Voices from the Cloister
Medieval Treasures at Downside Abbey
Preface

The cloister is a fundamental part of the lives of Benedictine communities. It is more than a corridor or an architectural feature of a monastery but rather somewhere one can concentrate on seeking and serving God. It is from this physical and interior space that monks and nuns can live their lives and fulfil their commitment to ora et labora (‘pray and work’, effectively the Benedictine motto).

Our Downside community – more officially, the Community of St Gregory the Great – was founded in 1606 by a group of English and Welsh monks, exiled in the Habsburg Netherlands. These men came together to live in community under the Rule of St Benedict and devote themselves to prayer and the many aspects of work and outreach that have marked Benedictine lives through the centuries.

Since 1814, we have been in Somerset, and though many of us have published, taught, preached, and ministered to people since then, we realise, perhaps belatedly, that we had not until now invited you, the general public, to enter our home (for that is what Downside is) to see some samples of our material treasures.

As this catalogue gives witness, we are now inviting you warmly to visit us, and invite you to glimpse into the ‘cloister’ of Downside Abbey. We hope that in looking at this selection of our manuscripts, relics, and vestments, all can see reflections of our attempts to teach, as best we can, by word and by deed. May our own Voices from the Cloister help to bring all of us closer together in spirit!

Dom Nicholas Wetz, Prior
Downside Abbey, Stratton-on-the-Fosse
Foreword

Between 6 December 2018 and 11 April 2019, Downside Abbey hosted Voices from the Cloister, a public exhibition of its centuries-old monastic heritage. This was the first time that the abbey has opened an exhibition of its medieval treasures to the public within its Grade I listed abbey church. This exhibition was a high point in a long-standing collaboration between Downside’s monastic community and the Department of Religion and Theology, University of Bristol. Voices from the Cloister emerged from the ‘21st Biennial Symposium of the International Medieval Sermon Studies Society: Medieval Monks, Nuns, and Monastic Life’, organised at the University of Bristol in July 2018. Part of this conference consisted of a workshop and one-day display at Downside Abbey entitled Words for Life, Spoken and Written: Monasticism and Homiletics in Medieval Europe which featured fifteen different examples of Downside’s cultural heritage associated with the conference theme of monastic preaching and devotion.

We are grateful for the impeccable assistance in the co-curation of the subsequent exhibition provided to us by the Downside monks, Heritage team (Dr Simon Johnson and Steve Parsons), and the ever-helpful Downside volunteers. The Downside Community generously provided funds for display cases and lighting, and space in the abbey church itself. Further generous support came to us from the University of Bristol’s Dr Andrew Wray (Senior Knowledge Exchange Development Manager) and Heather Williams (Arts Faculty Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange Manager). For their research on items contained in the catalogue, we would like to thank University of Bristol postgraduate students Lauren Cole and Sandy Gale, and undergraduate intern Ben Stiggants. We are indebted to Downside’s Dr Simon Johnson, Dr Benjamin Pohl of the University of Bristol, and Dr Ann Kuzdale of Chicago State University for their research on (respectively) the Opus Anglicanum, the Lambach manuscripts, and Gregory the Great’s relic. Dr Ilya Dines, manuscript librarian of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., spent a week at Downside working side by side with George Ferzoco and Edward Sutcliffe on a codicological assessment of all eight manuscripts described in the catalogue. His insightful and experienced eye taught us much about the history of Downside’s fascinating manuscript collection. We are especially grateful to Dr Edward Sutcliffe, whose experience with both monastic preaching and manuscript studies has made him this catalogue’s perfect editor-in-chief.

We anticipate that this exhibition will be the first of many that will identify and explain the multifaceted monastic heritage of Downside Abbey.

George Ferzoco, Research Fellow, University of Bristol
Carolyn Muessig, Professor of Medieval Religion, University of Bristol
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval Treasures at Downside Abbey</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastic Rules</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 25646. <em>The Conferences</em>, John Cassian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 93495. <em>The Rule of St Benedict</em></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 26550. <em>The Rule of Grandmont</em></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanting Monks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 79128. <em>Lectionary</em></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 79131. <em>Major and Minor Prophets</em></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuns at Prayer</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 26542. <em>The Pricking of Love</em> and Other Devotional Works*</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 61166. <em>Processional for Dominican Nuns</em></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vestments</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glover Chasuble</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gold Chasuble</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphrey Segments</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relics and Martyrs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relic of the True Cross</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relic of St Benedict</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relic of St Gregory the Great</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relic of St Boniface</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 48251. <em>Sermons for Saints</em>, Thomas Ebendorfer*</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking and Hearing: Voices from the Cloister</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Bibliography</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Medieval Treasures at Downside Abbey

Downside Abbey possesses an outstanding collection of medieval manuscripts and liturgical vestments, along with relics and reliquaries of great historic, devotional and artistic interest. In 2019, for the first time ever, items were selected for public viewing from these rich holdings by the Downside community alongside scholars from the University of Bristol’s Department of Religion and Theology, and the Centre for Monastic Heritage. This catalogue presents the items that were included in this first exhibition, offering glimpses into Downside’s stunning collections and bringing together books and artefacts that elucidate aspects of monastic life in western Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth century. All of the objects selected here help to demonstrate how monks and nuns lived — what they believed, and what they taught — during this thousand-year period. These items also reveal how the general public could relate to and enrich themselves from medieval monastic spirituality. These are indeed voices from the cloister; while some were intended to be spoken, heard, or even seen only within enclosed monasteries, others were voices that would be shared with all people across Europe.

At the core of this catalogue is a selection of books dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. Since the earliest days of monasticism, books such as these played an important role in the lives of monks and nuns, who needed regular access to texts that could guide and enrich life in the cloister. Such resources included, of course, theological tracts, patristic homilies, bibles, hagiography, and relevant rules and constitutions. And yet, monastic libraries also contained works on topics as diverse as grammar, natural philosophy, law, and medicine, as well as chronicles detailing secular and ecclesiastical history. Particularly prior to the rise of universities, monasteries were major centres of learning and book-production, and their libraries were the finest in Europe. Nevertheless, many of the most important monastic books were not kept in the library at all. Active liturgical books, of which a great many might be required on a daily basis, were usually stored near the choir for ease of access and use. Other books were for personal use. Portable volumes of chants and prayers, short devotional works, and miniature copies of monastic rules could be — and were — carried around by monks or nuns, or else stored in cells and dormitories for private reading.

