher percentage of the total stock because there was little market for diverse genres of texts in early sixteenth-century provincial England. In both York bookshops, the demand for law books was much the same; yet, by the seventeenth century, other genres of books had surpassed legal texts in popularity and marketability.

While there was a decline in the proportion of law books found in an English bookseller's shop, there was also a change in the types of titles on offer. Friedman's work has shown that before 1500, 352 books of canon and civil law could be found in wills in northern England (10.7% of all books).<sup>24</sup> Works by John Andreas, Bartolus de Saxoferrato, William Durand and Gregory IX were particularly popular at this time. These authors' works were also held in early sixteenth-century bookshops. Neville Mores's shop, for example, contained John Andreas's *Questiones mercuriales*, William Durand's *Repertorium sive Breviarium aureum super Corpus juris canonici*, and Gregory IX's *Decretalium compilatio examussim castigate*. Mores's stock also included three

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<sup>24</sup> J.B. Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, 1995), p. 261-263.

different titles by Bartolus de Saxoferrato. The style and the types of law books found on Mores's stock-list strongly resemble the legal interests of fifteenth-century book owners.

Mores's shop contains no legal texts that may be classified as 'new', as each of the titles found on the stock-list are at least a decade old. Recently published law books, such as John Rastell's *Expositiones terminorum legume anglorum*, are absent. Rastell's work is an interesting omission, as it was a popular lexicon reprinted seventeen times before 1609 and appears regularly in Cambridge inventories until the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps Mores's customers were established lawyers with little need for a legal lexicon, or perhaps his stock had more appeal for ecclesiastical lawyers than those focusing on civil law. In general, when comparing the legal stock found in Mores's shop with Rastell's London shop, Mores's stock closely resembles medieval legal stock, while Rastell's is much more modern, largely due to his own work in the genre.

As the sixteenth century progressed, law books accounted for a diminishing proportion of the total stock found in a bookseller's shop. At the same time, Latin, which dominated the legal texts of the early sixteenth century, had been replaced by English (and, to a much lesser degree, law French) as the language of law. After 1550, Latin law books virtually disappear from booksellers' stocks. By the second half of the sixteenth century, new law books would replace their medieval ancestors in provincial bookshops across England.

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<sup>25</sup> Ian Lancashire, 'Law and Early Modern English Lexicons' in R.W. McConchie, Olga Timofeeva, Heli Tissari and Tanya Saily (eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 2005 Symposium on New Approaches in English Historical Lexis* (Somerville, 2006), p. 3; and Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, Vol. II, p. 655.

One of the new law books to gain popularity in the sixteenth century was Thomas Littleton's *Tenures*, one of the first law books exclusively concerned with English law.<sup>26</sup> There were a total of seventy-nine editions of the *Tenures* printed from 1525-1627. Littleton's *Tenures*, on the topic of property law, was an early modern bestseller. Editions of *Tenures* can be found in both English (65.8%) and law French (34.2%).

No edition of Littleton's *Tenures* can be found on booksellers' stock-lists from the first half of the sixteenth century. It does, however, appear with regularity on stock-lists in the second half of the sixteenth century. Roger Ward's Shrewsbury shop contained two copies of the *Tenures* in English and one copy of the work in law French. The Powell brothers' shop in London held one English copy in 1553, and John Sheres of Cambridge sold one English copy of *Tenures* from his store in 1572. Even John Foster held four copies of Littleton's *Tenures* in French in 1616.

Other popular law books found on the provincial booksellers' inventories include *The Duties of Constables* by William Lambard and *Le Courte Leete* by John Kitchin. Both of these works provided detailed accounts of the Tudor government and the civil and criminal court system.<sup>27</sup> The first edition of Lambard's *The Duties of Constables* was printed in 1581 and underwent a total of eighteen reprints before 1626, each of these editions printed in English at London. Roger Ward's bookshop in Shrewsbury contained twenty-nine copies of *The Duties of Constables*, and John Foster's shop carried eight copies. John Kitchin's *Le Courte Leete* was published in nine editions from 1580-1623, and each one of these editions was in law French. Seven copies of this work were found in Foster's shop in 1616. These three examples, Littleton's *Tenures*, Lambard's *The*

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<sup>26</sup> Eugene Wambaugh (ed.), *Littleton's Tenures in English* (Washington D.C., 1903).

<sup>27</sup> Washington University Law Library, *Other Rare Books Collection Titles*, 15 December 2011 <<http://law.wustl.edu/library/rare/index.aspx?id=8555>>.

*Duties of Constables*, and Kitchin's *Le Courte Leete* demonstrate the small, yet consistent market for law books in provincial England.

The market for law books in provincial England was a small one, made up entirely of lawyers or those involved in the court system. The technical nature of law books coupled with the high prices suggest that few people outside the legal profession would have been interested in such works.<sup>28</sup> Unlike medical books, however, law books were regularly printed in London, and a number of works witnessed multiple reprints. This was a large and important market for the London publishing industry; its echo in the provincial book trade was comparatively faint.

### **Histories**

As a genre, history became immensely popular during the Renaissance.<sup>29</sup> Histories served to inspire respect for antiquity and forge a sense of national, local or personal identity. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, histories were used as educational tools in grammar schools, but they were also read at home for pleasure. The revived popularity of chronicles and histories in the Renaissance coincided with the early explosion of printing. This enthusiasm for reading history is also reflected in the provincial booksellers' stock-lists in early modern England, as most contained a selection of histories in their shops.

Before the Renaissance, book owners were not particularly drawn to the collections of chronicles in histories. In an examination of 3,292 books found in the wills of northern England from 1369-1497, J.B. Friedman found only thirty-nine historical

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<sup>28</sup> Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail Book-prices', pp. 83-112.

<sup>29</sup> D.R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000).

titles (1.2%).<sup>30</sup> In contrast, from the years 1530-1609, historical titles account for 975 of the 14,562 books found in Cambridge inventories (6.7%). In no decade did the percentage of histories fall below 4% of the total.<sup>31</sup> By the middle of the sixteenth century, most ‘middling to large book collections’ of over 500 books had a significant proportion of histories, amounting to roughly 8-10% of the total.<sup>32</sup>

Histories had clearly become a popular specialised genre in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, but what histories were being read and why were they so popular? The stock-lists of provincial booksellers do show a significant evolution in the type and character of historical writing that they made available to readers, faithfully reflecting developments in both the discipline of history and readers’ tastes.

During the Renaissance, ancient and classical histories were part of the curricula of grammar schools. Statutes from the Free Grammar School of Leicester reveal that students read Caesar’s *Commentaries* and Valerius Maximus in Form VII.<sup>33</sup> The Norwich Educational Ordinance of 1566 also recommends that students be taught Caesar’s *Commentaries* and works by Sallust and Valerius Maximus.<sup>34</sup> Though it is likely that these texts were used in local grammar schools, none of these works were ordered by Robert Scott. These histories would have been used by the higher forms, while Scott’s orders show a preference for titles used by the lower forms.

In the sixteenth century, chronicles were the dominant style of history in print. The chronicles which occur most frequently on the provincial booksellers’ stock-lists are the chronicles of John Stow, both his *Summary of English Chronicles* (first printed in

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<sup>30</sup> Friedman, *Northern English Books*, p. 257.

<sup>31</sup> Woolf, *Reading History*, p. 45.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>33</sup> Cross, ‘The Free Grammar School of Leicester’, pp. 26-27.

<sup>34</sup> Saunders, *Norwich Grammar School*, pp. 144-148.

1565) and *Chronicles of England* (first printed in 1580). Two copies of the *Summary* were ordered by Robert Scott in Norwich between 1568 and 1570. Stow's *Summary* was replaced by his *Chronicles of England* after 1580, and copies of this work can be seen in London in 1583 and Shrewsbury in 1585.

Other chronicles appear less frequently on the provincial inventories in the sixteenth century. The chronicles of Richard Grafton, though widely popular, only appear on Roger Ward's stock-list from 1585 Shrewsbury. Perhaps it sold out quickly: both Stow's and Grafton's chronicles witnessed multiple editions – twenty-two editions of Stow's chronicles and twenty editions of Grafton's.<sup>35</sup> Both of these titles appear with regularity in the inventories of English libraries. In Cambridge inventories, for instance, the chronicles of Stow and Grafton are owned in equal number.<sup>36</sup>

Though histories are a specialised market, many of these chronicles had wide social appeal. Robert Furse, a Devon yeoman, provides advice in his family's record book. Furse advises his children "to read and hear scripture, be familiar with the laws of the realm", and to have "read the old chronicles and such like...histories remembering it is a common saying it is a shame for a man to be ignorant of that which he ought to know".<sup>37</sup>

The chronicles found in provincial bookshops in sixteenth-century England contain some common features. The chronicles that do appear, namely those by Stow, Grafton, Holinshed and Camden, are written by English laymen. In the sixteenth century, chronicles were no longer a clerical domain. Similarly, these chronicles were published in English rather than Latin. Though printing in English increased the potential audience

<sup>35</sup> USTC, search 'Stow, John' [25 May 2012]; and USTC, search 'Grafton, Richard' [25 May 2012].

<sup>36</sup> Woolf, *Reading History*, p. 149; and Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*.

<sup>37</sup> Woolf, *Reading History*, p. 22.

for the chronicles in England, it also hindered its potential appeal to audiences on the Continent. Every edition of the chronicles of Stow, Grafton, Holinshed and Camden were printed in London. There was no market for English histories outside England.

Conversely, none of the provincial booksellers stocked chronicles published abroad. There were book owners who did own foreign chronicles, as the inventories in Cambridge attest. As many as twenty-four copies of Johann Carion's *Chronicon* were owned by book collectors in Cambridge.<sup>38</sup> Clearly this was a highly specialised market, limited to the most educated customers, and this small market could be satisfied by European imports.

In the early seventeenth century, histories remained popular; in fact, more historical works were printed in England in the seventeenth century than the sixteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Though historical works continued to be popular, their focus changed. After the sixteenth century, English chronicles had fallen out of fashion and virtually disappeared from the English book trade by the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup> The market for chronicles was short-lived; it surged rapidly and died quickly. In the seventeenth century, chronicles were replaced by histories whose coverage extended beyond England's borders. The 1615 stock-list of Michael Harte of Exeter provides one example of this. Despite the limited number of titles listed, three histories are included in the inventory: Thomas de Fougasses's *The General History of the Magnificent State of Venice*, Henri Lancelot-Voisin de La Popelinière's *The History of France*, and Louis

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<sup>38</sup> Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*; and Woolf, *Reading History*, p. 148.

<sup>39</sup> Woolf, *Reading History*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Turquet de Mayerne's *The General History of Spain*.<sup>41</sup> Each of these works was an English translation of the original texts, and each was translated by Edward Grimeston.

In the 1616 stock-list of John Foster of York, this trend continues. Foster's shop contained two French histories, a history of the Roman Empire, an Ethiopian history, two histories of the New World, and ten copies of Michael von Isselt's *A relation of all matters passed especially in France and the Low Countries*.<sup>42</sup> Though most of the histories found on Foster's stock-list are of an international scope, his shop did include a number of English histories as well, including John Hayward's *Lives of the Three Norman Kings of England* and John Price's *Historiae Brytannicae Defensio*. Though the majority of the works were printed in English, there were a total of three titles in Latin.

Compared to other genres of text, histories were expensive. D.R. Woolf's work on history books in Cambridge collections shows that, by the end of the sixteenth century, histories of foreign countries were valued at the same price as histories of Britain: an average of 7s. for foreign histories and 6s. 8d. for British histories.<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, books found in provincial booksellers' shops in the early seventeenth century closely reflect the high estimates of the histories owned in Cambridge. In Harte's shop, *The General History of the Magnificent State of Venice* was valued at 7s., *The History of France* was valued at 6s., and *The General History of Spain* had a value of 12s. The price for foreign histories was high in Harte's shop for two

<sup>41</sup> Harte, 'it 1 History of Venys in fo', Inventory no. 1021; 'it 1 French historie in fo', Inventory no. 1020; and 'it 2 Spannishe histories in fo', Inventory no. 1019.

<sup>42</sup> Foster, 'History of the Empires i', Inventory no. 1115; 'History of France', Inventory nos. 1136 and 2062; 'Ethiopian History i', Inventory no. 2094; 'Decades of the West Indies', Inventory nos. 1227 and 1562; and 'Mercurius Gallo-belgicus', Inventory nos. 1527, 1863 and 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Woolf here distinguishes between what he describes as high and low estimates. The low estimates reflect a putative unbound price, while high estimates reflect the price of a large book with expensive binding. Woolf, *Reading History*, pp. 148-149.

reasons: all three of the titles were in folio and transportation costs would have been reflected in the price.

John Foster's shop in York held a variety of histories in an assortment of formats. The folios were as expensive as those found in Harte's shop in Exeter, and quartos were also costly. For instance, the quarto of *An Ethiopian History* by Heliodorus Emesenus had a price of 4s. 8d., and the quarto of Pietro Martire Anghiera's *The History of the West Indies* was priced at 3s. However, as Foster's stock-list shows, smaller formats and cheaper copies were available. An octavo on the history of France, Belgium and the Low Countries was only 6d., while an octavo of *The History of the West Indies* was 12d., three times cheaper than the quarto version. Regardless of the impact of format size on prices, these values remain slightly elevated compared to the values of Cambridge stock, suggesting that transportation costs also had an effect on prices.

The prevalence of international histories on the stock-lists of seventeenth-century English provincial booksellers demonstrates a national interest in the foreign world. The merchants in Exeter in 1615 may have been interested in the history of lands they were visiting. York book owners in 1616 would have been fascinated by the stories and discoveries of the New World. England's international affairs and exploration into foreign lands in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries likely caused the surge in the popularity of international histories.

Medical books, histories and law books each formed part of a specialised market of the provincial book trade in England. The role of English printing in these genres was largely determined by market demand – London printers consistently fulfilled demand for

law books but satisfied only a part of the demand for medical texts. Much of this has to do with the language in which the work was printed. If there was demand for a translated edition of a foreign work, as seen in the example of the popular histories of the seventeenth century, English printers were likely to produce the book. If books, like many medical works, were published exclusively in Latin, English printers rarely published them. This is because the English did not play a substantial role in the Latin book trade. In most instances, provincial booksellers had to obtain their Latin works from Continental printing centres. This suggests that there was indeed a market for technical or specialised texts, but that this market was too small for the English printers to supply profitably.

