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**Society for the Study of Medieval Languages Travel Bursary Report, 2013**

With the support of the Society's Travel Bursary, I was able to travel to various libraries in Northern France in May and June 2013. This enabled me to spend many weeks considering manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal and the Bibliothèque Mazarine in Paris, as well as to go to the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Caen and the Bibliothèque Municipale in Cambrai. This research will contribute to my doctorate, which focuses on the role played by large scale in later medieval ritual culture.

The roles played by physical scale in medieval culture – for example, the effect of aggrandised physicality or in aesthetic writings – has become an important scholarly subject in recent years. One of the first steps of this development was the volume, *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics*, edited by C. Stepher Jaeger (2009).<sup>1</sup> However, whereas the study of scale within art history to date has focused primarily on architectural and architectonic-sculptural objects, my research focuses on the form and decoration of large examples of a 'miniature' media: illustrated missals (mass-books) in the medieval territories of England and France in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The entanglement of England and France, and England with its allies and holdings in modern-day France then, provide the geographical and historical context for a comparison of the two countries in this period.

The funding by the Society allowed me to study in detail over twenty-five missals in my two months in France. The majority of these will be included in my thesis's catalogue, with several forming core case-studies. These books varied in size from folio, which was the minimum I wished to consider, to sizes comparable to the large English missals of my thesis (the *Litlington Missal* in Westminster and the *Sherborne Missal* in the British Library). This range of manuscripts will help me construct the attitudes to the large mass book in the varied ritual and decorative contexts of late medieval France and England. The medieval missal, like all liturgical manuscripts, was localised to a particular regional or commonly-held rite or use, for example in England the dominant use was that of Salisbury (the Sarum Use). In France, there was no dominant use in the same manner as England, with strong regional liturgical variation and patronage. However regional use could be separate from a book's place of production. Irrespective of particular uses or places of production, there seems to have been a widespread patronage of large mass books in France, particularly in the fifteenth century.

The bursary of the Society allowed me to live in Paris for an extended time. Being based in Paris, and working with the collections there – the BNF, the Arsenal, the Mazarine – I encountered many Paris Use missals. These in principal came from the cathedral or the Sainte-Chapelle. These are essential for

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<sup>1</sup> More recently there was the conference *Size Matters* (8-10 November 2012) at the Max-Planck Institute in Florence, the proceedings of which will be published in an upcoming issue of *Art History*. In addition, one must make note of Paul Binski's 2013 article, 'The Heroic Age of Gothic and the Metaphors of Modernism', published in *Gesta*, which advances upon the themes in his *Magnificence and Sublime* essay on the relationship of literary modes to architectural and artistic practice.

reconstructing the attitudes to the use of large books for decorative and ritual effect at the altars of these churches. An interesting facet of the Paris books was the generations of episcopal donations to the high altar of Notre-Dame - an interesting extended case study, as there appears to have been a tendency for the archbishops to donate large missals. Among the interesting examples I examined in Paris were the two-part missal of Gerard de Montaigu (Arsenal MS 583 and Mazarine MS 409), datable to 1409-20 and interesting for not only being large but, despite Montaigu's wealthy position, lacking any historiated or figurative content.<sup>2</sup> Another possible example of this trend I examined was an early fifteenth century large missal, marked by a later episcopal marker, which was more opulent in its painted decoration (Arsenal 620). This trend continued with the Missal of Archbishops Jacques de Châtelier and Denis du Moulin (Arsenal 583) and other later, grand Paris Missals (which I did not consult this visit due to time constraints, but I wish to see in the future in contrast with these 'earlier' books).

In addition, beneficial for my work was the fact that the Bibliothèque Nationale preserves medieval liturgical manuscripts from across France, not simply Paris. So I was able to look at missals from Poitiers, Tours and other locations. These majestically large and beautifully decorated books were examples of the appreciation of great size and varied, widespread decorative schemes in several important regional centres. The missal of Poitiers Use, in particular, is as copiously illuminated as the much earlier *Sherborne Missal* of England: providing a comparison of how patrons and artists used, in different ways, the chance for excess that the grand altar book provided.

The study of manuscripts held in France was complimented by work outside Paris, made possible again by the Society's funding. As noted above, I visited Caen and Cambrai to see some manuscripts I had identified as of especial interest to my research. I had planned on visited Lille as well, but the librarians there kindly sent me a full scan of the manuscript I was interested in. Unfortunately, a manuscript I wished to examine in Chartres was destroyed in WWII, but archivist there sent me all the images that remain of it. In Caen I saw a magnificent illuminated missal, which in the sixteenth century was given to a parish church in the town (Saint-Pierre): its history prior to this is not known, but it could be like several earlier English examples which were theorized by Pfaff to have been hand-me-downs from cathedrals. The Caen missal is of the Bayeux Use and may have belonged to that cathedral. Equally it may have been a private manuscript. I shall need to work upon its potential origins, as I discuss it in my thesis. In Cambrai I saw several missals. A facet of the town that was especially apparent standing in the historical section of the Baroque cathedral, and in looking at books in the town library, was that Cambrai was Franco-Flemish. The questions of influence, origin and identity are fascinating in connection to several of the Cambrai missals I looked at, which represented a variety of stylistic schools. The most interesting of the missals I saw in Cambrai were a joint pair possibly from the old cathedral of the town (mss 146 and 147) which were obviously intended to form the two halves of a two-part missal. However they are produced by different scribes and illustrators, and do not seem to have been produced at the same time. Yet the patrons, in having a new half made, of a large scale, seem to have expressed a preference for not only an equally large missal, but also one where the decoration was of an equally

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<sup>2</sup> As is common with many missals in collections, the two volumes are missing the customary full page paintings that would have been present before the Canon of the Mass. However the ornamental treatment of the two volumes is extremely splendid.

grand scale. This is an interesting case-study of the preference for the grand and magnificent, potentially at another metropolitan site.

I am very grateful to the Society for their generous support of my research, which enabled me to spend an extended time completing research this past summer. I was able to brave the comparatively expensive French train network and stay over in Cambrai. More so examining this collection of late medieval illuminated manuscripts has provided me not simply with valuable material for my doctorate, but also other potential research ideas.