A wide variety of different types of book therefore permeated all areas of medieval monasteries, and all areas of monastic life. The major collection of over 60 medieval
manuscripts now held at Downside Abbey reflects this rich diversity. With particular strengths in liturgical and monastic history, the collection is nevertheless wide-ranging, encompassing classical texts by Ovid and Juvenal, grammatical textbooks, several medieval charters, and secular chronicles of the history of England. The majority of these texts are written in Latin, though some also feature vernacular languages such as Middle English and Italian.

Several medieval manuscripts were given to Downside as part of the bequest of Edmund Bishop (d. 1917). The acquisition of most of the manuscript collection was reflective of the ‘New Monasticism’ of the second abbot of Downside, Dom Cuthbert Butler (r. 1906-22), where a growing ‘medievalism’ led to the abbey acquiring medieval manuscripts and vestments. The papal bull, *Diu Quidem* of 1899 erected Downside into an abbey which provided the monks with a growing sense of optimism. The manuscript collection grew under the great monastic librarian Dom Raymund Webster (1880–1957). More recently, in 1976 twelve manuscripts owned by the Diocese of Clifton joined the collection, and a further eleven were bequeathed by David Rogers (d. 1995), former Head of Special Collections at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The resulting collection of medieval books at Downside, which has remained largely unstudied until recently, is varied and often surprising. Scholars from the University of Bristol have made several important discoveries over the past few years, identifying previously unknown manuscripts and establishing for the first time the provenance and history behind several of these medieval books. At least a dozen Downside manuscripts remain almost entirely unstudied, and a growing collection of manuscript fragments – typically pages cut out of older books to bind new ones – has also recently been identified. Three of the medieval codices included in this catalogue have never before been mentioned in print, and there is every reason to suspect that the rich opportunities for further study of the Downside collection will yield additional exciting discoveries.

Presented in this catalogue is a small and representative selection of manuscripts from the holdings at Downside. The items included have been chosen because either the texts they contain or else the histories of the books themselves help us to reflect on the theme of *Voices from the Cloister*. The manuscripts are presented here in small groupings, representing the key themes of preaching, contemplation, and liturgy which are found throughout this catalogue. Some of these codices affirm that life in the cloister was defined by praising God through prayer and music. Much attention was given to how monks and nuns should live their daily lives; here, texts composed in the fifth, sixth, and twelfth centuries show precisely this, offering rules and guidance on enclosed monastic life. Manuscripts not only contained the rules by which monks and nuns lived, but were also essential for the devotional work that was pursued in the medieval cloister. The catalogue includes contemplative texts used for private, meditative, reading, as well as the books of prayer and collections of scriptural texts required for communal celebration of the liturgy. The oldest codices in the catalogue, at around one thousand years old, are Benedictine liturgical texts, intended for routine use in a monastic choir.

As important and intriguing as these manuscripts are, the *Voices from the Cloister* exhibition did not limit itself to books. Also shown here are liturgical vestments and sacred relics held by Downside, each of which, in its own way, helped to shape, amplify, or memorialise monastic voices. Indeed, these ‘voices’ are not associated exclusively with the written and spoken word. Medieval culture was rich in symbol and allegory, and the wall paintings, statuary, and other ornamentations of medieval churches affirm that people would...
‘read’ images as well as words, and that visual cues and prompts could help to enhance devotional experience. The late-medieval vestments held at Downside are richly embroidered with elaborate spiritual imagery, designed to turn the thoughts of the viewer towards God. These items are superb examples of a luxurious style of medieval English needlework known as *Opus Anglicanum*. Typically featuring silk or linen embellished with intricate imagery and designs picked out in gold and silver-gilt threads, *Opus Anglicanum* was highly prized all across Europe throughout the Middle Ages. The items shown here encapsulate the visual spectacle and the dramatic ceremony which enhanced liturgical devotion throughout the Middle Ages, particularly in monastic contexts. Providing a tangible and observable counterpoint to scripture and prayer, decorated vestments reinforced liturgical expressions of core aspects of the Christian faith.

Monastic voices can also be heard through the collection of precious relics preserved within the abbey church. These relics are either the physical remains of saints, or objects closely related to them. Relics themselves had an important role to play in monastic prayer and devotion throughout the Middle Ages, not only for individual monks and nuns, but also for local laypeople and for pilgrims, who would travel substantial distances to visit those monasteries which hosted important shrines. Sacred objects of immense spiritual significance, relics serve as reminders to the faithful of the virtues of the saints and the grace those holy people received from God. The relics noted in this catalogue recall the lives and deaths of celebrated monastic saints, and in doing so they serve as a reminder that not all monks led settled and peaceful lives. The monastic vocation often entailed a delicately poised balance between the contemplative and liturgical work of the cloister and active pastoral work. Active work might include providing pastoral support for fellow members of the community, for patrons, or for the local laity, but it found its most developed and dramatic expression in preaching missions. Monks were among the most educated individuals in the medieval world, and especially in the early Middle Ages their training was often called upon to support the Church’s mission to convert all of Europe to Christianity. Finding themselves in the front line of this work, missionary monks routinely risked their lives to spread the faith, and indeed many achieved martyrdom in the process. The relics listed here give voice to these active aspects of medieval monastic life, and to an apostolic responsibility that stretched well beyond the cloister.