In some cases, this examination of ‘specialised’ books has shown the limitations of the provincial book trade in England. Ground-breaking medical texts, current law books, and popular histories were simply absent from the shops of provincial booksellers. A number of these works were found in London or the university towns. As shown in personal inventories, it was possible to obtain these materials from either London or the Continent. From the provincial bookseller’s perspective, customers were more likely to look further afield for these more expensive purchases. This is why the stock of provincial booksellers is full of these texts, yet they are lacking in ‘specialist’ works, like medical books, law books and histories.

## VII. Religious Books

The scientific and medical books that we have just considered represent only a tiny proportion of the stock of provincial booksellers. Only perhaps with the historical texts might a bookseller have risked stocking a title without a specific purchaser in view. These histories were the sort of books where in a town like Shrewsbury or York the number of potential buyers was considerable enough to make that a reasonable speculation. But sixteenth-century tradesmen were not on the whole risk-takers, and for this reason we see very few of the sort of specialist scientific or medical books which sold very well in places like Oxford and Cambridge. Religious books were a different matter. Here we pass to the reliable cornerstone of their businesses.

This was, however, an area of the market rather different in character to the market in school books, another core aspect of their trade. With school books, as we have seen, booksellers had a very clear sense of what would be required for use in the local schools, and they stocked these basic texts in fairly considerable numbers. With religious books, the situation was rather different. Here demand was high but the range of available books was also enormous. In sixteenth-century Europe as a whole, religious books comprised around 30% of all the texts published in the 150 years before the end of the sixteenth century. In England, this proportion was even higher (38%); not surprisingly since English printers were essentially cut out of other lucrative parts of the market by their lack of involvement in the international Latin trade.<sup>1</sup> So, provincial booksellers would always want to stock a variety of religious texts. Choosing which to stock was, however, less straightforward.

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<sup>1</sup> These proportions are taken from the USTC: 5,572 out of a total of 14,494 works published.

Involvement in this aspect of the book trade was not without a degree of hazard. The sixteenth century was a time of rapid and often bewildering transformations in the country's religious allegiance. The gradual, painful adjustment to a new Protestant worship during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI required a whole new liturgical literature. The return to Catholicism under Mary rendered much of this literature redundant and indeed often made its possession illegal. The reign of Elizabeth introduced an equally fundamental repudiation of her sister's Catholicism and brought a new surge of religious publication. All of these changes, quite apart from the need for new generations of the books associated with parish worship, were accompanied by an enormous quality of polemical and persuasive literature.

This then was a section of the book market characterized by considerable turbulence and volatility. This must have had its impact on provincial booksellers. The safe choice was always to try and follow rather than lead local opinion. Even if we know now that the final shift back to Protestantism under Elizabeth would be decisive, it was some years before tradesmen could have been confident of this. None could afford to be left with many hundreds of copies of redundant or possibly illegal stock.

So, this was an area of the market where the opportunities to exploit a buoyant market and the need to exercise political and economic caution had to be balanced. The response we see was generally to stock a wide range of texts but in small numbers. The sole exception to this general rule was the stocking of larger quantities of liturgical textbooks with a steady long-term sale. This way, booksellers could work in harmony with their local market, sniff the wind of shifting local opinion and profit from the

enthusiasm and zeal of local customers who wished to follow the latest controversies or pursue a course of religious self-education.

The local Reformation played out at a different pace in the various provincial towns for which we have a surviving bookseller's register. Some of these places had a profoundly conservative approach to the legislative imposition of Protestantism; in others evangelical citizens quickly won the upper hand. But it is fair to say that by the last decades of the sixteenth century, the period for which we have the largest stock-lists, the Reformation was generally an accepted fact in much of the country.<sup>2</sup> The surviving stock-lists tell us a great deal about the ways in which local inhabitants were supplied with their religious books. This was an extremely varied section in the market, ranging from large folio bibles to small pamphlets, and from steady best-sellers to esoteric texts which make only a single appearance. But it was a market in which all of our booksellers were to some extent engaged.

<b>Bookseller (Town, Year)</b>	<b>Percentage of Religious Stock</b>
Neville Mores (York, 1538)	37.5%
Robert Scott (Norwich, 1568-1570)	39.4%
James Backhouse (Kirkby Lonsdale, 1578)*	3.4%*
Roger Ward (Shrewsbury, 1585)	41.0%
Christopher Hunt (Exeter, 1603)	31.1%
Roger Sankey (Ormskirk, 1613)*	< 25%*
Michael Harte (Exeter, 1615)	66.7%
John Foster (York, 1616)	52.0%
Thomas James (Norwich, 1629)	~ 50%

\* Neither James Backhouse nor Roger Sankey were stationers by trade, so the majority of their stock was composed of school books.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c.1540-1640* (Oxford, 1998).

### **Bibles and Biblical Texts**

During and after the Reformation, bibles were essential tools of spirituality and religious education. Most of the reformers wanted bibles to be universally available, so that the Christian population could enjoy a lively, living faith. Reformers hoped this would increase their commitment to the new religious teachings.<sup>3</sup> Bibles were similarly popular among sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printers and booksellers. This is because they were potentially sources of considerable profit. The profitability of bibles can be seen in many ways, including the disagreements over and challenges to existing monopolies from the 1570s to the 1650s, and the willingness of some to pay significant amounts of money for a share in the market. One example of this is the dealings of Christopher Barker, who, in the late 1570s, was willing to invest thousands of pounds in the printing of bibles.<sup>4</sup>

Though there is significant variety in the type and tone of religious books found in provincial bookshops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bibles and biblical texts were universally available. Unfortunately, in most of the inventories, the recorded entry merely states ‘Bible’, ‘testament’ or ‘psalm book’ without providing any descriptive details.<sup>5</sup> In some cases, such as on Thomas James’s 1629 Norwich stock-lists, the style of binding is noted, but this does not help us identify a specific edition.

Despite these difficulties, we can nevertheless determine what proportion of a provincial bookseller’s religious stock was made up of bibles and biblical texts. Here

<sup>3</sup> Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2000), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> David Kathman, ‘Barker, Christopher (1528/9–1599)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1390>, accessed 24 May 2012]; and M.H. Black, ‘The Printed Bible’ in Greenslade, S.L. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 456–457.

<sup>5</sup> For examples, see Ward, ‘i Bible in quarto’, Inventory no. 438, ‘5 psalters’, Inventory no. 574; Harte, ‘Church bible’, Inventory no. 1028; and Foster, ‘single Testaments iii’, Inventory no. 2133.

there was tremendous variation between the different shops. The percentages range from a mere 4.0% on Michael Harte's incomplete Exeter inventory to 93.8% on Thomas James's Norwich inventory. In the shops of most of the provincial booksellers in this study, biblical texts represented between one-quarter and one-half of the total religious stock. For instance, Roger Ward's shop had a relatively high proportion of bibles, making up 58.6% of his religious stock and 13.5% of his total stock. Alternatively, John Foster's shop contained a smaller proportion of bibles, composing only 21.7% of his religious stock and 6.4% of his total stock.

In general, New Testaments were found in greater numbers in provincial stock-lists than complete bibles. Economically, the printing of complete bibles was a massive undertaking, often requiring the partnership of two or more printers to accomplish. It was cheaper and easier for printers to print parts of the bible because their financial investment was tied up for a shorter amount of time. Similarly, provincial booksellers preferred to stock their shops with the shorter biblical texts, and this too was driven by an understanding of the book market. Complete bibles were prohibitively expensive for most members of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century society. Only the wealthy or the most resolute would have owned the complete bible. According to Ian Green's estimation, the cheapest available new bible cost around 5s. This would have been unattainable for the lower classes in society, equivalent to a week's wages for an unskilled labourer and half a week's wages for a skilled craftsman.<sup>6</sup>

This trend can be seen in the stock-lists of provincial booksellers. In most of the bookshops, the stock of New Testaments and other biblical texts outnumber complete editions. In John Foster's shop, for instance, there were only forty-one copies of

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<sup>6</sup> Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 95.

complete bibles, compared to 147 copies of the Old Testament, New Testament and individual books of the bible. This means that only about a quarter of biblical texts in Foster's shop were complete bibles. Much of this has to do with the cost of the works. New, complete bibles ranged from 4s. to 7s. 6d., while testaments could be purchased for around 2s. Individual books of the bible were even cheaper, as a copy of the Apocrypha was 4d., and an 'Old book of Moses' was 3d.

### **Official Religious Works**

Because of its expense, a bible was a book that most families would buy only once. It would become a cherished possession, to be passed down through the generations. But there were other officially prescribed texts that offered booksellers a more lively market. These included official liturgies and books that would be carried into church, such as prayer books and psalters. All these categories of texts were likely to have a shorter lifespan: liturgies because they might be superseded by new church orders, psalters or prayer books because they were often used to destruction.

Catechisms also played an important part in religious instruction; they were also heavily used and heavily published. This was an area in which English readers were particularly well served, with a huge variety of catechismal works coming to the market during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.<sup>7</sup> Catechisms, like *The ABC with catechism*, were used heavily in schools not only to educate students on the correct beliefs but also to teach students how to read in the earliest forms. Because catechisms were widely printed, purchased and used as school books, they have been discussed together with

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechism and Catechizing in England* (Oxford, 1996), p. 51.

school books in chapter five. This section, therefore, will concentrate on the Books of Common Prayer and psalters.

The Book of Common Prayer was first published in 1549 with later editions appearing in 1552, 1559, 1604 and 1662. The Book of Common Prayer was the official liturgical work of the Edwardian, Elizabethan and Stuart reigns. It was reprinted hundreds of times: it has been estimated that there were a total of 525 editions of the Book of Common Prayer printed by the early eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The Book of Common Prayer was not only used in church, as many copies appear in private book collections. In many editions, the Book of Common Prayer is bound together with psalms or other devotional prayers, and it is these editions that are mostly found in private collections.

The Book of Common Prayer can be found on nearly all of the provincial booksellers' stock-lists after 1550. There are some exceptions, including Robert Scott's orders from Abraham Veale and Michael Harte's Exeter stock-list, but these sources do not provide complete pictures of the booksellers' stocks. Scott and Harte are exceptions not because they failed to stock their shelves with the Book of Common Prayer, but rather because of the limitations of the available source material.

While in general these provincial bookshops held one or two copies of an individual title, dozens of copies of the Book of Common Prayer appear on their stock-lists. Roger Ward's bookshop in Shrewsbury contained nearly 100 copies, and John Foster's shop in York held over forty-five copies. This is a significant difference to the stock holdings of other titles, including bibles, found in provincial bookshops.

The provincial booksellers not only carried multiple copies of the Book of Common Prayer, but they also offered a varied selection to choose from. The example of

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<sup>8</sup> Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 182.

John Foster's shop shows that both the regular prayer book and the prayer book with psalms were available. Foster also offered the prayer book in a variety of bindings, formats and prices, including one octavo copy with 'gilt edge & corners' for 4s. and eight copies of a 'plaine' prayer book in sextodecimo for 1s. 10d. each.<sup>9</sup> Customers were able to purchase either plain copies for regular use or decorated and stylized copies to display either in the church or at home. All of these features (large number of copies, variety of styles and prices, etc.) suggest that the Book of Common Prayer was a cornerstone of the provincial bookseller's business.

Like the Book of Common Prayer, psalters could be found in every provincial bookshop in early modern England. Whether published individually or in conjunction with other works, such as the Book of Common Prayer or a bible, psalters were a staple of the provincial book trade. Between the 1540s and the 1670s, there were predominantly two forms of psalters. The first type of psalter was the translation from the Great Bible that was regularly published for use in churches. The second and most popular type of psalm book was the metrical psalter, which had as many as 790 editions printed between 1565 and the late 1720s.<sup>10</sup>

Psalters were also popular, official religious works sponsored by the government for the purpose of spreading and maintaining Protestantism. Like prayer books, multiple copies of psalters in a variety of formats and bindings may be found on each bookseller's inventory. Roger Ward's Shrewsbury shop in 1585 had over 123 copies of individual

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<sup>9</sup> Foster, 'Com booke gilt edge & corners', Inventory no. 1322; and Foster, 'Com & psalmes plaine ij', Inventory no. 1202.

<sup>10</sup> Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 183.

psalters alone, one of which was in French and another in Latin.<sup>11</sup> Though mostly the bindings were not specified, Ward's shop did include one psalter in leather. In 1616, John Foster's bookshop in York contained over fifty-eight individual psalters, ranging in size from folio to trigesimo-secundo. There were also a variety of bindings and prices, ranging from an inexpensive 6d. for an old copy to a costly 1s. 3d. for a gilt binding. Whether purchased on their own or in conjunction with the Book of Common Prayer or a Bible, ownership of a book of psalms was attainable for many levels of society.

Though official religious works of this sort were a staple of bookshops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, proportionally, they were most important in the early and mid-sixteenth century. Before the Reformation, missals and breviaries were the largest category of religious works found in bookshops. This remained the case in the late 1530s, as Neville Mores's stock-list shows. Of the eighty religious books in his shop, sixty-six were missals, breviaries or other official religious work (82.5%). This trend continued through the middle of the sixteenth century as well, as over 90% of Robert Scott's orders of religious books were for official works. This changed in the late sixteenth century, as the preponderance of official religious texts gave way to an assortment of religious material, including devotional texts and collections of sermons and private prayers. By 1585, only 18% of the religious works in Roger Ward's bookshop were books of this nature, and this had shrunk to 10% of the works in John Foster's shop in 1616. This was not because these sorts of books were less in demand; rather it is because the range of religious titles available to their customers had expanded massively.

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<sup>11</sup> The psalter in French is Ward, '1 sphalmes in frenche', Inventory no. 871, and the psalter in Latin is Ward, '1 olde psalter in latin', Inventory no. 708.

### **Biblical Commentaries**

Among the new categories of books that found a place in the stock of provincial booksellers by the late sixteenth century were biblical commentaries. These were on the whole expensive books, so one would not expect that they would be the most significant item on most stock lists. But whereas Neville Mores's inventory of 1538 or Robert Scott's stock-list of the 1560s contained no biblical commentaries, John Foster in York stocked an impressive seventy copies in 1616.

