

Edmund Mortimer's death of the plague in Ireland in 1425 has been thought to mark the end of Wigmore as a major residence, with Mortimer's heir, Richard, Duke of York, having his headquarters at nearby Ludlow. However, some time in the fifteenth century the curtain wall was repaired and faunal remains and artefacts indicate occupancy of some status, even if Wigmore's prime role at this date was more a hunting lodge than fortress.

The ten chapters include C Davidson Cragoe's historical and architectural overview, and this chapter, along with Rátkai's two on the overview of the excavated evidence and Wigmore in context, will be of most interest to castellologists. A number of unpublished reports have been used to inform the monograph, one of them being J Cooke's 'Wigmore Castle, Herefordshire: fabric survey', prepared for English Heritage. This is described as forthcoming, but it is unclear whether it will be an in-house report or published more widely. I hope the latter, but it should be peer-reviewed in the light of a recent 'project' by the Castle Studies Group (CSG).

This project is Dr Robert Higham's work on shell-keeps, the detailed introduction and gazetteer appearing on the CSG's website in 2015, and kept up to date. Standing above the inner bailey at Wigmore is what has always been described as a shell-keep, against which stood the main tower, possibly on a motte. Higham dismisses Wigmore's shell-keep, using his criteria, and the myth needs putting to rest. What we have with the 'shell-keep' at this castle is an upper or inner ward, the inmost part of the Mortimer castle. The inner ward would be best described as the lower bailey, with the accepted outer bailey beyond.

Rátkai's report is a welcome addition to the field of castle studies, and the Society for Medieval Archaeology is to be congratulated on including it in its excellent monograph series.

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The Thorney Liber Vitae (London, British Library, Additional MS 40,000, fols 1–12r): edition, facsimile and study. Edited by LYNDA ROLLASON. 270mm. Pp 387, 36 pls, 6 figs, 2 maps. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2015. ISBN 9781783270101. £95 (hbk).

With the appearance of the Thorney *liber vitae* all three *libri vitae* from medieval England are now

available in modern editions.¹ Medieval *libri vitae* belong to the category of memorial texts, preserving the names of individuals commemorated in the community's prayers; some are separate enterprises, others are entered in pre-existing manuscripts in the community's possession. The Thorney list begins with entries inserted into a tenth-century gospel book in the time of Abbot Gunter (1085–1112). The earliest sections draw upon pre-existing material dating from the reign of Cnut (1016–35) and continuations were made in various stints throughout the twelfth century, with two names, those of Henry III and of Edward I's queen, Eleanor, being added in the thirteenth century. The lists record 686 names, but since the commoner ones recur frequently, it is difficult to estimate how many individuals are commemorated.

The core of the volume is an extended text of the *liber vitae* entries based on the transcript made by the late Cecily Clark (d. 1992), who herself took over the work after the death of Olof von Feilitzen (d. 1976). The various scribal stints were identified and dated by the late Neil Ker (d. 1982), and both the text and Ker's dates have been checked by Lynda Rollason and Richard Gameson. In the text of the *liber vitae* each stint is clearly defined and dated, and the full-colour facsimile (which includes not only the *liber vitae* entries but also the fifteenth-century list of abbots, the twelfth-century relic-list, the canon tables and other relevant materials) is followed by another in black and white, in which the same scribal stints have been delineated, for ease of reference. This transparency is evident throughout the volume, which is commendably user-friendly, enabling the reader to engage with the source itself as well as the conclusions of the various contributors. In the four introductory essays, Lynda Rollason sets the making and use of the Thorney *liber vitae* in the context of the abbey's history from its beginnings to the end of the Middle Ages, Richard Gameson examines the tenth-century gospel book, probably hailing from Brittany, into which the *liber vitae* entries were inserted, John Insley provides an introduction to the personal names and Katharine Keats-Rohan reviews the prosopographical challenges that they present. The printed text of the *liber vitae* is followed by Richard Gameson's study of its codicology and palaeography.