A range of different monastic voices, and different types of voice, are therefore reflected in this catalogue of a varied and exciting exhibition featuring medieval treasures from Downside Abbey. Each of the items presented on the following pages offers insight into medieval monasteries, revealing the ways in which prayer, preaching, study, and the liturgy animated the lives of monks and nuns, and allowing their voices, and the legacy of monastic spirituality, to continue echoing through the centuries.
Medieval monasticism was a varied life of activity and contemplation. In medieval Benedictine communities, a life solely dedicated to prayer and self-examination in the search for God was nearly impossible. Pastoral duties within the monastery and externally meant that monks had to spend some of their time assisting in the mending of not only their own souls but also of those of fellow monks, nuns and the nearby laity. The earliest monastic rules and writings sought to outline a way of life in which pastoral activity was balanced with quiet contemplation. The sixth-century Rule of Benedict, along with works by the fifth-century monk John Cassian (shown here as depicted on fol. 102r of ms 25646), suggested that active and contemplative vocations could co-exist in harmony. In later centuries, a number of new orders, as well as observant reform communities, sought new ways of balancing and resolving the tensions between these activities. Most striking was the twelfth-century Rule of Grandmont, in France, which unabashedly promoted the life of hermit-monks who sought near total seclusion from the general population. Among the Grandmont hermits, a complete renunciation of pastoral care and an insistence on the superiority of interiority were the guiding principles of the ideal model of religious life. These varying practices are evident in monastic attitudes to the spoken word: some rules like that of the Benedictines saw godliness in speech and service, while the hermits of Grandmont saw sanctity in silence.
MS 25646. The Conferences, John Cassian

s. XIV, Italy, Bologna?, parchment, 203 folios, 150 x 110 mm, historiated initials with gold leaf, modern binding. Previously unrecorded, appears to have been overlooked in Neil Ker’s Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries. For the text of Conferences see Pichery (1959), the most recent English translation is Ramsey (1997), and for background see also Kelly (2012), Casiday (2006), Sutto (2003), and Ferzoco and Muessig (2000).

This fourteenth-century manuscript has been unknown to scholars until now. It contains the final two of the three parts of the great monastic work The Conferences by John Cassian (c. 360–c. 433), which deals largely with the virtues and vices, and the monk’s quest for perfection and endeavour to defeat the devil. However, the work equally encourages monks to seek the salvation of others via teaching and preaching. Shown here is the opening of the third section of The Conferences, featuring a miniature of the author (fol. 102r). An almost identical portrait of Cassian can be found at the beginning of Part Two of this work, indicating that each part was originally produced as a separate physical book; perhaps Part One is yet to be found in another library. The very fine quality of the parchment, along with the high standard of the illustration and the use of gold leaf show that this was a luxury copy, made at some expense. This manuscript was produced over nine centuries after Cassian died, demonstrating the enduring appeal of his vision of monastic life. His teachings on prayer, and particularly the emphasis he placed on Verse 1 of Psalm 69 —

Deus in adiutorium meum intende

(O Lord, make speed to save me) — proved foundational in the development of the liturgy of the hours in the Western Church. St Benedict was deeply influenced by Cassian’s teachings on monastic spirituality, and recommended that his own monks practice daily readings from The Conferences. Cassian, shown here, therefore remained an important influence on — and symbol of — monastic life throughout the Middle Ages.
This fourteenth-century Italian manuscript is in a compact format, suggesting that this copy of the Benedictine Rule was intended for personal, rather than communal, use. It was given by Dominic Woodruff to the Downside monk Dom Phillip Jebb, on the occasion of the latter’s ordination in 1956. It subsequently passed to the abbey library after Dom Phillip’s death in 2011. This recent history of donation caps several centuries of monastic use and lending of this book. Copied probably around the year 1350 in Northern Italy, this manuscript was later used within the Congregation of Santa Giustina, a Benedictine reform movement which later became known as the Cassinese Congregation. A note on the first folio explains that this particular manuscript was delegated for the use of the brothers of San Benedetto Po, near Mantua in Italy, which had joined the congregation in 1419. As such, this little book bears witness to the observant reform movement that took root across Europe during the later Middle Ages. And yet, even during the periods of turbulent change which followed, the text contained here — the rule written by St Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–c. 547) in the fifth century — remained the constant and unchanging foundation for all forms of Benedictine spirituality. This rule, which for a millennium and a half has served as the bedrock for western monasticism, explicitly addresses preaching and teaching in several places, and celebrates the active and pastoral aspects of monastic life alongside the meditative and the contemplative. Shown here is fol. 9v, containing part of Chapter Two which details the duties of the abbot. The first words at the top (factis amplius quam verbis) describe how, by his good example, the abbot should teach ‘through deeds more than through words’. This reminds us that monastic ‘voices’ could be expressed through actions and works as well as speech and writing.
MS 26550. The Rule of Grandmont

s. XV, N. Italy?, parchment, 40 fols, 113 x 66 mm, written in a single hand using two separate scripts, original notations in margin, rubrics and chapter headings in faded red ink, s. XVII French binding of brown leather tooled in gold, page edges gilt, donated to Downside by Edmund Bishop, overlooked by Ker. For the text of the rule see Becquet (1968); see also Hutchison (1989), Brunner (2010), Seward (1965), and Muessig (1998).

This fifteenth-century manuscript is a copy of a rule originally written c. 1150 by Hugues of Lacerta (c. 1071–1157), and based upon the teachings of Stephen of Muret (c. 1045–1124), founder of the eremitic Order of Grandmont, which in the twelfth century spread rapidly across France and beyond. The rule outlined a strict ascetic existence which prized seclusion and contemplation over active ministries. Visible at the top of the image shown here (p. 55), is a quotation attributed to St Gregory and reading: *vita justi viva praedicatio* (the life of the righteous is living preaching). These are the concluding words of chapter 48 of the rule, which states that the brothers should stay in their hermitages and illuminate the world by their example, rather than going out and instructing the faithful through preaching. The middle of the image contains a faded rubric for chapter 49 of the rule, which admonishes the brothers not to go and listen to sermons either. The words at the very bottom of the image read: ‘Above all we order you not to leave the hermitage for the purpose of hearing preaching’. Many medieval texts identified John the Baptist as an obvious exemplar for the work of preaching and evangelization, but the Rule of Grandmont proceeds to deploy the same biblical narrative to insist that monks should always value private contemplation over public teaching, arguing that ‘it was not necessary for [John] to go physically to hear the word of Christ, for he heard [Christ’s] voice spiritually in his own heart’. Other aspects of this rule were so severe that a succession of popes attempted to mitigate the discipline of the hermit monks of Grandmont. By modifying several of the more extreme sections and suspending entire chapters of the rule, they hoped to guide the brothers towards a more sustainable existence. These controversial changes were not universally embraced by subsequent generations of Grandmontines. This manuscript gives the full text of the original rule, recording in marginal notations the various papal dispensations and modifications offered to the monks.
Chanting Monks

