Chapter Six

Book Ownership at Poissy

1. The friars and their library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Shelf Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bern, Burgerbibliothek</td>
<td>Cod. 428</td>
<td>(Albohali Evenzoay: De regimine sanitatis; Petrus Hispanus: Thesaurus pauperum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Évora, Biblioteca Pública</td>
<td>CXXIVI-12</td>
<td>(Vitae Patrum; Vincent de Beauvais on the Antichrist)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glasgow, University Library</td>
<td>ms Hunter 391</td>
<td>(Bartholomeus Anglicus: De proprietatibus rerum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek</td>
<td>Clm 10157</td>
<td>(Sententiae of the Church Fathers; Treatises on the Virtues and Vices; Etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek</td>
<td>Clm 10066</td>
<td>(Guillaume le Breton: Expositions on St. Jerome's prologues in the Bible; Gilbert de la Porée: Prologue to the Apocalypse)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek</td>
<td>Clm 10008</td>
<td>(Solomonic Books, Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, glossed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek</td>
<td>Clm 10026</td>
<td>(Gospels of SS Matthew and Luke, glossed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine</td>
<td>ms 1397</td>
<td>(Humbert of Romans: Commentary on rules of Saint Augustine and miscellaneous copied and composed by Roland Roussel OP, Vicar at Poissy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale</td>
<td>ms lat 11281</td>
<td>(Eberhard de Béthune: Graecismus)</td>
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<td>(Vincent de Beauvais: Speculum historiale)</td>
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Philippe le Bel's Foundation Charter of 1304 provided the Poissy nuns with an annual revenue for the upkeep of thirteen friars resident at the monastery: the king then made further funds available in 1308, by which time the friars had been installed. Their chief rôle was to minister to the spiritual needs of the nuns, but they could also, if required, negotiate on the nuns' behalf in temporal dealings. These arrangements were ratified by Clement V in 1312. The prior or vicar of the friars was to be chosen by Philippe le Bel and

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1 Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 2 (publ. in S. Moreau-Rendu, Le prieuré royal de saint-Louis de Poissy, Colmar, 1968, 314); Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 44, fol. 68v no. 111. The latter (dated 1308) refers to the king's provision for the food and clothing needs for thirteen Dominican friars already resident at Poissy ('fratrum predicatitorum commorantum apud Pisiacum'). See also Archives Nationales, Registres du Trésor des Chartes, I, Règne de Philippe le Bel, ed. M. M. Glénisson and J. Guerout, Paris, 1958, 1003.

2 Regestum Clemens Papae V ex Vaticanis archetypis, ed. Monks of St. Benedict, An. 7, Rome, 1887, 50 (nos 7811-12); O. Dufourcq-Latron, Le monastère royal de saint-Louis de Poissy depuis la fondation
was responsible for the care and maintenance of the royal hospice situated in the monastery grounds.\textsuperscript{3} By the mid-1500s the number of ordained friars had been reduced to approximately six (one cantor and five confessors).\textsuperscript{4}

The Dominicans voiced their concern that friars attached to female houses should be carefully selected for their maturity, piety and discretion.\textsuperscript{5} Two of the earliest vicars at Poissy held the post of confessor to the king and also served as executors on the kings' deaths. The first prior, Reynaud d'Aubigny, was confessor to Philippe le Bel and later to his son Philippe V. Aubigny had previously been prior of the Paris convent and was inquisitor of the Templars in 1307; among his duties at Poissy he sold lands unusable by the monastery in the name of the king in 1309 and functioned as 'concierge de l'hôtel du roi' from 1313.\textsuperscript{6} Succeeding royal Dominican confessors, Vibert Louel (to Louis X and Charles VI) and Nicholas de Clermont (to Philippe V), were involved in negotiating the building works still in progress at the monastery.\textsuperscript{7}

Pope John XXII appointed Nicholas de Clermont vicar of Poissy in 1320, but revoked the life-long appointment three years later.\textsuperscript{8} Other friars did live out their lives at the monastery, including its second prior, Guillaume Vitalis (formerly a \textit{lector}) and André Piconis, confessor and organist who by the time of his death in 1476 had been the friar-sacristan at Poissy for twenty-five years.\textsuperscript{9} In general, though, the length of an appointment either as prior or as a member of the convent seems not to have been lifelong. Indeed it may often have been relatively short, two- or three-year terms being laid down for monastic confessors

\footnotesize{(1304) jusqu'à l'institution de la Congrégation Gallicane (début du XVIe) in \textit{Position des Thèses...École nationale des chartes}, Paris, 1929, 79-80.}

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Regestum Clemens V}, n. 2 above, 51 (no. 7815).

\textsuperscript{4} See the journal of Claude Despence, quoted in A. de Ruble, "Le colloque de Poissy (Septembre-Octobre 1561)", \textit{Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France}, 16, 1889, 11; surviving Poissy accounts for 1631 and later years indicate five or six 'pères', while five confessors and three conversi were recorded at the house in 1694 (see Yvellins, 73 H 15-73 H 29; \textit{Etat de ce que doit le monastere Royal des dames Religieuses de saint Louis de Poissy, de ses charges et dépenses tant ordinaires, qu'extraordinaires}, s. l., 1694, in \textit{Recueil de la fondation...}, Paris, BN Lk7 7923).