The Onomasticon is based on the work of Olof von Feilitzen, continued by Cecily Clark

1. The others being the Durham *liber vitae* (BL, Cotton MS Domitian A VII) and the New Minster *liber vitae* (BL, Stowe MS 944).

and updated and reorganised by John Insley. The names, all of which are cross-referenced to the labelled stints in the printed text, are arranged under Celtic, continental Germanic, Old English (dithematic and monothematic), Latin, Greek and Biblical, and Scandinavian forms, plus a few that cannot be precisely assigned. A detailed prosopographical survey follows, prepared by Katharine Keats-Rohan, containing notes on all the persons so far identified, whether ecclesiastics (both regular and secular), abbots and monks of Thorney, royalty, aristocrats or gentry and their followers. Two entries receive detailed treatment because of their intrinsic interest: the 'goldsmith's' entry, which records a gift of bullion to the abbey, is analysed by John Insley (on the language), Julia Crick and Tessa Webber (on the palaeography), and Rory Naismith deals with the entry for the moneyer, Turstan of Stamford. These sections are followed by John Insley's discussion of the language of the earliest entries, which refer back to the time of Cnut (folios 9v, 10r and 10v), and Lynda Rollason's analysis of the relic-list. There are full indexes, both for the name-forms and for individual persons. As it stands, the Thorney *liber vitae* is a list of names and, while much can be deduced from their form and context, their greatest value emerges when they can be associated with the individuals whom the monks of Thorney wished to commemorate. For this reviewer the detailed prosopographical list is especially relevant, but there is plenty to interest other specialists, whether codicologists, palaeographers or linguists, as well as historians working on the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Much can be deduced by looking at those who were not entered into 'the book of life'. There is, for instance, no mention of Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester, even though it was he who instituted Benedictine life at Thorney in the tenth century. The explanation might be that in the time of Abbot Gunter, when the compilation of the *liber vitae* in its current form began, Thorney was concerned to maintain a distance from the resurgent abbey of Peterborough, also founded by Æthelwold, perhaps with Thorney as a dependent cell. Similar considerations might explain why the *liber vitae* appears to skip over the reign of Edward the Confessor, when the abbey was part of the ecclesiastical empire ruled by Leofric, Abbot of Peterborough. The name of King Cnut, on the other hand, figures prominently at the head of its earliest section, perhaps because the abbey enjoyed more independence in the days of the Danish kings. Such considerations emphasise the fact that, like many

similar texts, the Thorney *liber vitae* deals not only with piety but also with property and politics. This comprehensive edition will furnish future researchers with insights into such matters for a long time to come.

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The Medieval Manuscripts at Maynooth: explorations in the unknown. By PETER J LUCAS and ANGELA M LUCAS. 210mm. Pp xxvii + 276, col ill. Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2014. ISBN 9781846825347. £35 (hbk).

This is the first time the medieval Latin manuscripts in the library of the National University of Ireland Maynooth have been published. In that sense this is an exploration 'in the unknown', and makes a valuable contribution to knowledge of the collections of medieval manuscripts in Ireland: now fully and comprehensively presented, and with a generously illustrated volume to be proud of, the Maynooth Latin manuscripts, which date from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, are on the map.

The introduction to the catalogue includes a brief history of the college from its origins as a Catholic seminary in 1795. The acquisition of medieval manuscripts may have begun with five manuscripts from the monastic library of Saint Jacques in Liège, which probably came to Maynooth early in its history. These five retain their Liège bindings of the 1720s: 'They seem to be much as they must have been when sold from St Jacques in 1788, and this state of preservation is a bonus' (p 19). From then on, it seems that manuscripts were simply acquired: given or bought. There is no evident policy behind the creation of this collection, but they add substantially to the riches of the University Library.

As the authors make clear, this book is new work, investigating a group of 'virgin manuscripts' (p xv). As such, the focus has been on diligent description, each manuscript treated individually. The catalogue is grouped into six sections: the five manuscripts from Liège, six liturgical and devotional manuscripts from various origins (one of which is a printed book with hand-coloured illuminations), two manuscripts including canon law and biblical commentary, one bible, one benedictional and a fair copy of a Venetian commission from the Doge to his Captain of the Gulf, Nicolò da