At the core of medieval monastic devotion were the Office and the Mass, communal liturgical celebrations featuring a range of chants, prayers, and readings. Many of these were derived from scripture — shown here is an image of Isaiah, as depicted in a liturgical manuscript of the Old Testament prophets (ms 79131, fol. 1r), described in the following pages. However, texts for the Office and Mass were not only drawn from scripture, and depended on a diverse range of sources including hagiographical narratives, ancient Christian hymns, and the homilies of the church fathers. Most of the elements of the liturgy were variable, meaning a different selection of material would be required for any given day. From an early stage in monastic history, effective celebration both of Divine Office and the Mass depended on ready access to a constantly rotating repository of daily texts. By the end of the Middle Ages, monks and nuns were able to find all of the necessary material for any given day within the Breviary (for the Office), and the Missal (for the Mass), new types of liturgical aid which provided in a concise and convenient format the daily selection of texts. Before the advent of these single-volume liturgical books, monks and nuns celebrating the liturgy did so by reading and chanting material that was dispersed across a broad range of separate volumes. The two manuscripts discussed on the following pages are both representative of this older system, according to which monastic communities needed to maintain a large range of different types of book in order to celebrate the liturgy. These particular items both date from the twelfth century, making them some of the oldest items in Downside’s collection. They were used by, and most probably written for, the Benedictine Abbey of Lambach, founded in 1056 in what is now Austria, and they were part of a substantial bequest of books made to Downside by David Rogers. Together, these manuscripts reflect the voices of monks at prayer, providing invaluable insight into how biblical texts shaped the nature of monastic liturgy, worship, and ultimately the self.
MS 79128. Lectionary

s. XII, Lambach, Austria, vellum, 112 fols, 125 x 172mm, several hands throughout, red rubrics and initials but no decorative scheme, no signs of heavy use, bound in s. XVII in N. Germany with blind-tooled calf skin, donated by David Rogers, title recorded in Addenda to Ker (V., p. 10, n. 151). On this ms see Pohl (2018), and for background see also Hulgo (1988), Nocent (1999), and Harper (1991).

This manuscript is a lectionary, a type of liturgical book containing extracts from specific genres of text. In this instance, the codex is an epistolary, containing short readings from scripture for use during the Mass. This is a specialist liturgical volume, and the readings are given in their correct order with red rubrics clearly identifying the occasions for which the given texts were required. On folio 78r, shown here, the reading is from 1 Corinthians 5:2, and the red rubric near the top identifies this text as the epistle for the tenth Sunday after Pentecost. Typically for the genre of the lectionary, the original text of this manuscript contained little more than readings and rubrics, but some further notes have been added to the margins, providing prompts for the liturgical context in which the reading would be given. Here, the words ‘du[m] clamare[m]’ in the top right hand corner indicate that the epistle was to be used in conjunction with the corresponding introit for the tenth Sunday after Pentecost: When I cried out to the Lord. Books such as this one therefore provided monastic communities with both the words of scripture and their liturgical setting, facilitating the prayer and chanting through which the voices of monks and nuns could fill the cloister and be raised towards God. Recent research suggests that this codex, like the book of prophets overleaf, was copied in the late twelfth century for the monks of Lambach. Following a major shift in western liturgical practice in the thirteenth century, codices such as this one became, at least in theory, obsolete, and were replaced by new single-volume composite liturgical aids. For the Mass, texts that would previously have been read from a range of individual liturgical books – including sacramentaries, antiphonals, or lectionaries such as this – were now gathered together into the consolidated missal. Nevertheless, the monks at Lambach retained this book, even investing in a new decorative binding for it in the seventeenth century.
MS 79131. Major and Minor Prophets

s. XII, Austria, vellum, 241 fols, 350 x 250mm, written in one hand throughout in single columns, by an accomplished scribe, rubrics in red, illustrated initials on fol. 1r and fol. 4v, s. XV cuir-ciselé leather binding, donated by David Rogers, title recorded in Addenda to Ker (V., p. 10, n. 152). On this ms see Pohl (2018), for background see also Harper (1991), Davis (2000), and Babcock (1993).

This codex was almost certainly made at the Benedictine Abbey of Lambach, Austria during the final quarter (c. 1175–1200) of the twelfth century. It contains the complete texts (plus St Jerome’s prologues) of the Old Testament’s four major and 12 minor prophets. Shown here is fol. 114v, containing the opening of Lamentations, preceded by its traditional rubric. Copying manuscripts was not always straightforward, and here the long rubric in red ink has exceeded the space allotted to it and overflowed into the margin. The pages of this manuscript show heavy wear, and a number of additions to the text of the Prophets suggest that it was read in the choir. The clearest indication of how this codex was used is the simple musical notation, added in between the lines of passages such as the one shown here, and intended to guide and prompt monks as they sang these familiar words. A further chant with notation has been added in the margin, towards the bottom of this folio: ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord they God’. This additional text is from Hosea 14:1, and was used as a refrain to punctuate the three daily readings from Lamentations when this text was sung during Matins of Holy Week. Other pages bear further indications of the liturgical use of this manuscript, including rubrics and symbols highlighting passages needed for certain days. Prior to the popularization of the breviary, some specialist liturgical volumes did exist, containing – in the correct liturgical order – the passages, music, and responses needed for Divine Office. However, rather than copying new specialist books it was often cheaper and easier to use existing copies of the unedited source material and mark them up for liturgical use with rubrics and simple musical notation. This is almost certainly what happened in the present case. This particular book was originally made as a straightforward copy of the Prophets, but the additions seen opposite and described above show that it was subsequently adapted for liturgical use in the choir of Lambach Abbey.
Quoniam laudem sola eundem plena populo est quasi una domina quem principis prundanu facta e subtrahend. SI et A. Plo nunc plo nunc vincente a lacrima et in marillis et non e consolatur ea communitate et omnium a.