Before one could read and understand commentaries on the Bible, the spiritual student was instructed to first learn about the patriarchs and the experiences of Israel.<sup>12</sup> Anthony Gilby's *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* appears on both Ward's and Foster's inventories. Foster, in particular, carried a number of works on biblical history, including two copies of Eusebius Pagit's *The History of the Bible* and five copies of an anonymous work entitled *History of Jacob and his Twelve Sons*.

The presence of these works and of biblical commentaries provides evidence of a growing biblical literacy among the book-buying population. This trend is particularly evident in the last third of the sixteenth century. Neither Neville Mores's nor Robert Scott's lists contain any commentaries. The first provincial bookshop to stock commentaries was Roger Ward's shop in 1585. Ward's shop contained twenty-eight copies, including works by Jean Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger. Despite the fact that Christopher Hunt's shop in Exeter in 1603 specialised in dramatic works and literature, his stock-list shows that his shop contained at least one commentary, Gervase Babington's work on Genesis. John Foster's stock-list, the latest of the substantial

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<sup>12</sup> C. John Somerville, 'The Distinction between Indoctrination and Education in England, 1549-1719', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1983), p. 396.

provincial lists, contained seventy copies of biblical commentaries. Commentaries by Babington, Bèze and Calvin are included, but so is William Attersoll's commentary on Philemon and Johannes Piscator's individual works on the gospels and the epistles.<sup>13</sup>

With the growth of literacy and the spread of Protestantism over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, biblical commentaries became a striking new feature of the stock in provincial bookshops. The reading of biblical commentaries implied both a dedication to Christian education and a relatively advanced state of biblical awareness. It is unlikely that this would have been the entry point to reading the bible; rather the experienced bible reader would have used commentaries as a tool of reflection and further instruction. The presence of readers of this sort in the English provincial community is impressive evidence of the spread of religious literacy and commitment.

### **Sermons**

Like biblical commentaries, sermons only became a common feature of the stock of provincial bookshops in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many reformers viewed sermons as “the most important and characteristic form of communication for Protestants”, because the messages of the sermons would guide the listener to salvation.<sup>14</sup> Because sermons were so important to the salvation of one's soul, they were printed regularly and proved popular with audiences. One estimate suggests that 1,000 sermons

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<sup>13</sup> Foster, ‘Attersall on Philemon i’, Inventory nos. 1109 and 1895; and Foster, ‘Piscator on Matthew’, Inventory no. 1372, ‘Piscator on Luke and John’, Inventory no. 13173, ‘Piscator on Marke’, Inventory no. 1374, and ‘Piscator on the Epistles’, Inventory no. 1375.

<sup>14</sup> Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 194; and Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010).

were printed from 1558-1603, and 2,000 were printed in the years 1603-1640. In Ian Green's compilation of early modern bestsellers, sermons feature prominently.<sup>15</sup>

Sermons were primarily intended for oral delivery. In the sixteenth century, despite sermons being published in increasing numbers, many preachers were reluctant to put their sermons into print.<sup>16</sup> The spoken word and the written word were separate and distinct entities, often in tension with each other. Preachers were concerned that the printed word would discourage their congregation from attending sermons, as they would be able to read the text in the comfort of their own homes. They were also hesitant to put their words into print because they feared their message would become distorted. Despite their resistance, the number of printed sermons increased dramatically in the 1580s and 1590s, saturating an increasingly competitive market. By the 1620s preachers' suspicions of the printed sermon had mellowed to a cautious acceptance. They recognized that there were benefits to print, as printed sermons could transmit their evangelical messages to a wider audience.<sup>17</sup>

Stephen Egerton, a Puritan preacher, provides an example of the tension between word and print. Initially, Egerton was uninterested in publishing his sermons, despite constant pleas for him to do so. As Egerton stated in his preface for one of his lectures in 1603, "I could never be induced, by the persuasion or entreaty of any man, to publish any of my sermons in print". In his opinion, there were already an "infinite number of

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<sup>15</sup> There are over 100 sermons included. Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 194.

<sup>16</sup> Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 119-122.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

learned and godly books...more in number than the leisure of any man of calling will permit him to read, or the strength of any ordinary memory can be able to bear away.”<sup>18</sup>

Yet, despite his initial refusals, Egerton’s sermons were published. In this case, Egerton’s concerns over the superfluous amounts of religious text already available in print were trumped by his fears that his words might be misinterpreted. Egerton allowed his works to be published to replace an existing imperfect and unauthorized edition. Printed sermons were never intended to replace the spoken word; rather, as Egerton suggested, printed sermons were meant to supplement and reinforce the message of the sermon as delivered.<sup>19</sup>

Other preachers expressed the fear that the printed sermon would replace the original public sermon. In the 1603 edition of *Seven Treatises*, Richard Rogers was displeased with “their private reading, when they might have been taught also in the public assembly: which some of them refuse to do.”<sup>20</sup> The following year, Robert Cleaver expressed the same anxiety in John Dod’s *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, when he warned readers to, “Beware thou grow not conceited of a sufficiency to be found in reading good books, and so begin to distaste the Ministry: they are not ordained to kill our appetites to the word, but to sharpen them.”<sup>21</sup>

Many preachers were worried that their parishioners would forego hearing sermons in favour of reading them later, and this concern was not unfounded. Elizabeth Wilkinson, a Puritan gentlewoman from Devon, admitted that she preferred to read

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Egerton, *A lecture preached by Maister Egerton, at the Blacke-friers, 1589* (London, 1603); and Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>19</sup> Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Rogers, *Seven Treatises* (London, 1605), STC 21216a; and Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 123.

<sup>21</sup> Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 123-124.

sermons, because she “heard very little powerful preaching”.<sup>22</sup> By the early seventeenth century, many preachers felt obliged to publish their sermons. There were certainly apologetic and theological reasons for their changes of heart, but, as the example of Elizabeth Wilkinson demonstrates, the market was driven by demand.

By the 1620s, preachers had a more optimistic view of the printed sermon. Instead of viewing the printed word as something separate and distinct from the sermon, preachers began to view printed sermons as an extension of their preaching. Even Stephen Egerton developed a positive opinion, finding value in the dissemination of the evangelical message. Printed sermons not only carried the message beyond the congregation where the sermon was delivered, but they also transcended time, as the theological message was passed down to future generations.<sup>23</sup>

Printed sermons can be found in most of the provincial stock-lists. The earliest inventory to include sermons is Neville Mores’s list from 1538 York. Mores’s shop contained five individual sermons, but four were written by the same author, Jacobus de Varagine. Jacobus de Varagine was a thirteenth-century archbishop and prolific writer.<sup>24</sup> Mores imported Latin copies of de Varagine’s sermons on the saints and Lent. Although de Varagine’s works were popular enough to have been quite extensively translated into English at this point, the titles found on Mores’s stock-list were not among the titles available in English.<sup>25</sup> These were potential purchases for Latinate, and most likely clerical customers.

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<sup>22</sup> Michelle M. Dowd and Julie A. Eckerle (eds.), *Genre and Woman’s Life Writing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 34-35; and Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, p. 165.

<sup>23</sup> Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 125-128.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Jeremy, ‘Caxton’s Golden Legend and Varagine’s *Legenda Aurea*’ *Speculum* 21, no. 2 (April, 1946), pp. 212-221.

<sup>25</sup> There were nine English translations of de Varagine’s works published in English from 1483-1527. USTC, search ‘Jacobus de Varagine’ and ‘England’ [25 May 2012].

Though sermons appear in many of the early provincial stock-lists, it is only after 1580 that they appear in significant numbers. The first inventory to contain a substantial number of sermons is Roger Ward's 1585 Shrewsbury inventory. In total, Ward's shop contained fourteen different volumes of sermons, in a total of 241 copies. Considering Ward usually kept only one copy of a title in stock the presence of multiple copies of the sermons is very striking. Ward's stock included forty-two copies of Arthur Dent's *Sermon of Repentance*. This was Dent's most popular work, and it went through forty editions from 1582 to 1642.<sup>26</sup> The number of copies found in Ward's shop suggests that the sermon's message of continuous repentance for all of one's sins appealed to book owners and readers in 1580s Shrewsbury. The popularity of Dent's sermon indicates that, by the 1580s, a significant portion of Shrewsbury's citizens had firmly accepted the message of the Reformation and the influence of Puritan ideas had begun to be evident. A concurrent example of the growing Puritan influence can be seen clearly in the 1590s when local authorities banned the Shearman's Tree, an Elizabethan ritual used to replace the old Catholic customs and festivals.<sup>27</sup>

It is unclear whether the other sermons found on Ward's stock-list are of a similar Puritan persuasion, because no identifiable descriptions are given. Instead, the assessors noted that Ward's shop contained thirty-eight copies of 'sermons at 2d.' and another twenty-five copies of 'sermons at 3d.'. Although this does not prove helpful when trying to determine the topics or messages of the sermons, it does illustrate one important fact. Printed sermons were popular because they were inexpensive and could be bought by all members of the reading public. If they saw it as a means to set them on the path to

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<sup>26</sup> EEBO, STC 6649.5- 6670.

<sup>27</sup> Tittler, *Reformation and the Towns*, pp. 331-332.

salvation, few would have refused to pay 2d. or 3d. Though the price of Dent's sermon is unknown, it was likely to have been similarly inexpensive.

Even though Christopher Hunt's Exeter bookshop in 1603 specialised in dramatic works and literature, he also stocked a selection of religious works, about half of which were sermons. Of the seven sermons found in Hunt's shop, three were the court sermons of Anthony Rudd, Bishop of St David's. Both of Rudd's famous sermons, delivered at Greenwich and Richmond, could be found in Hunt's shop. At Richmond in 1596, Rudd offended Queen Elizabeth by preaching on the 'infirmities of age', dwelling tactlessly on the body's decay as the years progress.<sup>28</sup> At Greenwich in 1603, Rudd preached on the godly behaviour of a king, which included "touching the government of the kingdom by way of practice of mercy towards the good, and of judgment against the bad".<sup>29</sup>

Hunt's shop also contained two copies of Thomas Blague's May 1603 sermon before King James. Blague's sermon was the first preached to the new king after he arrived in London. As in Rudd's sermon, Blague asks the king to 'temper his mercy with judgment', similarly extolling the virtues of a king.<sup>30</sup> Whereas Rudd's sermon at Richmond in 1596 signals the end of an era, both Rudd's sermon at Greenwich and Blague's sermon at St Paul's looks towards the future.

John Foster's York bookshop in 1616 contained twenty-one volumes of sermons in forty-six copies. Though this is not an insignificant number, the proportion of sermons compared to the remaining religious stock was much smaller in Foster's shop than in many of the other provincial bookshops. Also, unlike other bookshops, the sermons

<sup>28</sup> Richard Crisp, *Richmond and its Inhabitants from the Olden Times: With memoirs and notes* (London, 1866), pp. 47-49.

<sup>29</sup> Peter E. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 104.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 104.

found in Foster's shop were not necessarily new or recently printed. For instance, Foster's shop contained six copies of a collection of sermons by Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, who had died in 1588.<sup>31</sup> Many of the sermons included in the collection were from Sandys's time in exile during the reign of Mary. There was also a copy of twenty-seven collected sermons of Hugh Latimer, who was martyred in 1555. Though the printed editions were only a few years old, the sermons themselves were much older. The topics of these sermons were not specific to a place or time, like the sermons of Anthony Rudd; rather, the sermons of much loved patriarchs of the new church like Latimer and Sandys were evergreen favourites with English readers.

### **Religious Treatises**

The taste for sermon reading was one that English book buyers shared with co-religionists in many parts of Protestant Europe. But the building of a new church also called for other sorts of religious instruction, systematic expositions of the faith less appropriate to the sermon form. This was also an age of controversy. The new faith had to be defended against enemies both within and without. Apologetics used print to protect the Anglican Church from its Catholic, Puritan and Anabaptist opponents.<sup>32</sup>

The evidence of the provincial bookseller lists is that the taste for controversial reading developed relatively late. As Neville Mores's 1538 stock-lists shows, there was more of a demand for official religious works, such as prayer books, psalters and catechisms, than religious treatises. This trend continues as late as the 1560s, as over

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<sup>31</sup> Patrick Collinson, 'Sandys, Edwin (1519?–1588)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24649>, accessed 24 May 2012]; and Foster, 'Bishopp Sandes Sermons', Inventory nos. 1230 and 1893.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources* (London, 1978).

90% of the religious stock ordered by Robert Scott was comprised of these official religious works. The majority of the religious works in both Mores's and Scott's inventories were in Latin.

By the 1580s, English had become the language of religious print, and there was new demand for treatises of diverse religious topics. Of the over 150 copies of religious treatises found in Roger Ward's shop, only five were in Latin. Ward also stocked his shop with treatises on a wide variety of religious topics and themes, the most common of which were work denouncing the Catholic Church. The shop stocked two copies of Philip de Marnix's *The Beehive of the Romanish Church*, a satire that details the differences between the practices and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church and the Bible.<sup>33</sup> There are also two copies of Thomas Lupton's *A Persuasion from Papistry*, and a single copy of John Jewel's *Apology of the Church of England*.<sup>34</sup> In its Latin version, *Apologia ecclesiae anglicanae*, Jewel's work was the 'official defence of the Elizabethan church', and had been reprinted at least ten times since 1562.<sup>35</sup> It is understandable why the English translation of this bestselling work would have been in demand. In total, twelve titles and twenty-five copies on Ward's stock-list are specifically targeted against the Catholic Church.

Christopher Hunt's shop in 1603 Exeter focused more on devotional materials. There were certainly anti-Catholic works present, such as Thomas Bell's *Anatomy of Popish Tyranny*, but most of the religious treatises were concerned with the daily practice

<sup>33</sup> Ward, '2 bee of romish church', Inventory no. 633 [25 May 2012]; and F.E. Beemon, 'Poisonous Honey or Pure Manna: The Eucharist and the Word in the "Beehive" of Marnix of Saint Aldegonde', *Church History* 61 (1992), pp. 382-393.

<sup>34</sup> Ward, '2 persuasion against papistry', Inventory no. 534 [25 May 2012]; and Ward, 'i Apologie of churche of England', Inventory no. 692 [25 May 2012].