Migrant unde puer afflicton e multitudine seu unius habitant unigenes neminem reper nihil nisi pietatis et adphendunt ea inangust at D e t e. Ur is fugens e quod nunt queniant ad follempopulat. Omnis portae et deserta facies doros et gentem unigenis et equalitae omnia oppressa amaritudine. Hec factae sunt hostes e incapere. Iniuriatio locupletatur qua vis locutus est super multitudinem magna tatu eum larum eum duces captivum ante facies tribularum. 41. V. Ex ergo hanc a sion omnis decor eum facta principes et uxor autem

15
Nuns at Prayer

These two late-medieval manuscripts were owned by Dominican nunneries, one in England and the other in France. Unlike their male counterparts the friars, women who joined the Dominican Order lived enclosed and contemplative lives. Learning and prayer played important roles in their vocations, and like other medieval nuns they not only read but also commissioned, copied, repaired, and translated works that would enrich a life lived in the cloister. The English codex selected here contains the devotional work the Pricking of Love (fol. 73v shown here), a text that invited the nun to pray with her lips and with her mind, while encouraging the heart to feel emotions of compassion and joy. The French manuscript is a chant book, a small, personally owned volume used by a nun as she processed with her sisters in and around her monastic church to mark burials, prominent saints’ days, and major feasts such as Christmas and Easter. The contents and histories of these two manuscripts help us to understand the role played by reading, and by the written word more broadly, within female monastic contexts. They show us not only what medieval nuns were reading, but also how they approached the act of reading – when, where, and to what end they read. In particular, these two books tell us about the role of reading in prayer, both as a private act of individual devotion, and as a performative act of corporate and liturgical worship. In both contexts, these books demanded active physical and mental participation on the part of the nun as she engaged with words on the page and gave voice – internally or externally – to the text in front of her.
This early fifteenth-century manuscript is a compilation of devotional works for the use of nuns. It contains prayers, meditations, and sermons in both Latin and English, copied in a single hand and contained within a well-produced and high-quality manuscript. It belonged to the Dominican nunnery at Dartford, England. This multilingual volume implies a high level of Latin and English literacy amongst Dominican nuns, and its contents reveal the ways in which contemplative reading contributed to female monastic practice. Private reading, along with private reflection on a text read communally, provided late-medieval nuns with an opportunity for meditation and spiritual ascent, and could also serve as an invitation to conform to and imitate the life of Christ. In this manuscript, the first and longest item is the *Pricking of Love*, an English adaptation of a late-thirteenth century guide to meditation. Amongst other things, this text encouraged the nuns who owned and used this book (several of whom are named in ownership notes copied onto the covers and flyleaves) to pray the Lord’s prayer not only with their outer voices, but with their whole bodies and their souls. In this way, reading, listening, and speaking became vehicles for affective meditation, by which a nun could shield herself from worldly distraction and seek the inner transformation of her soul through focused prayer and spiritual ascent. Shown here is the beginning of this section on fol. 73v, explaining the benefits of ‘saying the Lord’s prayer’ (the words pater noster are underlined in red on the second line shown here) and outlining how the nuns should use it to ascend closer to God – lines six to eight in this image read: ‘I shall be so glad that I shall, for the love of Him, raise up the eye of my soul like an eagle to behold the heritage of Heaven’. The words show how the voice of private prayer could lift the contemplative soul closer to God.
MS 61166. Processional for Dominican Nuns

s. XIV with additions to s. XVII, Poissy, France, vellum, 227 fols, 62 x 35 mm, five different hands, one miniature on fol. 1r, rubrics in red with red and blue initials and some border decoration throughout, blind-tooled semis binding from s. XVI. Donated by Dom Aelred Watkin, title recorded in Addenda to Ker (V, p. 10, n.149). On this ms see Sutcliffe (2019). For background see Bonniwell (1945), Naughton (1995), Huglo (1999–2004).

This very small fifteenth-century manuscript is a processional — a highly portable book of chant and music for liturgical processions. The scheme of chants contained in the manuscript is ultimately derived from the Dominican liturgy produced under friar Humbert of Romans in 1254. However, a number of alterations and additions to the standard text indicate that this particular volume was produced for the Dominican nuns of Poissy, near Paris. Over thirty other late-medieval processionals from Poissy are known to survive, and this unassuming little Downside manuscript is therefore part of an important corpus of material, promising rich and detailed evidence for the evolution of liturgical text and practice within a female monastic context. Of all known processionals written for Poissy, this copy, with folios scarcely larger than a credit card, is the smallest, encapsulating the portability and practicality of these intimate little personal books of chant, which could easily be kept in a sleeve or a pocket. The chants included here are given with full musical notation on four-line staves, and the manuscript would have been held by a nun as she processed around the Church and cloister, singing. Folio 191v, shown here, contains material used for the celebration of the Nativity of John the Baptist, one of several occasions when the sisters of Poissy held additional processions. The rule of the nuns mandated strict enclosure, and while they were not permitted to take up the example of John as wandering preachers, they continued to echo his call to penance. The processional also hints at several occasions when close ties between the outside world and the sisters proved the flexibility of their enclosure. Contained in this book are chants for the reception of civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries, as well as burials and the profession of novices, on which occasion family members and associates of the sisters involved were permitted to be in attendance. This little book facilitated occasions on which the voices of the sisters, expressed through procession, drama, and liturgical ceremony, had a direct impact on visitors from outside the cloister.
Downside Vestments: Opus Anglicanum

*Opus Anglicanum*, or ‘English Work’ was an internationally recognizable form of late-medieval liturgical textile, featuring high quality coloured silk or linen, embroidered with elaborate religious designs. Vestments of this style often included metallic threads of gold and silver, which were stitched onto the surface fabric in a technique known as couching. The exceptional quality of this type of work ensured that English liturgical textiles exported during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were highly-prized items, sought after and worn by clergy across Europe. A large collection of *Opus Anglicanum* is kept at Downside Abbey. Nevertheless, although a handful of these beautiful items have been exhibited in the past, Downside’s late-medieval vestments are not widely known, and have for the most part not yet been recognized as part of the acknowledged canon of *Opus Anglicanum*, again reflecting the many opportunities for further study offered by the Abbey’s medieval treasures.