<sup>35</sup> Six of those editions were before 1600. USTC, search '*Apologia ecclesiae anglicanae*' [25 May 2012]. For editions after 1600, see Green, *Print and Protestantism*, p. 633.

of faith.<sup>36</sup> One example is Thomas Lant's *The Daily Exercise of a Christian*, which provided instruction to the faithful on how to lead godly lives and avoid the traps laid by the devil.<sup>37</sup>

Many of the religious titles found on Ward's stock-list reveal the influence of Genevan religious thought on the English Church. In the 1580s, the works of Calvin significantly outnumbered the works of any other religious reformer published in England.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Calvin's works dominated Ward's shop, which contained thirteen titles and ninety copies of his various works. This was the largest number of titles stocked by any single author. There were more copies of Calvin's works than there were prayer books or psalms. Though not as popular as Calvin, Théodore de Bèze features prominently on Ward's stock-list, which contained six titles and nineteen copies by the reformer.

Roger Ward's stock-list contained a selection of titles condemning the Catholic Church, but it also offered a number of titles that were more amenable to those of conservative views. Ward's shop contained the three parts of the religious controversy between Jerónimo Osório and Walter Haddon. In his letter to the Queen, Osório tries to persuade Elizabeth to return to the Catholic faith. Acting for the government, Haddon replied to Osório's assertions, and Osório responded again in 1563.<sup>39</sup> Although Osório's letters are promoting and defending the Catholic faith, Ward's stock included all stages of the controversy. Though it may be that some Catholic customers came to purchase these

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<sup>36</sup> Hunt, '1 anatomy of popish tirannie', Inventory no. 956.

<sup>37</sup> Hunt, '1 dayly exercise of a christia stringd wth ribbon', Inventory no. 943; and Thomas Lant, *The dailie exercise of a Christian* (London, 1590), STC 15222.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The French Book and the European Book World* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 282-290; and Francis Higman, 'Calvin's Works in Translation' in Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke and Gillian Lewis (eds.), *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 82-99.

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 260.

works, it is more likely that these Catholic titles are intended to allow faithful Protestants to be able to make sense of the whole exchange. In either case, Ward stood to profit regardless of the religious motivation of his clientele.

On John Foster's stock-list, the religious treatises are more concerned with dying, death and the afterlife. By 1616, England had suffered through two recent outbreaks of the bubonic plague (1603-1604 and 1609-1610).<sup>40</sup> These outbreaks would have certainly affected the mentality of the survivors, and helped to stimulate renewed interest in a spiritual understanding of death. Numerous titles found on Foster's stock-list are concerned with comforting the soul, such as Richard Smith's *Munition against Mans Misery*, John Hayward's *The Sanctuary of a Troubled Soul* and Richard Bernard's *Staff of Comfort*.<sup>41</sup>

Foster's stock reflected the complex religious attitudes of early seventeenth-century York. One prominent feature of Foster's religious materials is the anti-Catholic polemicists, including works by Thomas Bell (*The hunting of the Romish foxe* and *The Jesuits antepast*), Thomas Morton (*The encounter against M. Parsons*) and Matthew Sutcliffe (*A challenge concerning the Romish Church, her doctrine & practises* and *A briefe replie to a certaine odious and slanderous libel*). Foster's shop not only contained a copy of Alexander Cooke's *Pope Joan*, but Cooke is also named among Foster's debtors, as owing 8s. These are four of the eight men who make up the "controversial

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<sup>40</sup> John Findlay Drew Shrewsbury, *A History of Bubonic Plague in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 264-299.

<sup>41</sup> Foster, 'Meditation against Misery ij', Inventory no. 1638, 'Bernerdes Stafe of Comfort j', Inventory no. 1628, and 'Stafe of Comfort j', Inventory no. 2034.

retainers” of Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York, who was, at the time, engaged in a pamphlet war against Catholic recusants.<sup>42</sup>

Far more surprising is the appearance of a large number of popular Catholic works in Foster’s stock. There are many titles that criticize Catholic practices, such as William Fulke’s *Two treatises written against the papistes the one being an answere of the Christian Protestant to the proud challenge of a popish Catholicke: the other a confutation of the popish churches doctrine touching purgatory & prayers for the dead.*<sup>43</sup> Foster also carried works from known Jesuits, such as John Fisher (‘Fischers Book’), Petro Stevartio (‘Stevarius ad Chorinthios’) and Pedro da Fonseca (*Commentariorum Petri Fonsecæ in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis tomus primus*).<sup>44</sup> There are other Catholic works included as well, such as the fourth part of Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ*.<sup>45</sup> Foster’s shop also included Ralph Buckland’s *Seaven Sparkes*, likely to have been printed on a secret English press.<sup>46</sup> Foster’s stock contains other probable Catholic works, such as ‘*Pomenius de Beata Virginia*’, ‘*Rerum Societatae Jesu*’, ‘Rosary of Prayers’, and ‘*Ignatius Instructon*’.

As in the example of Roger Ward’s stock-list, these Catholic works may be present for the benefit of Tobias Matthew and his men. Archbishop Matthew was recorded as having many illegal Catholic works in his library. This may explain why Foster carried two copies of a work by Robert Bellarmine, the “main target of English

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<sup>42</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> Foster, ‘Confutation of Purgatory j’, Inventory no. 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Foster, ‘Fishers Book’, Inventory no. 2092, ‘Stevarius ad Chorinthios i’, Inventory no. 1284, and ‘Fonsecus in Aristotles Metaphisickes, 3 vol’, Inventory no. 1182.

<sup>45</sup> Maximilian von Habsburg, *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi, 1425-1650: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller* (Farnham, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Foster, ‘Seaven Sparkes of the unkindled Soule j’, Inventory no. 1639.

anti-Catholic writers".<sup>47</sup> On the other hand York was also notorious as a heartland of traditional religion. Lady Margaret Hoby, an ardent Yorkshire Puritan, recalled in her diary that she had heard people read from banned Catholic works at least twice in the early seventeenth century.<sup>48</sup> A 1604 survey found that Yorkshire had a total of 2,461 Catholics, of which 1,408 were women.<sup>49</sup> John Standeven, a prominent York recusant and vintner, appears on Foster's debtor's list, owing the bookseller 2s. Though there is no indication as to what Standeven purchased from Foster, he would have had access to numerous works of Catholic devotion. With the amount of Catholic books in stock, it seems almost certain that Catholics made up a significant proportion of Foster's clientele.

John Foster is the most striking example of a phenomenon that seems to differentiate provincial from London booksellers. One can hardly imagine a London bookseller stocking so much unorthodox work, with such insouciance. Catholic books were not the only controversial titles that Foster held in stock. In his stock-list, Foster recorded five copies of John Darrel's *A True Narration*.<sup>50</sup> Darrel was declared to be a fake exorcist in 1599, and his *A True Narration* was ordered to be destroyed in 1600.<sup>51</sup> Yet Foster still had five copies of the work sixteen years later. It is unclear whether this edition is from the original printing, before the order of prohibition, or if there was another edition of this work printed by a secret press.

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<sup>47</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> Sarah Bastow, 'Worth nothing but very wilful', pp. 591-603.

<sup>50</sup> Foster, 'Darrell of Witches v', Inventory no. 1248.

<sup>51</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 31; and Thomas S. Freeman, 'Darrell, John (b. c.1562, d. in or after 1607)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7168, accessed 24 May 2012].

By and large the Catholic titles in Foster's stock are recorded only in a single copy. He held larger stock of the Puritan works. Many of these were early modern bestsellers, like Arthur Dent's *The plaine-mans path-way to heaven* and Lewis Bayly's *The practise of pietie*. But other works, like William Attersoll's *The pathway to Canaan*, were not as popular, yet Foster's shop held six copies of the title in addition to three other works by Attersoll. Similarly, there were three titles and twenty-one copies of William Perkins's religious texts, including bestsellers like *The foundation of Christian religion gathered into sixe principles* and *A golden chaine*. The stock also contained two copies of *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft*, of which there were only three editions between 1608 and 1631.<sup>52</sup>

Many of the anti-Catholic polemical works discussed earlier were written by Puritan authors. Anthony Cooke, author of *Pope Joan*, was an "icon to the godly", because of his dedication to preaching and his intense hatred of Catholicism.<sup>53</sup> Though not all of these anti-Catholic authors may be considered to have been Puritans, the majority of them were Calvinists or sympathetic to the Puritan movement. Thomas Morton, for instance, was a self-proclaimed Calvinist who was suspicious of Puritanism.<sup>54</sup>

The religious treatises found in provincial bookshops in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mirrored the religious circumstances of the time. Before 1570, provincial booksellers preferred to stock their shelves with official religious works. By

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<sup>52</sup> Foster, 'Perkins of Witchcraft j', Inventory no. 1975; and STC 19697-19653b.5.

<sup>53</sup> Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580-1720* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 173.

<sup>54</sup> Brian Quintrell, 'Morton, Thomas (bap. 1564, d. 1659)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19373>, accessed 24 May 2012].

1585, as Roger Ward's stock-list shows, booksellers were now providing their customers with an assortment of religious treatises on a wide-range of topics that echoed their everyday concerns. Shrewsbury was a town which had accepted the message of Reformation relatively late, so Ward sought to supply this market with a wide range of treatises criticizing the Catholic Church and supporting Protestantism. In Exeter in 1603, customers were more concerned with private prayers and devotionals, while in York in 1616, there was considerable interest in death and the afterlife, likely as a response to the recent outbreaks of bubonic plague. Regardless of their differences, each provincial bookseller carried a wide selection of titles to satisfy the growing demand for pious instruction among the reading public.

### **Cheap Religious Print**

Cheap printed materials – ballads, broadsides, chapbooks, pamphlets, etc. – were incredibly popular in early modern society, and cheap religious works were no exception. As Tessa Watt's work on *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* has shown, a broad range of society, both rich and poor, bought cheap texts. Watt's work demonstrates the gradual transition and integration of Protestantism in English society through the distribution of cheap religious print.<sup>55</sup>

Provincial bookshops in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England would have contained these cheap forms of print, but, for the most part, these less expensive works are absent from inventories and stock-lists. When the assessors created a stock-list of the bookshop, they concentrated on the books of higher value. The inventory of Michael Harte of Exeter provides an excellent example of this. Of the approximately 4,000

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<sup>55</sup> Watt, *Cheap Print*, p. 322.

copies, only seventy-seven are given any title or descriptive identification. Each of the seventy-seven copies had a value of at least 4s., and many had values of a pound or more. The remaining books are categorized as ‘books’, ‘school books’ or ‘French books’. This can be seen in the other provincial stock-lists as well, where the value of a batch described in this way shows those works to be cheaper per copy than works given a more detailed description.

This tendency not to enumerate titles of low value individually frustrates any attempt to discuss this element of the market from inventory evidence. Those who have studied cheap print rely instead on the evidence of surviving copies and on the records of titles registered with the Stationers’ Company of London.<sup>56</sup> These record many books which are not known in any surviving copy or in any probate inventory. The reference to large bundles of low value stock is the only clue we have from the inventories of the importance of this market to their business.

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<sup>56</sup> See Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, and Watt, *Cheap Print* for examples.

## VIII. Network Connections

Though often spoken of in the singular, the early modern European book trade was composed of multiple components. Printers, publishers, wholesalers, booksellers, bookbinders, papermakers and customers were all interconnected and necessary components of the book trade. The early modern economy can be viewed as “the cumulative unity of millions of interpersonal obligations which were continually being exchanged and renegotiated”.<sup>1</sup> This economy survived on the exchange of credit between the different elements of the trade. While this study’s primary focus is on the stock of provincial booksellers, it is certainly the case that all of those involved were connected with the wider world of print in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and Europe.

The English book trade would be more aptly described as book *trades*, as it consisted of numerous interdependent occupations. Printers were reliant upon paper-makers and ink producers to supply their materials and often required publishers and other individuals to provide capital. Printers were also dependent upon booksellers to sell the printed works. Booksellers were similarly dependent upon printers and publishers for new works. Above all, however, the book trade was reliant on the continuing vitality of the market for printed books.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London, 1998), p. 123.

### **The Stationers' Company**

It was vital for the survival of a business that printers should maintain positive relationships with their fellow stationers. Many provincial booksellers had ‘favourite’ printers, and, in some cases, received the majority of their stock from only a handful of presses. In some instances, familial bonds forged working relationships, while, in others, shared religious or political ideologies created relationships of trust. On other occasions, stationers built connections born of simple convenience and necessity. The privilege system enabled printers to hold monopolies over the printing of certain titles, so if a provincial bookseller wanted these titles, their options were limited. They could purchase them from the privileged printer, import it from abroad or partake in the illegal trade of pirated works. Booksellers, too, had working relationships with each other. It was not uncommon for booksellers to trade their merchandise with one another. Despite being in competition within the same city, many stationers also worked together to maximize profits or safeguard themselves against large losses.

The privilege system promoted by the Stationers’ Company ensured steady business for printers who held the monopolies. It also regulated the number of presses operating in London. For that reason a limited roster of publishers appears time and again in the shops of provincial booksellers. By 1615, Adam Islip was running two presses in London, so it is unsurprising that his works feature prominently in both John Foster’s and Michael Harte’s book-lists. John Foster also received a large quantity of books from Felix Kingston (6.5% of the total). Felix Kingston was also a frequent printer of the works in Michael Harte’s stock-list (11.5% of the total). Humphrey Lownes also features prominently on both lists.

If a provincial bookseller wanted to stock his shop with English works, he had little choice but to use the main London publishers. If he were instead pursuing books in other languages, such as Latin or Greek, more options were available. In the seventeenth century, popular works in Latin and Greek were printed locally in London and the university towns, but booksellers also were able to import works from the Continent. In the sixteenth century, when Latin texts outnumbered English ones in bookshops, we see a more marked dependence on imported works. English publishers were not yet capable of meeting the demand for books printed in classical languages, so a bookseller was forced by necessity to import works. In the sixteenth century, booksellers largely imported their books from France and Italy, but in the seventeenth century printing centres in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands rose to prominence.