The small selection of vestments shown as part of the *Voices from the Cloister* exhibition offer a brief sample of the broader collection of ritual garments at Downside, and demonstrates the liturgical splendor which enhanced monastic voices in the choir. Feast days and special processions called for particular liturgical books, props and vestments, but the items shown here were probably intended for use during Mass on a daily basis. They variously evoke the central doctrines of Christianity, the ties of patronage that linked lay benefactors with religious communities, and the enduring role played by the saints as heroes of the faith and exemplars of holy living. In their variety, they all demonstrate the care, attention, and dedication that was channeled into the embroidery of liturgical garments, and by extension these items reflect the central importance of the communal life of prayer in medieval monasteries.
The Glover Chasuble

A chasuble, such as this, is the outermost garment to be worn by a priest saying mass. Originally in the form of a loose, flowing cone, late-medieval chasubles were increasingly shorter, tailored items such as the one shown here, designed to facilitate ease of movement within an embroidered garment that was typically both stiff and heavy. This particular item dates from the early fifteenth century, and stands out because of the unusual motif of a glove, embroidered a total of ten times on the front and back of the garment. The design recalls the patron by or in whose memory the item was commissioned: Robert Glover, a prominent member of the Worshipful Company of Glovers, which was founded in the late fourteenth century and continues to exist today as a charitable organisation. The Glover chasuble was intended as a chantry chapel vestment, designed to be worn by priests saying a daily Mass in Robert’s memory. The garment, and its remarkable design, bear witness to the close interweaving between liturgical activity and external patronage, reflecting how lay benefactors could support, contribute to, or even insert themselves into collegiate and monastic acts of prayer. Voices from the cloister were not necessarily isolated from the wider world, and the corporate life of prayer in a monastery could have direct and immediate impact upon the laity, as seen here.
The Gold Chasuble

This beautifully decorated garment also dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century, and contains a design that is more overtly theological than that found on the Glover chasuble. Here, pride of place is given to a particularly fine crucifixion scene (shown here), a masterpiece of the late genre of Opus Anglicanum. Passion scenes are an obvious but entirely appropriate choice of image for a garment that would have been worn during Mass, the liturgical re-enactment of Christ’s death. This item is a typical example of the ways in which beautifully rendered religious imagery could further enhance monastic voices and monastic liturgy. The celebrant who wore this garment would literally be marked with the cross and the passion as they spoke the words of Mass, and this visual depiction of the death of Christ would have acted as a prompt for those listening to the words of institution to focus their minds on the crucifixion and to prepare to witness that sacrifice made new in the Eucharist. In the rich symbolic context of the Mass, this image operated on several levels, underscoring the nature of the sacrament, and inviting those present to contemplate the saving miracle of the cross.
Orphrey Pieces

An orphrey is a heavily decorated strip of fabric attached to the front and back of vestments, often constituting the most elaborate and expensive parts of a liturgical garment. Sometimes, medieval orphreys remain attached to the items for which they were designed and with which they were used; the Glover and Gold chasubles each have original orphrey strips attached. On other occasions, however, these hard-wearing strips outlasted the thinner garments to which they were once attached, and survive independently. The two segments of orphrey shown in the exhibition encapsulate this longevity. Dating from the middle of the fourteenth century they are the oldest liturgical fabric in Downside’s collection. They were probably originally a pair, attached to the front and rear of the same garment. The images on both pieces depict recognizable saints and apostles, shown with their attributes and names, which are still visible but highly faded. Shown here is St Katherine of Alexandria, also known as Katherine the Great (c. 287–305). According to her hagiography, Katherine was converted as a young woman following a vision of Mary, and she went on to dedicate herself to study, disputing with pagan philosophers and converting hundreds to Christianity. Aged just 18, she was tortured and sentenced to death by the Emperor Maxentius, who ordered she be executed on the spiked wheel with which, as here, she is traditionally depicted. Her cult was revived in the later Middle Ages and she became, for women and men alike, an ideal and inspiring model of a life of dedicated study, zealous evangelisation, and fearless martyrdom. Katherine and the other saints depicted on the orphrey remind us as that the example of pious and holy individuals – celebrated on feast days, commemorated in the liturgy, recalled in hagiography, and depicted in religious imagery such as that shown here – permeated medieval devotional life and had the capacity to animate the spiritual lives of all of the faithful.
Relics and Martyrs

As well as a library rich in medieval manuscripts, and a sacristy filled with ornate vestments, the Downside community has a vast collection of relics. Downside Abbey’s status as a minor basilica, one of a few in the UK, reflects the importance of its relic collection. Given Downside’s history, it is no surprise that many of these holy objects are associated with Catholic recusants (those who refused to conform to the Elizabethan Settlement of Religion) and English martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when fragments of bone and clothing were secretly gathered after executions, quietly preserved by Catholic families or smuggled across the channel to the continent. The Downside collection is not, however, limited to relics dating from after the Protestant Reformation. Several relics of medieval monastic saints were selected for inclusion in the Voices from the Cloister exhibition, alongside a precious relic of the True Cross. These items capture important aspects of medieval devotional practice, as well as indicating the often fraught balance between active and contemplative expressions of monastic vocation. Relics, the physical remains of saints or else objects associated with them, could serve as devotional prompts for the faithful, but they were also considered powerful items that were capable of effecting miracles when approached properly. Monasteries and churches sometimes hosted shrines containing the relics of local or particularly prominent saints, and these provided laity and religious alike with a miraculous interface through which they could seek not just guidance and inspiration, but also healing and miracles. At the same time, many of the most prized relics were associated with martyrs, including monastic martyrs whose violent deaths were themselves the result of preaching and evangelization.