These connections with the European book world were likely to be occasional and relatively spontaneous. For London, the institutional structures of the book trade made for more durable relationships. Some of those who later set up a bookshop in one of the English towns had earlier served an apprenticeship in London. This was one of a number of ways provincial long term relationships might be established. Wynkyn de Worde regularly conducted business with stationers in York. An Exeter bookseller, who died in 1553, assigned John Walley, a London stationer, as his will's overseer.<sup>2</sup>

There are countless reasons why a bookseller might choose to do business with a particular publisher or printer. In many cases, cost or availability of credit would have been deciding factors as well as the quality of the product. Robert Scott's 1560s book-list from Norwich provides an example. Abraham Veale, the wholesaler with whom Scott

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Morgan, 'Frances Wolfreston and "Hor Bouks": A Seventeenth-Century Woman Book-Collector' *The Library* s6-11 (1989), p. 31.

did much of his business, offered generous credit for a number of years. The inventory also specifically notes that 10.1% of the stock Scott received from Veale originated from Christophe Plantin's presses. This is most likely due to the superior quality of the texts published by Plantin. Robert Scott attempted to stock his shelves with high quality works in heavy demand, but his precarious finances made him especially dependent on the good will of his London supplier.

### **Familial Connections**

Like many occupations in early modern England, printing and bookselling tended to be family businesses, passed down through generations. There are many examples to illustrate this point, but the Fosters' shop in York provides one of the more interesting instances. Records for the Fosters' bookshop originate in about 1580, when the original owner, Anthony Foster, was noted as providing the Minster with “xxxij queres of royall paper at xii<sup>d</sup> the quere and for the binding the same into xvijj bookees for prickinge of songs for the quere”.<sup>3</sup> Anthony's will also demonstrates strong ties between the Foster family and a family called Marsh. Thomas Marsh was a bookbinder and stationer active in York from 1590 until 1597.<sup>4</sup> Thomas's children, named Anthony and Margaret, inherited £20, the second largest legacy bestowed by Foster's will. Anthony also made further provisions for the children's education. Given the names of the children, it was likely that Anthony and Margaret Foster were in fact their godparents, and they may have even been related in some way.

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<sup>3</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The largest beneficiary of Anthony's will was John Foster, who inherited Anthony's shop. Though described in the will as 'cosin', John was likely Anthony's nephew, and, because Anthony had no male children, would have been an obvious candidate to run the shop. The shop, however, was only to be in John's possession during his own life and would return to either Margaret, Anthony's widow, or Roger Jackman upon his death. Jackman was a fellow stationer and Anthony's son-in-law, having married his eldest daughter Jane in 1605.<sup>5</sup> Despite the terms of both Anthony and Margaret's will, Jackman never inhabited the bookshop. In 1628, Chamberlain's Rolls record John Foster 'deceased' as renting the property even though John had been deceased for twelve years. A few years later in 1633, 'Joan Bennet, widowe' was noted as paying rent on the property.<sup>6</sup> This may have been John Foster's widow, who was also named Joan.

Within ten years, the shop was occupied by Mark Foster, whose 1644 inventory was discussed in chapter four. Despite having the same surname, there is no evidence that Anthony and John Foster were related to Mark Foster. Mark was the son of Richard Foster, a stationer, who lived in the parish of St. Michael le Belfrey in 1609-1611.<sup>7</sup> Neither Anthony nor John had any relatives with the names Richard or Mark, nor did Richard's family have a known member named Anthony, Margaret or John. Similarly, none of the known family members appear in wills of the other Foster line. Mark Foster, who died in 1644, did have a son named 'Marke Anthony' who died as an infant and was

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<sup>5</sup> Barnard and Bell, *York Book Trade*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Collins (ed.), *The Registers of St. Michael le Belfrey, York, Part I, 1565-1653* (York, 1899), p. 215.

buried the same day as himself.<sup>8</sup> This naming practice may suggest a distant familial relationship between the two lines of Fosters, or it may have been merely to honour his benefactor.

Upon a bookseller's death, their shop and goods were routinely inherited by the deceased stationer's widow. This was acceptable practice within the Stationers' Company, as women were not formally excluded from the trade. Widows would inherit their husbands' shares, stock, apprentices and even their freeman status within the Company. Between 1550 and 1650, at least 132 women were members of the English book trade, either as printers or booksellers, accounting for approximately 8% of stationers at this time.<sup>9</sup> Although most of the widows practised their trade in London, there are examples of female booksellers in Oxford, Cambridge, Staffordshire and Lowestoft.<sup>10</sup> These widows were not considered to be a distinct group within the Company. They could choose to maintain their husband's business or marry another stationer. If a widow chose to marry outside the Stationers' Company, she forfeited the rights to her husband's stock and privileges. Mary Barley, widow to the London publisher William Barley, provides an example. After William's death in 1614, Mary took control of five of his privileges, but, by 1626, she had married 'one Lewis a Silkweaver neere white Chappell' and lost control of the copyrights.<sup>11</sup>

One of the first English women to inherit her husband's business was Elizabeth Redman, widow of the London printer Robert Redman who died in 1540. Like many

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<sup>8</sup> Collins (ed.), *The Registers of St. Michael le Belfrey*, p. 218.

<sup>9</sup> Helen Smith, "Print[ing] your royal father off": Early Modern Female Stationers and the Gendering of the British Book Trades' in W. Speed Hill, and Edward M. Burns (eds.), *Text: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies* 15 (Ann Arbor, 2003), pp. 163-166.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-179.

<sup>11</sup> Gerald D. Johnson, 'William Barley, "Publisher & Seller of Bookes", 1591-1614', *The Library* 11, no. 1 (March 1989), pp. 17-18.

sixteenth-century widows, she used the same imprint as her husband.<sup>12</sup> Though most widows only ran their businesses for short periods of time, there are a few notable exceptions. Elizabeth Purslowe printed for fourteen years after her husband's death and produced at least 164 titles; 123 titles are attributed to Elizabeth Alld. <sup>13</sup> Joan Orwin had married and been widowed by stationers three times in her life. After John Kingston, her first husband, died, Joan inherited his printing shop and quickly married his apprentice, George Robinson. After Robinson's death, she inherited both Kingston's and Robinson's goods, combining their businesses under one imprint as 'Joan Robinson'. Joan's third marriage was to Thomas Orwin, and, after his death in 1593, Joan continued to print: a busy sixty-eight titles in the next four years. At the time of her death in 1597, the business was passed down to Felix Kingston, a son from her first marriage. In 1596, Joan printed one work entitled *Albion's England* that was probably sold to Joan Broome, widow of William. Joan Broome was a wealthy and successful London bookseller for five years.<sup>14</sup>

Elizabeth, the wife of John Rastell and sister to Thomas More, was given her husband's 'presse, notes and lres comprised in the same' after his death in 1536. Even though his son William Rastell was already a printer at the time of John's death, it was his widow who inherited his printing tools.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of Neville Mores of York, his widow Christabel assumed his estate and goods.<sup>16</sup> The contested division of Mores's estate is what prompted the legal battle

<sup>12</sup> C.H. Timperley, *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing* (London, 1839), p. 276.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, 'Print[ing] your royal father off', p. 167.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>15</sup> At his death, John Rastell's shop contained a copy of the *Play of Good Order* printed by William. See Roberts, 'John Rastell's Inventory', p. 35, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Palliser and Selwyn, 'The Stock of a York Stationer', p. 210.

between his widow and his son Thomas, which led to the creation of the inventory used in this study. Thomas Mores was himself employed in the book trade, as he is recorded as having received 7s. from the Dean and Chapter ‘for mending and bindinge of bookeſ’.<sup>17</sup> There is very little extant information on the lives of either Christabel or Thomas, and much of what does survive revolved around the legal battles surrounding Neville Mores’s estate. Unfortunately, we do not know how this case was resolved. Thomas, who was a book trade professional, or another son may have inherited Neville’s shop. It is also possible that Christabel herself maintained the shop for some time.

Another case with which we are familiar is that of Roger Ward of Shrewsbury, whose widow inherited the shop from Ward and took a new apprentice on 6 March 1598.<sup>18</sup> Ward’s wife was clearly heavily involved in his business during his lifetime, and it is likely that she handled Ward’s business and household affairs while he spent time in prison. In one instance, in October 1582, Ward’s wife and servants prevented the Wardens from searching his property.<sup>19</sup> Henry Bynneman’s widow ‘Brigide’ controlled his estate until she married Charles Sledd. Upon marrying Sledd, who was not a member of the Company, Brigide forfeited her rights to Henry’s patents and copies.<sup>20</sup>

In the instances where widows did not inherit their husband’s shops, the business was usually passed down to a family member, a son or a work associate. Even in cases where a widow did take over or male family member would eventually inherit, as in the case of Felix Kingston. Michael Harte’s son, who was also named Michael, probably

<sup>17</sup> Palliser and Selwyn, ‘The Stock of a York Stationer’, p. 210.

<sup>18</sup> Roger, ‘Roger Ward’s Shrewsbury Stock’, p. 248.

<sup>19</sup> Arber, *Stationers’ Company*, Vol. II, pp. 776-777.

<sup>20</sup> Eccles, ‘Bynneman’s Books’, p. 82.

inherited his father's shop in 1615 and became a freeman in Exeter in 1622.<sup>21</sup> John Foster in York took over his cousin's trade.

In other cases, when a family member may not have been in the trade or if his sons were too young, a work associate would take control of the shop. In many instances, the apprentice, whether former or current, would inherit the business. This can be seen in the example of a 1553 London inventory. The document shows that William and Humphrey Powell assumed responsibility for Edward Whitchurch's shop after he had abandoned it. Whitchurch himself had inherited John Byddel's bookshop in 1545, and Bydell was the recipient of Wynkyn de Worde's shop in 1534.

Familial relationships were fundamental to the success and longevity of individual bookshops and printing houses. The fact that widows were eligible to inherit their husbands' businesses provided the women with a certain degree of financial stability and independence. Intermarrying with another family in the Company provided booksellers and printers with potential support and financial backing for their businesses. This can be seen in the marriage between Christopher Barker and Sara Norton, which was used to solidify a business partnership between the families.<sup>22</sup> The Stationers' Company was a community, and familial relationships were the backbone of this community. What is clear from the instances studied here is that this community was not confined to London but extended out into the English provinces.

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<sup>21</sup> Devon Records Office, Exeter Court of Orphans (DRO/ECA, Vol. 144, pp. 129-134).

<sup>22</sup> Maria Wakely, 'Printing and Double-Dealing in Jacobean England: Robert Barker, John Bill, and Bonham Norton', *The Library* 8, no. 2 (June 2007), p. 128.

### **Shared Ideologies**

In some instances, political or religious ideological agreement forged a relationship between book trade professionals. Roger Ward and his circle of friends provide one example of how political ideas created a business network. Roger Ward was well-known for his stance against the privilege system within the Stationers' Company and was a leader of a movement to print illegally-obtained materials for distribution and profit.

Even though he was a printer himself, Ward carried relatively few of his own works in his Shrewsbury shop; he only printed 3.5% of his total stock. Compared to other printer-booksellers, this number is very low. Henry Bynneman, a contemporary, printed 89.0% of his stock, and John Rastell and his son's printing accounted for 41.2% of his total stock, which constitutes most of their non-imported texts. There are a few possible explanations for Ward's situation. First, with his presses repeatedly destroyed by the authorities, Ward's printed output may have been largely unavailable around the time the Shrewsbury inventory was taken. The second possibility is that some books in his inventory may have been pirated works concealed under the names of other printers. 5.6% of Ward's stock was supposedly printed by John Day, but due to the legal battle with Day over his privilege to print the *ABC's*, we know that Ward was happy to counterfeit Day's works.

Ward did though have a strong preference to stock the books of his fellow insurgents. John Charlewood, Thomas East, and John Wolfe each have significant proportions of titles in Ward's stock. Many of the titles from these men were recent

publications, implying not only a reliance on his fellow insurgents for new material but also perhaps a newly-formed, distinct community within the Stationers' Company.

Although evidence supporting a close working relationship is scant, there are hints. For instance, John Wolfe was aware of Ward's current location and secret press in Southwark, which allowed him to arrest Ward in 1587. Also, when Ward was desperate for money in 1590, he transferred his apprentice to John Charlewood.<sup>23</sup> These men were rebels on the fringe of the Stationers' Company because of their campaigning against the privilege system. Whether it was because of their similar stances on the matter or because no one else wanted to work with them, these men found some sort of alternative network through mutual support of each other's enterprises.

In most instances, however, potential profit was the motivating force behind creating working relationships. The joint-stock partnership between Robert Barker, John Bill, John and Bonham Norton will be discussed in detail shortly, but it provides an excellent example of this point. Despite rocky relationships and two decades of litigation and disputes, these four men continued to work together because it was profitable. This was not a particularly trusting relationship: at some point each man attempted to swindle the others. In spite of this, the partnership lasted until the death of the partners. Regardless of political or religious ideology, profit was perhaps the most compelling reason for entering into business relationships with other stationers.

### **International Connections**

Trade connections with the Continent were important for provincial booksellers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The popularity of the Frankfurt Fair shows how

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<sup>23</sup> Roger, 'Roger Ward's Shrewsbury Stock', p. 248.

English printers, publishers and booksellers valued the international market for books.<sup>24</sup>

Fairs enabled book trade professionals to buy and sell stock, and for some stationers became a necessity. A closer involvement in the international trade here provided a substitute for participation in county fairs in England, which London stationers found to be increasingly unprofitable. Rather than exhibit their ware in this way, they established direct connections with provincial booksellers.<sup>25</sup> John Wolfe was an active participant in the Frankfurt fair for ten years, largely because he needed the income from the fair because the market for Latin print was so small in England.<sup>26</sup> The book fairs also allowed stationers to advertise their stock and establish personal relationships and trading connections with their counterparts from abroad.

Christophe Plantin, a publisher from Antwerp, had trade connections across Europe, and this included a lively trade with England and Scotland.<sup>27</sup> Many of his works were available for sale in provincial bookshops, as both Robert Scott's Norwich stock-list and John Foster's York inventory demonstrate.<sup>28</sup> Though it was nearly forty years after Plantin's death, John Foster's 1616 list contains a copy of an unidentified work by Lambert Daneau, published by Plantin. Robert Scott's accounts suggest that he was a regular importer of Plantin's books. Between July 1568 and November 1570, Scott made seventeen separate orders for school books, including a Greek alphabet and titles by Terence and Cicero. These same school books would have been easily available from

<sup>24</sup> Ian Maclean, 'Alberico Gentili, his Publishers, and the Vagaries of the Book Trade between England and Germany, 1580-1614' in Ian Maclean, *Learning and the Market Place* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 291-338.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Morgan, 'The Provincial Book Trade Before the End of the Licensing Act' in Peter Isaac (ed.), *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain* (London, 1990), p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> Maclean, 'Alberico Gentili', pp. 298-299.