Violent death was of course also associated with the defining miracle of the Christian faith, and relics recalling the Passion of Christ were especially popular throughout the Middle Ages. The first item shown here is a precious relic of the True Cross, a natural focal point for prayer and meditation. While the cross is a symbol of universal inspiration within Christianity, the next two items shown here are associated with saints who have a very particular significance to the specific devotional context of Downside Abbey. One is a relic of St Benedict, recalling the founder of the Benedictine order and the most consequential figure in the development of western monastic traditions. The other is a second-class relic of the community’s patron, St Gregory the Great. As a young man, Gregory himself had professed as a monk, but his profound influence on medieval Christianity stems from his remarkable tenure as pope (r. 590–604). During his papacy, he promoted and rebuilt the apostolic authority of the See of Rome as well as cultivating a renewed commitment to the pastoral responsibilities of the Church. For Downside, the first English Benedictine community to resume observance after the dissolution of the monasteries, the figure of Gregory has always held a special appeal. In 595 Gregory had commissioned St Augustine, a Benedictine monk and first Archbishop of Canterbury, to cross the channel and convert the Anglo-Saxons. Gregory’s conception of an apostolic monastic mission to England was a natural and inspiring model a millennium later, when in 1606 the community of St Gregory’s was established in Douai by monks seeking to preserve and reconstruct English Catholic monasticism. The missionary activity in which the new community of St Gregory’s involved itself in the seventeenth century was dangerous, but preaching the faith had always carried risks. As noted above, the spread of Christianity across Europe in Gregory’s own time had been largely the result of monastic missionaries, monks who took up an apostolic calling and pursued pastoral duties outside of the cloister. Many of these monastic missionaries were martyred, and their
relics, the focal point of major shrines, became important centers for devotion across Europe. The enduring impact of monastic martyrs is demonstrated in the final two items shown here. One is a relic of St Boniface, an Anglo-Saxon Benedictine monk who was martyred whilst preaching the faith to the Frisians. The other item is a manuscript containing a sermon in honour of the Irish monk St Colmán, killed near Vienna in the early eleventh century. The sermon provides a further example of the ways in which saints, living on not only through relics but also through preaching, image, liturgy, and legend, continued and continue to leave their imprint on monastic life many centuries after their death.

Before a relic can be venerated in public, it must be authenticated by the Roman Curia’s Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum. Relics are usually affixed with a seal and accompanied by documentation to guarantee their authenticity. Shown here is the reverse of the inner reliquary of the crozier associated with St Gregory and discussed in the following pages. The unbroken wax seal confirms that the relic is intact with its reliquary, and corresponds to a certificate of authenticity for this relic, produced in the nineteenth century and kept separately in the Abbey’s archives.
Relic of the True Cross

For Christians, the cross is the culmination of salvific history; it is the instrument through which the incarnate God fulfils the messianic covenant with his creation. For medieval monastic communities fortunate enough to possess a fragment of the True Cross, it enabled their members to venerate directly the physical symbol of their salvation. Medieval prayers made specifically to the crucified Christ, and the instrument of his torture, were authored by monastic figures such as Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) and Peter Damian (1007–1073), monk, cardinal and reformer. Peter Damian preached:

When the first man, tempted by Satan, stretched out his hand to the tree, it was as if he wrote the bond of his unconditional servitude on wooden tablets. But the second Adam, stretching out His hands on the Cross, obliterated the bond of that deadly agreement. By a tree then we were enslaved; by a tree also we have been restored to our pristine freedom. By a tree we were cast out from Paradise; by a tree we are called once more to our native land.

These words capture the importance of the cross and hint at the role relics could play in monastic devotional life. Downside possesses several relics of the True Cross, shown here is the most important of them. This relic can be traced back to the reign of King Alfred the Great (r. 871–899). Tradition narrates that he gifted it to the Benedictine community at Glastonbury Abbey, from which it was translated to the private chapel of St James’ Palace during the reign of Mary Tudor (r. 1553–1558). Four scenes are depicted on the base of the reliquary: the Holy Family, the mockery, the scourging at the pillar, and the crucifixion. The reliquary is almost identical to that which contains the cross’ companion relic, the Holy Thorn, now kept by the Benedictine sisters of Stanbrook Abbey in Yorkshire. Together the relics and their reliquaries are prominent and tangible examples of medieval devotional interest in the instruments of the passion, and in physical and visible manifestations of the cross.
Relic of St Benedict

This reliquary contains a bone fragment of St Benedict of Nursia (480–547), monk and founder of the Benedictine order. Benedict remains the most important figure within the history of western monasticism. We have already seen the influence exerted by his rule for monastic life, and his attempt to balance contemplative with active vocations has resonated across this entire catalogue. Yet he was also remembered as a charismatic figure, a renowned miracle worker who is reputed to have resurrected the dead, exorcised diabolical forces, and enabled one disciple to walk upon water. The nature of his life was discussed in the Dialogues of Gregory the Great, where he is described embodying the notion that instruction should be by deed as well as by word. Whilst Benedict’s rule provided the fundamental blueprint for monastic life, his own actions exemplified and reinforced the ideal he had set down. This particular relic is said to have come from the monastery of San Sebastiano in Alatri, Italy, where Benedict himself is believed to have received hospitality in 529. It was probably acquired in Rome and was given to Downside in 1982 by Sir John Leslie, 4th Baronet, who was an old boy of the school. Today, the Downside relic of Benedict is kept by the monks along with a copy of his rule for daily reading, allowing the saint’s personal presence as well as his textual influence to continue to shape monastic life on a routine basis.
Relic of St Gregory the Great

Downside, or, more properly, the Community of St Gregory the Great at Downside, possesses several relics of its namesake and patron. The most intriguing of them, shown here, is a sizeable piece of a crozier associated with Gregory. The crozier, or pastoral staff, was an item carried by a bishop as the symbol of their pastoral office and their jurisdictional, doctrinal, and disciplinary authority. Croziers were in liturgical use from around the fifth century onwards, and they reflect the varied responsibilities of the bishop or abbot who carried them. This piece is not in fact thought to be a part of Gregory’s original crozier.

It was acquired for the Abbey in Rome in 1854 by Dom Jerome Jenkins, and shortly after it arrived at Downside it was reported that the relic was probably a ‘portion of an ancient pastoral staff which was placed by the saint’s body at some previous opening of the tomb in substitution for a still older one, which was removed’. The fragment was authenticated as a second-class relic in the mid-nineteenth century by Antonio Luigi Piatti, titular Archbishop of Antioch and Vicegerent of the Diocese of Rome. A second-class relic is an object that has touched the remains of a saint, and this item therefore encapsulates Gregory’s own teaching that through physical contact, the miraculous and healing power of a relic could be transferred to other objects. Today, along with Downside’s relic of Benedict, Gregory’s crozier is kept by the monks, allowing the sainted pope to continue guiding his flock.
Relic of St Boniface