<sup>27</sup> Colin Clair, 'Christopher Plantin's Trade-Connexions with England and Scotland', *The Library* 14, no. 1 (1959).

<sup>28</sup> Scott, Inventory nos. 85-88, 85, 118, 200, 230, 237, 254, 264, 282, 286, 303, 330, 355 and 391; Foster, Inventory nos. 1181 and 1472.

London printers and publishers, which raises the question of why Scott chose to import these titles. Scott's stock-list specifically denotes these works as originating from Antwerp and Plantin, most likely because the association with Platin enhanced their value. Plantin was a valued trading partner because of his superior credit terms. Generally, Plantin was able to offer six months credit, and he often provided booksellers with discounts, ranging up to 15 or 20% in some cases.<sup>29</sup> Robert Scott was a bookseller who was deeply in debt, and this potential line of credit, if he was able to qualify, would have made an attractive offer.

While Christophe Plantin and Johann Birkmann of Cologne exported large quantities of books into London ports, English stationers such as John Bill, Bonham Norton and John Norton entered into a partnership in 1603 in order to produce and distribute texts abroad as well as at home. As established booksellers at the Frankfurt fair, John Bill and John Norton had many overseas contacts, and the partnership was intended to capitalize upon these connections by creating a monopoly in the Latin book trade.<sup>30</sup> This partnership agreement was successful domestically – the partnership's property and stock was valued at £18,000 in 1621 – but failed to impact significantly on the international market.<sup>31</sup> This failure had little to do with the quality of Bill and Norton's contacts, but rather the squabbling and litigation between the partners combined with the onset of the Thirty Years War destroyed the potentially lucrative venture on the Continent.

This partnership, which at times included Robert Barker, John Bill, John Norton and Bonham Norton, certainly imported more books than it exported. Even though they

<sup>29</sup> Clair, 'Christopher Plantin's Trade-Connexions', pp. 28-45.

<sup>30</sup> Wakely, 'Printing and Double-dealing', pp. 123-124.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

were unable to establish themselves as premier figures in the European book market, these men did prosper by creating a niche in the Continental trade. John Bill had the rights to print all works by Francis Bacon, and these were in high demand in both France and Italy in the 1620s. The Dupuy circle in France was particularly interested in Bacon's writings, and Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, a member of the circle, frequently exchanged letters with John Bill.<sup>32</sup>

English stationers had relatively little involvement in the international book trade. This international participation was restricted to the Latin trade, as there was only a very small market for English books on the Continent before the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Though some stationers did attempt to establish themselves and their businesses in the European market, the true relevance of English participation to the international network was as an importer of stock.

### **Customers**

Arguably, the single most important group in the English book trade was the people who bought the books. Without customers, there would be no book trade. Printers printed works that were in demand, and booksellers stocked their shelves with titles they hoped they would be able to sell. While it was easiest for customers to buy books from London, it was certainly possible to find many of the works they would be looking for in the bookshops in provincial towns. We can explore this by looking briefly at the development of English book collecting. We will see that the changes both in the

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<sup>32</sup> Wakely, 'Printing and Double-dealing', p. 151.

<sup>33</sup> Maclean, 'Alberico Gentili', p. 322.

size of collection and their contents mirror quite closely the developments we have seen in the provincial book trade during these years.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, most English book collections were the property of ecclesiastical institutions. There were few important university libraries and even fewer personal libraries.<sup>34</sup> The dissolutions of the monasteries in the late 1530s witnessed the destruction of many rich collections of books. The ecclesiastical libraries would never regain their former prestige. Many of their books were given to individuals, which in turn invigorated the growth of private libraries.<sup>35</sup> By 1640, the universities had significant collections of books, many including thousands of works.<sup>36</sup> There were also many private libraries that included hundreds or even over one thousand texts.<sup>37</sup>

The first ‘generation’ of English book collectors emerged in the fifteenth century. Composed of humanists such as Thomas Markaunt, John Tiptoft, Duke Humphrey and William Grey, they supported a kind of ‘patronage of learning’ rather than amassing collections for personal prestige. The overwhelming proportion of their books were imported, mainly from Italy.<sup>38</sup> The second ‘generation’ could be considered more ‘scholarly’ humanists. They assembled libraries for personal use. John Bale, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and Archbishop Matthew Parker may be considered to be part of this

<sup>34</sup> Sears Jayne, *Library Catalogues of the English Renaissance* (London, 1983), p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> James P. Carley, ‘Monastic collections and their dispersal’ in John Barnard and D.F. McKenzie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 4, 1557-1695* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 339-347; R.H. Fritze, “Truth Hath Lacked Witness, Tyme Wanted Light”: The Dispersal of the English Monastic Libraries and Protestant Efforts at Preservation, ca. 1535-1625’, *Journal of Library History* 18, no. 3 (1983), pp. 274-291; and C.E. Wright, ‘The Dispersal of the Libraries in the Sixteenth Century’ in Frances Wormald and C.E. Wright (eds.), *The English Library Before 1700* (London, 1958), pp. 148-175.

<sup>36</sup> Roger Lovatt, ‘College and university book collections and libraries’ in Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Vol. I: to 1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 152-177.

<sup>37</sup> Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber, ‘Introduction’ in Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Vol. I: to 1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 3-5.

<sup>38</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, p. 44.

second generation.<sup>39</sup> After this second wave of book collecting, nobles, gentry and some townspeople began to acquire substantial numbers of books. The Earl of Arundel and the Earl of Bedford each had large late sixteenth-century libraries, while John Lumley and Robert Cotton each had significant early seventeenth-century collections. In this third generation, more people of different social backgrounds were purchasing books. Books were no longer simply a tool of scholarship and study, but they were also collected as valued possessions.<sup>40</sup>

But how did customers find out which titles were available? One of the ways customers discovered new titles was through their local bookseller, who would stock a range of materials hoping to entice a sale. Recommendations by friends, family and acquaintances would have been equally important. Another means by which to learn about available works would have been through book catalogues. Andrew Maunsell's two-part work *The Catalogue of English Printed Books* was printed in 1595, and William Jaggard printed his catalogue of recent works in 1619.<sup>41</sup> These catalogues listed bibliographic information, including printer's name, making it possible to locate a selected book.

Many of the more exotic purchases were supplied through book fairs, both in England and abroad.<sup>42</sup> Europe's most popular book fair was in Frankfurt, and, from the 1570s, English printers and booksellers partook in increasing numbers. Although titles printed in England made up a very small portion of the fair's offerings, the sharp increase

<sup>39</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, p. 45.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Maunsell, *The Catalogue of English Printed Books* (London, 1595), STC 17669; and William Jaggard, *A catalogue of such English bookees, as lately have bene, and now are in printing for publication From the ninth day of October, 1618. untill Easter terme, next ensuing* (London, 1619), STC 14341.

<sup>42</sup> For a comprehensive list of all markets and fairs in England and Wales to 1516, see Samantha Letters, *Gazetteer of markets and fairs in England and Wales to 1516*, 15 July 2010, <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html> [28 April 2012].

in the early seventeenth century demonstrates the willing participation of English printers and booksellers in the European book trade.<sup>43</sup> In fact, many booksellers travelled to Europe annually to sell their books and obtain foreign stock.<sup>44</sup> Even John Foster, as a provincial bookseller, held a 1616 catalogue of what must have been the Frankfurt Fair in his stock.

Not all customers bought their books personally; in fact, many sent agents to acquire texts for them. When Francis Trigge, Rector of Welbourne in Lincolnshire, wanted to establish a library, he sent an agent to buy books in the value of about £100. Trigge did not send to London or abroad to purchase the books; instead, he appears to have sent to Cambridge. In total, about one-quarter of the books were more than fifty years old, suggesting Cambridge could be relied on for a lively second-hand or antiquarian trade. Buying in bulk necessarily implied rather less care and discrimination. The religious works purchased included Lutheran propaganda as well as a refutation of Protestant thought by Cardinal Bellarmine.<sup>45</sup>

### **Scholars and Students**

By 1580, the average Cambridge scholar's inventory contained about seventy books.<sup>46</sup> According to Sears Jayne, scholars were the single largest book-owning occupational group for the period 1500-1640.<sup>47</sup> Many of their collections conformed to a similar model. William Brown, a Cambridge scholar whose inventory was made in 1558,

<sup>43</sup> Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (eds.), *Fairs, Markets, and the Itinerant Book Trade* (London, 2009), p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> Wolfe, *Reading History*, p. 269.

<sup>45</sup> Glenn and Walsh, *Francis Trigge Library*, p. ix.

<sup>46</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93-182.

assembled a library of 223 titles mostly printed in the learned languages of Latin and Greek. Brown owned several books of rhetoric and grammars, and his library included many works by classical authors.<sup>48</sup>

The books itemized in the 1589 probate inventory of Cambridge's Abraham Tilman look very similar. Nearly all of Tilman's seventy-five titles were printed in either Latin or Greek.<sup>49</sup> The library contained a number of bibles, including editions printed in English, Hebrew, Spanish, French and Italian. One of the most unusual features of Tilman's library is the variety of foreign language works. Six of Tilman's books were printed in Italian, three in French and one in Spanish. The remaining titles (82.7%) were printed in Latin, Greek or Hebrew.

The contents of both William Brown's and Abraham Tilman's libraries reflect what may be found in Cambridge bookshops at that time. Both John Sheres and Walters stocked predominantly works in classical languages. The private libraries of scholars and students in early modern England have a very particular profile. Classical authors and languages feature prominently, and many of the titles are academic, theological or legal works. Compared to other libraries, book collections of scholars tend to be technical, specialised and stocked with books in the learned languages.

## **Clergy**

Clergy were an important consumer group in the book trade. According to *Library Catalogues of the English Renaissance*, clergy account for 24.4% of the libraries

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<sup>48</sup> Fehrenback and Leedham-Green, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England*, pp. 1-35.

<sup>49</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, pp. 187-188.

from the period 1500-1530. This proportion declines in later decades, amounting to 16.7% from 1531-1560, only 9.0% from 1561-1590, and 11.3% from 1591-1620.<sup>50</sup>

The best and most extensive sources on clerical book ownership in provincial towns concern York clergy. This section will be focusing on York as a case study. This is for three primary reasons. First, York was an important English religious centre and contained a wide spectrum of clergy, from the local city clergy to the higher officials of the Minster. Second, the wills and inventories of York clergy are well-documented. Finally, two booksellers in this study had their businesses in York, Neville Mores and John Foster, so a direct comparison would be possible.

The largest personal libraries of the York clergy may be found in the wills of those who worked in York Minster. William Melton was the Chancellor of York Minster, and the inventory at his death on 20 August 1528, valuing his possessions at £108 16s. 10d., revealed a library of 107 books and four manuscripts.<sup>51</sup> The overwhelming majority of the books were in Latin (95.3%), but it also contained two titles in Greek, two in English and one in French. As would be expected, Melton's library was dominated by religious works. This included six works by St. Augustine, and four each by St. Ambrose and John Chrysostom, along with numerous bibles and testaments. There were also three religious titles that explicitly denounced the teachings of Martin Luther. The first is Richard Kydermynster's *Tractatus contra Doctrinam Lutheri*, one of the first English printed attacks against Luther.<sup>52</sup> The remaining two are by John Fisher, known for his written attacks on Lutheranism. Melton owned Fisher's

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<sup>50</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, pp. 93-182.

<sup>51</sup> Claire Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. I, pp. 17-22.

<sup>52</sup> Walter F. Hook, *An Ecclesiastical Biography, containing the lives of ancient fathers and modern divines, interspersed with notices of heretics and schismatics, forming a brief history of the church in every age*, Vol. 6 (London, 1850), p. 503.

*Sacri sacerdotii defensio contra Lutherum and Assertionis Lutheranae confutation.* The remaining works included seven by classical authors, such as Plato, Cicero and Plutarch, three histories, one dictionary and one work of literature.

Many of the titles have publication dates either in the late fifteenth century or around 1500-1510. Melton appears to have acquired only four works that were printed in the 1520s, the last eight years of his life. This indicates that Melton's library was probably collected slowly over many years, or that it had been assembled from a mixture of new and second-hand books.

We do not know how many of these books Melton bought in York, though the theological works in Melton's library share a similar tone to the stock found in Neville Mores's York shop in 1538. Both contain works by Jacobus de Varagine and each inventory displays only minimal influence of Erasmus and other humanists. Much like Neville Mores's stock-list, William Melton's library is definitively traditional in character. Mores's stock, like Melton's library, was almost entirely composed of Latin works from the Continent.

Edward Kellett was the precentor of York Minister, and his 29 September 1539 probate inventory contains fifty-three titles with a total value of £3 4s. 2d.<sup>53</sup> All of the titles were printed in Latin and contained a high proportion of both theological and legal works. Kellett's library held seventeen law books (32.1%), thirteen religious works (24.5%), and nine school books (17.0%). This library has a very similar profile to the stock of Mores's shop, comparatively made up almost wholly of law (28.6%), religious (37.5%), and school books (19.6%). All of Kellett's books were published in Latin, compared to 93.5% of Mores's stock. Just like Melton's library, no volumes appear to

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<sup>53</sup> Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. I, pp. 42-45.

have been printed in England, the bulk of the works originating from either France or Italy.

The wills of other York clergy in the first half of the sixteenth century look very similar to the examples of William Melton and Edward Kellett, but on a much smaller scale. John Fewlare, chaplain at St Stephen's Altar in 1530, had only nine books.<sup>54</sup> City clergy may have even less, owning only a couple of books.<sup>55</sup> Yet, each of the book collections, whether large or small, have common features. Nearly, if not all of the titles were printed in Latin, and all the books seem to have originated from Continental printing houses. Unsurprisingly, theological and legal texts were the most popular subject categories found in clerical book collections.

Although the books found in clerical libraries largely originated from the Continent, these could be readily obtained locally by the local provincial bookshop in early sixteenth-century York. The overwhelming proportion of the stock in Neville Mores's shop was procured from abroad (85-93%), of which over half was imported from France. Given the small size and few titles offered in his shop, it is likely that Mores would have instituted some kind of order system, where customers could request specific titles. Though it is possible that clergy imported their books directly or used book-buying agents, it is equally likely that they could have obtained the same materials from their local bookseller.