Housed within this glass dome is a spinal vertebra of St Boniface (c. 675–754), Benedictine monk, evangelist, archbishop, and martyr. Born in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex, Boniface was educated at the Benedictine monastery in Exeter, before moving to the Abbey of Nursling where he continued to pursue his studies, instructing novices and writing a textbook on grammar. Though he may have first found his voice teaching grammar in the classroom, Boniface was later called to leave the cloister and preach the Christian faith in the mission field. In 716, when offered the abbacy of Nursling, he declined and instead set out on a missionary journey to Frisia and Germania. This was to be the first of several highly successful preaching journeys, and as well as winning converts to Christianity, Boniface set about organising these new territories into dioceses and pursuing the reform of the Frankish Church. Remembered as a zealous and gifted preacher, Boniface was fully aware of the potential impact of dramatic gesture. According to one tradition, the modern Christmas tree can trace its roots to the moment when Boniface felled the Donar Oak, a public spectacle orchestrated to demonstrate the erroneous nature of pagan veneration of sacred groves. Eventually martyred in Frisia in 754, his remains were taken to the monastery of Fulda, where Boniface was venerated as the ‘Apostle of the Germans’ and as a patron saint of the Germanic lands. Fondly remembered in many parts of northern Europe, and venerated as a Catholic patron saint of Germany, Boniface has not enjoyed any widespread fame in England in recent centuries. Nevertheless, in 2019, it was announced that Boniface was to be recognised by the County Council as the patron saint of his native Devon – a new and rather different legacy for this famous monastic preacher.
Thomas Ebendorfer (1388–1464) was a distinguished professor at the University of Vienna and of considerable influence in the historical and cultural debates of his time. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Theology, and Rector of the university on several occasions. Although his Sunday sermons were printed as early as the 1470s and are reasonably well-known, his sermons for saints’ feast days (sermones de sanctis), which are contained in this manuscript, are almost completely unstudied. Given his involvement in efforts to canonize Emperor Leopold III (who turned out to be the only layman canonized in the fifteenth century), Thomas’s views on sanctity will be of interest not only to the history of spirituality but also to the religious culture of his time. One of these sermons is of particular interest to the context of monastic spirituality. Although most of the sermons in this manuscript are on rather traditional feasts, the collection also contains an unusual homily dedicated to St Colmán (Colomannus), an Irish monk who was martyred near Vienna while on pilgrimage in the year 1012. Colmán’s relics were revered at the prestigious monastery of Melk and his cult was widespread in the British Isles, as well as in central and eastern Europe. Shown here is the beginning of Thomas’ sermon, Colman’s name (appearing here as Coloma[n]ni) is visible at the beginning of the fourth full line of text. This sermon, written over four centuries after Colmán’s death, demonstrates the enduring appeal of this particular saint, as well as the wider role played by monastic martyrs in medieval spirituality. In his act of writing and preaching, Thomas gave new voice to Colmán, amplifying and celebrating the impact of this monk’s holy life and holy death.
Speaking and Hearing: Voices from the Cloister

Since the earliest days of monasticism, monks and nuns have sought to regulate their contact with the outside world in order to foster a degree of withdrawal and seclusion. In the rich variety of items presented here, we are reminded that the medieval world offered a range of often very different solutions to the question of how far this withdrawal could and should be developed. Liturgical texts and vestments, as well as books for private meditation, reflect a contemplative way of life within the cloister, where voices were used primarily for study and education, and for communal acts of prayer. And yet, many early monastic texts, including the works of Cassian and Benedict shown here, argued that the outside world could not and should not be cut out entirely, and sought to balance a quiet life of secluded prayer and inner spiritual discipline alongside active ministries in which monastic vocation might entail some forms of pastoral or apostolic responsibilities. Some reform movements and new religious orders of the later Middle Ages sought to recalibrate this balance. One of the strictest monastic models for contemplative withdrawal from the world can be found in the twelfth-century rule followed by the hermit-monks of Grandmont, for whom, as we have seen, listening to Christ in the heart was always the best path to spiritual advancement. At Grandmont, voices – which were the most part private and internal voices – were to remain in the cloister, and preaching was primarily understood as a metaphor for spiritual dialogue and not a literal aspect of the monastic vocation. In their austere eremitism, however, the Grandmontines perhaps represent the exception rather than the rule. We have also seen that St Benedict had envisaged monasteries that might become involved in pastoral work, and had guided monks towards a way of life in which the example of their words and deeds stretched far beyond the cloister. A long tradition of monastic preaching, stretching back even beyond Benedict, bears witness to apostolic activity in the lives of monks. Within this catalogue, the relics and the corresponding veneration of saints and martyrs have reflected most clearly this legacy of monastic voices carrying far beyond the cloister. St Gregory, his authority marked by his crozier, had sent missionaries all across Europe, and in the eighth century monastic preachers like St Boniface continued this work. The Irish monk and martyr St Colmán, recalled in the late-medieval sermon shown at the end of this catalogue, captures the enduring legacy of monastic martyrs as individual figures of devotion and models of sanctity. Saints of all kinds, as we have seen, permeated medieval devotional culture. Venerated through relics, recalled in the liturgy and sermons, depicted in art, architecture, and vestments, and commemorated in the naming of churches and indeed people, saints were the heroes of the faith, inspirational, miracle-working figures whose examples of holy living provided a model to which others could aspire. Nevertheless, while the influence of famous saints can be detected throughout this
catalogue, the items shown here also reflect the daily lives and routines of the largely anonymous monks and nuns who read and indeed copied these manuscripts, who sang and prayed and chanted from them, who listened daily to chapters from the rules, who used these relics as a platform for prayer and meditation, who wore these vestments, and saw and contemplated their elaborate designs, and who prayed with and for the laity. Some of these monks and nuns preached and listened to sermons, others withdrew to secluded cells for private contemplation, and others still left the tranquility and security of the cloister altogether to seek new converts to the faith. The items gathered together here are the books, the vestments, and the relics that guided, enriched, and commemorated their lives and deaths, and that now stand testament to them, so that many hundreds of years later, we too can hear, and can learn from, these Voices from the Cloister.
Select Bibliography


Becquet, Jean (ed.). 1968. Scriptores Ordinis Grandimontensis. CCCM 8 (Turnhout: Brepols)


Yardley, Anne. 2006. Performing Piety in Medieval English Nunneries (New York: Palgrave Macmillan)