This traditional pattern of collecting continued in some cases deep into the sixteenth century.<sup>56</sup> The value of Thomas Atkinson's inventory at his death on 9 September 1571 was £17 18s. 10d., of which £2 4s. 4d. was the assembled value of his

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<sup>54</sup> Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. I, p. 27.

<sup>55</sup> For examples, see Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. II, pp. 4-45.

<sup>56</sup> Cross, *York Clergy Wills*, Vol. I, pp. 115-116.

books. Atkinson was the prebendary of Stillington, about ten miles north of York in north Yorkshire. Like his predecessors, theological works dominate the list, making up twenty-five of twenty-nine titles (86.2%).

This was probably not typical of the English parish clergy as a whole. Clerical customers made up an important part of the market for provincial booksellers, and their libraries reflect the far more various stock increasingly available. Isaac Lowden, a priest in Darlington died in 1612 and his estate was valued at £10 8s. 4d., of which £5 16s. was the assessed value of his books (55.7%).<sup>57</sup> Only forty-five of the ninety-seven titles were of a religious character (46.4%). Lowden's library included many works by popular classical authors and many school books.<sup>58</sup> It also contained works on law, philosophy, science, medicine, drama, literature and politics. Eighty-seven of the ninety-seven titles were in English (90.0%). The library contained only seven works in Latin, two in Greek, and one French and Italian testament. Despite a knowledge of both Latin and Greek, Lowden preferred to read classical authors in English, as every classical work he owned was an English translation.

Most of the books in Lowden's library were inexpensive, ranging in value from about 4-8d. He did own a few more expensive works. Lowden's copy of a work by Johann Scapula was valued at 14s. and a four-volume work by Martin Chemnitz had a value of 10s. In general, Lowden preferred cheaper, probably smaller-sized books. There is little to indicate any folios or expensive bindings present.

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<sup>57</sup> J.A. Atkinson, *Darlington Wills and Inventories, 1600-1625*, Surtees Society 201 (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1993), pp. 122-125.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-125.

### Gentry and Townsmen

Beyond the university towns before 1590, few people owned more than fifteen books.<sup>59</sup> Before 1560, libraries were primarily collected by clergy, scholars and professionals, such as lawyers and physicians. By the later decades of the sixteenth century, nobility, gentry and members of the middle class began amassing personal libraries. These groups made up a quarter of the surviving catalogues for the period 1591-1620 (24.6%). Nobles accounted for over half of these, but others represented included crown officials, merchants and soldiers.<sup>60</sup>

Many private libraries had a strong professional bent. Physicians' collections contain numerous medical works, and lawyers own substantial numbers of legal texts. This, however, was not always the case. Richard Brereton of Lea Hall (near Middlewich in Cheshire) was a lawyer whose 1557 library catalogue shows an interesting mix of subject material.<sup>61</sup> Though Brereton's collection contains many law books, nearly half of the fifty-seven titles were religious. Brereton owned a Mass book, two communion books, biblical texts and whole bibles in Latin. Few of the works were printed in Latin. According to the titles that may be identified, 84.5% were printed in English. Brereton's library contained a much higher proportion of works in English compared to his contemporary scholarly and clerical counterparts.

Brereton's book collection also held greater diversity of subject matters than other members of his profession. In total, Brereton's library contained alongside classical, legal and religious texts three medical works, three histories, three scientific books, five

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<sup>59</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-182.

<sup>61</sup> William A.E. Axon, 'The Library of Richard Brereton, of Ley, 1557', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 11: 1893 (Manchester, 1894), pp. 103-112.

works of literature, two agricultural works, and a music book. This was a library collected not simply for professional learning and advancement.

Robert Swift, a lawyer of Lincoln's Inn, bequeathed twenty-seven titles in his will on 14 January 1599, worth a total of £13 6s. 8d.<sup>62</sup> Though it is unlikely to be an exhaustive list of the books Swift owned, the sample is not without interest. Calvin's *Epistles*, Rastell's abridgement of *Statutes*, and a small copy of Cicero's *Offices* decorated in gold feature in the will. Many family members, colleagues and friends received one or two titles from Swift, yet his servant Richard Rothwell received four works, including a bible and a copy of *Natura Brevium*. Excluding the old books found in Swift's will that were likely inherited or purchased in his youth, any of these titles may have been found in a London or provincial book shop.

By the end of the sixteenth century, members of the gentry were reading and owning books in significant numbers. In the diocese of Norwich from 1590-1700, only two percent of the 450 gentlemen could not read.<sup>63</sup> In a survey of Yorkshire gentlemen, it has been found that of the 679 heads of family, more than a third attended university and nearly half of them attended grammar school.<sup>64</sup>

The library of William More of Loseley provides an early example of a gentlemen's book collection. In 1556, More's collection included many legal texts, ranging from books on statutes to copies of the Magna Carta, medical books and many chronicles and histories. More had an interest in English literature, and Chaucer,

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<sup>62</sup> William Greenwell (ed.), *Wills and inventories at the registry at Durham*, Vol. III (London, 1906), pp. 174-176.

<sup>63</sup> Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, p. 119.

<sup>64</sup> Levy, 'How Information Spread among the Gentry', p. 12.

Lydgate, Gower and Skelton may all be found in his library.<sup>65</sup> More also owned four books generally prescribed for women: an *Apparel of Women*, a *Book of French Hoods*, a *Commentary of Ladies*, and an *Instruction of a Woman*. These may, however, have been his wife's books, as an inventory rarely distinguishes between a husband's and wife's books.

## **Women**

Evidence of women's personal libraries is scant at best for early modern England. According to common law, a married woman was unable to create a will without her husband's permission. Similarly, a widower was permitted to inherit all of his deceased wife's property.<sup>66</sup> For these reasons, women's wills and inventories occur much less frequently than men's, accounting for less than 1% of extant wills between 1558-1700.<sup>67</sup> There is evidence to suggest that many women's libraries were simply integrated with their husbands' libraries. In the 1570s, Lady Jane Lumley received a book by Nicholas Bacon 'at her desire'. Eventually, the copy came to bear her husband's ownership mark, inscribed by his secretary. If it were not for Bacon's inscription, this book would be indistinguishable from the rest of her husband's collection.<sup>68</sup> In another example, Elizabeth Hunt took care to inscribe 'Elizabeth Hunt her Book not his' onto three separate pages of one of her titles, making plain the importance one attached to keeping her books separate from her husband's.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Levy, 'How Information Spread among the Gentry', p. 26.

<sup>66</sup> Heidi Brayman Hackel, 'The Countess of Bridgewater's London Library' in Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 138.

<sup>67</sup> Mary Prior, 'Wives and Wills, 1558-1700' in John Chartres and David Hey (eds.), *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 208.

<sup>68</sup> Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 138.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

There are a few notable exceptions where women's libraries are distinct from their husbands' collections. This may include the woman's own inventory, or it may be discussed as part of her husband's. As an example, this includes books in the household that may be found 'In my wyfes closet', as described on William More's inventory of 1556.<sup>70</sup> Marks of book ownership survive for about thirty women of this time period. In most cases, women's libraries are valued but no inventory or catalogue exists to show what titles or volumes were present. For instance, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, owned a 'chestful of books' in 1580, Lady Anne Southwell moved three 'truncks of booke' to a new household in 1631, and Anne, Viscount of Dorchester, left books valued at £77 at her death in 1639. It is estimated that £77 worth of books would be approximately 100 'elaborate' folios or 400 'more modest' works.<sup>71</sup>

Though there are only a small number of extant women's book collections in the early seventeenth century, there are even fewer for the sixteenth century. Excluding queens and other members of royal families, there exists only one single woman's book list for the first half of the sixteenth century. That list belongs to Alice Edwards of Cambridge, and her probate inventory contains a modest twelve titles. Each of the titles appears to be school books printed in Latin and includes works by Erasmus, Ovid and Cicero.<sup>72</sup> The fact that Edwards lived in Cambridge may suggest a connection to the university community, which may explain the preponderance of Latin works. Edwards was an educated woman, at least at an elementary level, and personally owned twelve titles of classical and grammatical works which she may have used to educate herself or others. She would have been able to obtain her books from nearly any bookseller. Some

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<sup>70</sup> Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 139.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139-140.

<sup>72</sup> Jayne, *Library Catalogues*, p. 186.

of Edwards's titles were similar to those stocked by Robert Scott in 1560s Norwich and James Backhouse, the mercer, in 1570s Kirkby Lonsdale. Though she likely purchased the works from a Cambridge bookseller, it is possible that Edwards obtained the volumes from other tradesmen who dealt in a sideline trade of books.

Another example of an English early female book collector is Frances Wolfreston. Though no specific inventory from Wolfreston exists, she inscribed many of her titles ‘frances wolfreston hor bouk’.<sup>73</sup> This, with a description of an auction sale in 1856, allows scholars access to at least part of what was Wolfreston’s library. Although she was born around 1607 and died in 1677, many of the editions in Wolfreston’s collection are from the reign of James VI/I. Frances Wolfreston was “a member of the minor country gentry” and has been described as being a woman who was “the stronger character” in her relationship with her husband, a man five years younger than her.<sup>74</sup> The details of Wolfreston’s life do not reveal a substantial interest in books. There is no indication of her love of English literature and drama, even though substantial numbers of these works can be found in her library.

Wolfreston’s books were obviously important to her. In her will she gave her son

all my phisicke booke, and all my godly booke, and all the rest conditionally if any of his brothers or sisters would have them any tyme to read, and when they have done they shall returne them to their places againe, and he shall carefully keepe them together.<sup>75</sup>

The majority of these books remained at Statfold Hall, the family estate, for nearly two hundred years after Wolfreston’s death. When they were eventually sold at auction in 1856, the copies were in poor condition.

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<sup>73</sup> Jason McElligott, ‘Wolfreston , Frances (bap. 1607, d. 1677)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68912>, accessed 26 May 2012].

<sup>74</sup> Morgan, ‘Frances Wolfreston’, pp. 198-199.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

In total, 106 titles may be identified as belonging to Frances Wolfreston, and, of those, forty-five editions were printed before 1630 (42.5%).<sup>76</sup> Nearly half of the titles (48%) are books of literature and drama, and about one-quarter are religious works (24%). Wolfreston's collection of drama is particularly impressive, comprising ten quartos by Shakespeare and plays by Heywood, Marlowe, and others. Much of the literature that she owned would be considered 'popular' literature. Wolfreston owned at least twelve works by John Taylor, the 'Water Poet', and possessed such titles as *Foole upon Foole* by Robert Armin and a *Booke of Merrie Riddles*. The religious books found in her collection are fairly standard for the time. She owned an English New Testament, a Book of Common Prayer, two catechisms, numerous sermons (including those by Dent and Perkins), and the lives of Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint George. Wolfreston owned a few works on history (10%), such as *Britannia* by Camden, as well as medical books (3%), works on current events (7%), and even some titles in Latin and French (3%). Wolfreston's name, however, only appears in English vernacular books, which included translations of such authors as Homer and Saint Augustine. It is likely that these Latin and French titles would have been for general household use rather than her own personal copies.

One interesting feature of Frances Wolfreston's library is the presence of works prescribed for women. Of the books, nine titles were written either specifically for or by women. Wolfreston owned *The Mothers Blessing*, written by Dorothy Leigh, *The School of Learning; or A Guide for Children*, and *Schoole of Vertue and Book of Good Nurture*. She also possessed works on the debate of women, such as Joseph Swetnam's *The*

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<sup>76</sup> A list of Frances Wolfreston's located books may be found in Morgan, 'Frances Wolfreston', pp. 211-219.

*Arraignment of Lewde, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* and a copy of *The Good Womans Champion; or A Defence for the Weaker Vessell*, in which Wolfreton wrote ‘in prais of wemen a good one’ after her signature.

Frances Wolfreton’s private library was one compiled for leisure reading. Much of her collection would either have been inherited or obtained second-hand, as many of the texts were printed in her youth. By the middle of the seventeenth century, booksellers had established their businesses in larger towns of the Midlands, in the Statfold area. There were stationers in Birmingham and Lichfield at this time. John Cartwright set up his trade in Coventry by 1635, which was only seventeen miles from Statfold. Another Coventry bookseller, John Brooke, had his estate valued at £953 at his death in 1679. Brooke’s stock included a diverse array of subject materials, both new and second-hand titles, with the total stock valued at £150.<sup>77</sup> It is likely that Frances Wolfreton would have acquired her books from stationers like Brooke or during her trips to London.

Frances Wolfreton was exceptional, but not unique in building a substantial provincial library. Frances Stanley Egerton, the Countess of Bridgewater, had an impressive library in her London residence, similar in size to Frances Wolfreton’s. Frances Stanley Egerton was born in 1585 to a well-connected literary family. Her father, Ferdinando Stanley, also known as Lord Strange, was a ‘courtier poet’ who had been mourned by Edmund Spenser in *Colin Clout Comes Home*.<sup>78</sup> Her mother, Alice Stanley, has been described as “a great lady, who had more close associations with more great literary figures [of the Renaissance] than any other single person that I am aware

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<sup>77</sup> Morgan, ‘Frances Wolfreton’, p. 208.

<sup>78</sup> Steven W. May, *The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and their Contexts* (Columbia, 1991), pp. 369-376.

of', and Milton's *Arcades* was performed in her honour.<sup>79</sup> From the early sixteenth century, the Stanley family had been patrons of troupes of players known as 'Derby's men' and 'Strange's men'. As a widow, Alice continued this patronage into the 1590s. Egerton's family members were frequent participants in court masques. Alice Stanley had appeared in those by Daniel and Jonson, while her sister performed in Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* and *Masque of Queenes*.<sup>80</sup>

Even though she was born into what may be described as a 'literary family', extant sources do not divulge Frances Stanley Egerton's educational background nor do they intimate her obvious love of books. Contemporary sources describe Egerton and praise her for her 'exemplary' piety and obedience. Alternatively, her daughters are commended for being excellent readers and collectors of devotional works in their funeral sermons.<sup>81</sup> In fact, in contemporary sources, Egerton appears as a highly conventional seventeenth-century English woman. Her private library, however, seems anything but conventional.

Comprising 241 volumes, Egerton's book collection included printed works that span from 1548 to 1633, with the majority of the works having been printed between 1605 and 1625. Egerton's library was completely distinct from her husband's, as they each owned individual copies of the same book, bearing each of their ownership marks on their respective copies.<sup>82</sup> Her books may have been kept physically separate from her

<sup>79</sup> Mary Ann O'Donnell, 'Egerton , Frances, countess of Bridgewater (1583–1636)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2007 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65143, accessed 26 May 2012]; and Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 140.

<sup>80</sup> Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 140.

<sup>81</sup> For the funeral sermon of her daughter Lady Frances Hobart, see Danielle Clarke, 'Gender, Material Culture and the Hybridity of Renaissance Writing' in Margaret Healy and Thomas Healy (eds.), *Renaissance Transformations: The Making of English Writing, 1500-1650* (Edinburgh, 2009), pp. 122-123.

<sup>82</sup> Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 142.

husband's as well. Even though there is no evidence that Egerton would have had her own book closet, these kinds of rooms were owned by her sister, daughters and daughter-in-law. Unlike Frances Wolfreston, Egerton's books do not seem to have been inherited or acquired second-hand. The library's catalogue demonstrates that Egerton was actively collecting books in the 1630s, and two books are specifically labelled as gifts. One English bible was 'given by Mrs Bagnor' and a copy of *The New Covenant* was "given mee by my Sister Huntington". Only fifteen of the works were printed before Egerton reached adulthood and married. Only ten of the volumes found in Egerton's book collection were printed before her father's death, and there is no indication that she inherited any books from him. Egerton was outlived by her mother, husband and two sisters, and it is unlikely that she would have inherited books elsewhere. Two-thirds of her folios and quartos were first editions.<sup>83</sup>

From her library's catalogue, we know that Frances Stanley Egerton read French, as she owned eighteen works printed in the language. Most of these were religious works, including two bibles, a testament and a prayer book. She also owned a French translation of the English liturgy. Egerton possessed books on a wide variety of subjects, including history, literature, theology, travel, music and drama. Egerton, however, did not own many works prescribed for women at that time, instead preferring translated editions of Quintus Curtius, Plutarch, and Aesop. About 20% of all English works in Elizabethan England were translations, and Egerton's collection reflects this, with translations comprising 15% of her library.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 142-143.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

These were books that could have been found in the libraries of any of Egerton's male contemporaries. This is all the more striking because booksellers were certainly conscious of the development of a specifically female market. This can be well illustrated by comparing the book stock of John Foster of York with the list compiled by Suzanne Hull in her study of female reading, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient*. Foster seems to have made something of a speciality of this literature. His stock contained twenty-two titles written either specifically for or by women. Titles which appear both in Foster's stock and Hull's list include *Child Birth*, a collection of prayers based on the Gospel of Luke's first chapter, written by Christopher Hooke, and a cookery book entitled *A Daily Exercise for Ladies and Gentlewomen* by John Murrell.<sup>85</sup> Foster's stock not only contained devotional and instructional books for women, but also included Joseph Swetnam's *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women*, written in 1615, which expressed widely held criticisms of the 'common sort' of women.<sup>86</sup> Foster also carried literature known to be popular with women in the early seventeenth century, such as the romances *Guy of Warwick* by Samuel Rowlands and *A Petite Palace* by George Pettie, which may be the first 'recreational' book specifically directed to a female audience.<sup>87</sup>

Frances Stanley Egerton's collection, on the other hand, has only six titles in common with Suzanne Hull's list of 'Books for Women'. The library included copies of *The History of Women* and Heywood's *Defense of Women*. Egerton also owned a copy of *Tableau historique*, a French work against women. In fact, Egerton's collection has more

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<sup>85</sup> Foster, 'Child Birth i', Inventory no. 1234; and 'Dayly Exercise i', Inventory no. 1621.

<sup>86</sup> Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640* (San Marino, 1982), p. 205.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

in common with her male relatives than Hull's 'Books for Women'. She owned thirty-one of the same titles as her brother-in-law, the Earl of Huntingdon. Egerton's collection lacks cookery books and herbals, common staples of an early modern woman's library. This may be because Egerton had two collections of books: one at her London residence and one at her country residence at Ashbridge. This would not be unusual, for Lady Anne Merricke was also known to have a country library. With easy access to medical care in London, Egerton may not have needed her herbals in town and may have kept them at her country estate.<sup>88</sup>

Most impressive is Egerton's collection of religious works, which makes up over half of her entire collection. She owned a total of nine bibles, seven in English and two in French, as well as four testaments, seven prayer books, and four books of psalms. Egerton's library contained a substantial number of printed sermons, including three by John Donne, many from contemporary bishops, such as Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, and John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, and four books of sermons by John Rawlinson, chaplain to both James VI/I and Lord Chancellor Thomas Egerton, Frances's father-in-law. Egerton's collection even included a number of recusant works: the Catholic primer *A Right Godly Rule*, a copy of the *Jesus Psalter*, and two works by the Jesuit and martyr Robert Southwell. The placement of the books in her catalogue and shelf indicate that Egerton was aware of the recusant nature of the books. Her copy of *A Right Godly Rule* was placed next to Southwell's *Shorte Rules for a Good Life* and *Mary Magdalene: Funeral Teares with Other Treatises*.

Another seventeenth-century female book collector was Lady Elizabeth Sleigh. Nothing is known about Sleigh's life; however, she did leave behind an inventory of her

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<sup>88</sup> Brayman Hackel, 'Bridgewater's London Library', p. 143-144.

books. This inventory may be found in the last pages of a medical and recipe book that spanned from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>89</sup> The inventory was dated 12 May 1647 and includes fifty-two volumes. Of those, nearly all of the works are religious, including two bibles and numerous works by Preston, Bolton and Gouge. There are also two medical works: Dr. Molan's translation of *Practice of Physicke* and Guillemeau's *Childbirth*. The majority of the books are in English, but Sleigh did own four titles in French, including the Old and New Testaments. Over half of Sleigh's books were in quarto (55.8%). Thirteen of the titles were in octavo (25%), with six sextodecimos (11.5%) and only three folios (5.8%).

The libraries and book catalogues of three seventeenth-century women, Frances Wolfreston, Frances Stanley Egerton, and Elizabeth Sleigh, all demonstrate the particular experience of women as consumers in the book trade. Each of these three women had their own unique interests and purposes for collecting books and reading. All three had at least one title that may be considered prescriptive reading for women, but the proportion of their libraries dedicated to these works varied greatly. While there are many differences between these three women, the similarities are striking. Books were important to Wolfreston, Egerton and Sleigh. They invested the time and effort to have their books catalogued, and in each case the catalogues are well-organized, predominantly by bookshelf. Also, in each of the three instances, the women overwhelmingly preferred books in the vernacular. With the increased numbers of

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<sup>89</sup> Wellcome Institute, MS 751. Available online through the Wellcome Collection's Archives and Manuscripts Catalogue,  
<http://archives.wellcome.ac.uk/DServe/dserve.exe?dsqIni=dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd>Show.tcl&dsqSearch=%28RefNo==%27MS751%27%29>.

translations available, reading was more accessible for women in the seventeenth century than any time before.

The expansion of the English book trade combined with the rise of grammar schools and education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries allowed English men and women in growing numbers to enjoy the fruits of the printed word. Personal libraries and book collections could be found in the homes of many from different walks of society. We have examined some of these groups here: scholars and students, clergy, professionals, gentry, and even women. Though each group had distinct features specific to them alone, there are a number of similarities that unite them. In England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, religious literature dominated personal libraries. There was also a concern over health, as seen by the consistent appearance of medical books. By the seventeenth century, the majority of these texts may be found in English booksellers' shops. It would have been easiest to find a particular work in London, but it was also possible to find many of these works in provincial bookshops. Provincial booksellers catered especially to the demands of local clergy, gentry and the middle class, who were the three most regular and, consequently, most important customers for a provincial bookseller.

## IX. Conclusion

Any study of the English provincial book trade must recognize the unique circumstances of England in the European print world. In no other country was print so wholly concentrated in one location. London, the printing metropolis, constituted by far the biggest market. This and its two satellite markets in Oxford and Cambridge comprised the lion's share of the market for imports and expensive, scholarly books. These towns are also by far the best documented thanks to the records of the Stationers' Company for London and the extraordinary surviving series of inventories for Oxford and Cambridge. So it is inevitable that a study of the English provincial book trade will be dealing with a far more limited and restricted market. Nevertheless, as this study has shown, it is not without interest.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the English book trade relied on a series of professions and networks to deliver books to customers throughout England. With the founding of the Stationers' Company in 1557, the book trade became a regulated, guild-like organization. As the decades progressed, the demand for books increased. This demand stimulated a significant expansion within the trade. For early modern book owners, booksellers represented the familiar face of the trade, with whom they regularly interacted to obtain their books.

The English book trade was economically precarious for those professionally involved. They faced many hardships and their livelihoods were susceptible to market fluctuations, the result of changes in the particular economic climate or simply changes in taste. Significant amounts of start-up capital were required, which could be very

demanding for booksellers in small provincial towns. The book industry was as competitive as it was cooperative. One way booksellers eased the inherent competition was to specialise and stock only a limited range of titles. In many towns, if one wanted books on drama or law, there would be a particular bookseller to visit. Booksellers located near waterways or major roads received their books more quickly and at lower cost than those in rural areas, and these transportation costs affected not only the customers' prices but also the booksellers' profit margins. Although it was possible to make a decent living as a provincial bookseller, they were more likely to experience economic hardships, and the businesses of several of those we have met in this study ultimately failed.

This examination of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century stock-lists allows us to ascertain the types of books that were most likely to stock the booksellers' shelves, and how this changed over time. In the early sixteenth century, provincial bookshops were generally small and stocked only a few copies of a title. These shops primarily sold theological or legal works, and Latin was the dominant language of print. Much of this stock was imported. Before 1550, booksellers imported much of their stock from France and Italy. Book owners largely belonged to the professional classes of society, such as clergy, doctors and lawyers, and purchased works that reflected their occupational needs.

In the 1560s and 1570s, the English provincial book trade was transformed by the increased demand for print. The growth of literacy and the expansion of grammar schools coincided with the establishment of larger bookshops which offered a wider selection of books, now in both classical and vernacular languages, and often in inexpensive editions. Booksellers met these needs most likely from English suppliers,

and, when they did import works, they mostly came from Protestant countries like Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. By the seventeenth century, most large provincial cities had at least one bookseller, and in many of these cities bookshops were able to carry a stock of several thousands of copies. Though shops still offered numerous professional and theological texts, they also contained inexpensive popular literature, plays and poetry. By the seventeenth century, reading had established itself as an accepted leisure activity.

Though the book trade witnessed many changes over the years, certain aspects of the trade remained largely constant. From the 1530s to the 1630s, bookshops stocked, on average, only one or two copies of each title. Religious works and school books were consistently the two most popular categories of books stocked. Though the character of religious print changed very significantly, with sermons and devotional literature replacing missals as the predominant texts sold, bookshops continued to stock a sizeable array of religious texts.

The bookseller's stock was also likely to reflect the specific circumstances of the locality. Here we must beware of over-interpreting the evidence of one particular document: the titles listed may reflect the niche market of a particular bookseller as much as the reading preferences of the population as a whole. But one can say that the stock of shops in Norwich, Exeter or Shrewsbury, however varied, was markedly different from that of university towns. In Oxford and Cambridge, the experience of the English book trade was very different. Booksellers in Oxford and Cambridge were more successful than booksellers in other provincial towns, not least because they had access to significant populations of educated book owners. They stocked books appropriate to

their scholarly readers – for this reason their stock reflected a predominance of Latin titles far deeper into the sixteenth century.

The London market again exhibited a different character. London was a busy, crowded market. Customers could choose from many booksellers, and booksellers had to develop a particular reputation to differentiate themselves from the competition. But the market for vernacular texts seems to have developed rather earlier in London than in the provincial towns. Certainly, Mores's York shop retained a largely Latinate stock at a time when London booksellers were beginning to stock a larger range of locally published vernacular books.

With the formation of the Stationers' Company in 1557, the English book trade witnessed a transitional period. By the 1560s and 1570s, London had become the centre of the trade distributing books throughout England. At the same time, the benefits of the foundation of grammar schools began to become apparent. More generally available schooling led to an increased demand for a wider range of literature. The demand for works printed in the vernacular also increased dramatically. English was overwhelmingly the most common language of print, but there was also a perceptible demand for books in other European vernacular languages. These changes occurred in both London and the provincial towns, but each experienced the shift differently. On a fundamental level, the ability of London booksellers to obtain books printed very locally gave them a distinct advantage over the provincial towns, particularly in the years of increased English output. They could themselves commission works from local printers, and exploit far more effectively the growing interest in current affairs. A London

bookseller could have a short text of this sort printed and ready within a matter of days.<sup>1</sup>

This sort of commissioned work was nigh impossible to conceive for a bookseller in a provincial town. Their customers would have to make do with stale news – more often they obtained news pamphlets directly from friends in the capital. So there were some parts of the vernacular trade that remained virtually closed to provincial booksellers.

English books printed in the capital dominated the stock of bookshops in both London and the provincial towns. The availability of works expanded both in terms of titles and the range of subjects. While these general trends applied to bookshops across England, there remained significant differences between those in London and the provincial towns. Bookshops in London were larger and held more stock than their provincial counterparts. London booksellers were more inclined to hold a specialised stock and were also more likely to own multiple shops. Bookshops in provincial towns carried a more varied stock. Because these booksellers were interested in providing their customers with a wide selection of works, they were restricted by available space and, consequently, carried fewer copies per title.

In the early sixteenth century, a bookseller's primary customers would have been scholars, clergy, doctors, and lawyers, and their stock lists were made up largely of classical, religious, medical and legal texts. By the seventeenth century, book owners included the gentry or middling classes, and the booksellers' stock-lists reflect this. Rather than stocking books exclusively for scholars and professional customers, provincial booksellers sold a wide selection of works intended not only for professional use, but also for leisure or devotional pursuits.

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<sup>1</sup> Lisa Ferraro Parmelee, *Good Newes from Fraunce: French Anti-League Propaganda in Late Elizabethan England* (Rochester, 1996), pp. 27-29.

The English provincial book trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a series of networks and professions that provided access to books to those in the towns outside of London. With the expansion of English print, most major towns in England had at least one bookseller, and these booksellers represented the public face of the book trade. Examining the stock of provincial booksellers tells us not only about the booksellers themselves, but also about the distribution of books and the potential readership and customers of the towns in early modern England. The book trade was fundamentally driven by consumer demand, and it experienced rapid change to reflect the evolving needs of a growing customer base.

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