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{ACGOP}, II, 286; the same sentiment is expressed in Philippe le Bel's letter to the Dominican Provincial in 1299 (Bernard Gui, "E notitia provinciarum et dominorum Ordinis Praedicatorum" in \textit{RHGF}, 23, Paris, 1876, 191).


\textsuperscript{7} Viard, n. 6 above, 174 (no. 869) and passim (Clermont); 576 (no. 3321) and passim (Vibert Louel).

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Lettres communes de Jean XXII (1316-1334)}, ed. G. Mollat, Paris, III, 1906, 188 (no. 12376); IV, 1910, 255 (no. 17140).

\textsuperscript{9} See \textit{L'année dominicaine}, ed. T. Sougez, Amiens, I, 1684, 68-69; V, 1691, 280; Moreau-Rendu, n. 1 above, 325.
in 1569. More limited appointments helped, of course, to guard against the friars becoming too familiar with the nuns, a matter which was always of concern to the Order.

Relatively short appointments also meant that the establishment of a comprehensive library for the use of friars was less likely. The friars' main duties consisted of service to the monastery — hearing confession for the nuns, providing them with religious or musical instruction where necessary, acting as guardians of their property, and undertaking their business affairs if required — and the conduct of church services that involved both the nuns and royal and other lay parishioners. There is no evidence that they undertook any teaching or formal study, and certain of their number were sometimes away for extended periods on monastic business. Poissy was not, therefore, likely to have had the extensive library that is characteristic of male houses where study was a primary activity. Some of the texts regularly used for the preparation of sermons were no doubt available, but otherwise an incoming friar would probably have brought most of the books he needed with him and have taken them away again when he left. Were he to remain at Poissy until his death, however, his possessions were to remain there, put to the needs of the friars' convent; this was contrary to normal Dominican practice whereby the Provincial decided how the books and other goods of deceased friars attached to female houses were to be distributed. It is these books, and those for which a friar no longer had use, that are likely to have provided the bulk of the friars' library at Poissy.

There are, however, isolated instances of individuals at the house engaging in sustained scholarly activity. Jean Chambli was among a group of Dominicans and other Masters of Arts who were commissioned in 1397-98 by Louis, duc d'Orléans to continue work on a French translation and commentary for the large Bible that had been started for king Jean le Bon. And in the later years of his appointment as prior, between 1494 and 1502, Roland Roussel transcribed Humbert's commentaries on the Rule and his own sermons and glosses on material relating to St. Jerome (Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, ms 1397).

In the earliest phase of the monastery Philippe le Bel provided two general encyclopedic works for the friars' communal book collection. A surviving, closely-written copy of De

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10 ACGOP, V, 93.
11 Restriction of encounters between nuns and friars, especially friars' unauthorised entry into the nuns' enclosure, was continually insisted upon at the Chapters General, for instance in 1321, 1349, 1359, 1362, 1401, etc (ACGOP, II, 134, 328, 384, 395; III, 106).
12 Liste des prieures du monastere de S. Louis de Poissy..., repr. from 1644 publication, probably Paris, n. d., passim; Dufourcq-Latron, n. 2 above, 80.
13 Bull issued by Clement V in 1312, reiterated by John XXII, and by Dominican Chapter General in 1343 (Regestum Clemens V, n. 2 above, 51 (no. 7812); ACGOP, II, 289).
15 Delisle, Cabinet, I, 101.
16 It has also been conjectured that a prior at the house at about this time composed a biographical catalogue, in French, of esteemed Dominicans that bears an unknown temporal relationship to their sixteenth-century portraiture in the nuns' cloister (see R. Creytens, "La galerie des hommes illustres de l'Ordre de Saint-Dominique au monastère royal de Poissy", Archives d'histoire dominicaine, Paris, 1946, 103-108).
proprietatis rerum (Glasgow, University Library, ms Hunter 391) — a common ready-reference for sermons — was almost certainly among his book provisions for the house.\textsuperscript{17} On his death in 1314 the king bequeathed for the friars' use a second encyclopedic compilation, a copy of Vincent de Beauvais' \textit{Speculum historiale} that he had received from his previous Dominican confessor.\textsuperscript{18}

When the friar-confessor Charles Lopis died in 1545 he specifically endowed the friars' library with a 'quantité de beaux livres'.\textsuperscript{19} None of these has been identified and, of the books that are known to have come from the friars' library, only the unprepossessing and fragmentary \textit{Graecismus} (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms lat 11281) lacks a library inscription pre-dating this bequest. Indeed, this Latin text-book, along with a number of biblical commentaries that survive from the library, must have been brought in by an incoming friar and perhaps discarded as no longer useful.\textsuperscript{20} The commentaries are all parts of the biblical gloss, a set text in the faculty of Theology at the University in Paris which was issued to Dominicans sent to study there.\textsuperscript{21} The Poissy examples are a compilation of the five glossed 'Solomonic books' in a particularly finely illuminated manuscript, the glossed gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, originally two separate volumes, and Gilbert de la Porre's Prologue to the Apocalypse and Guillaume le Breton's Expositions on St. Jerome's prologues, also now bound as one volume (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 10008; Clm 10026; Clm 10066). All these manuscripts date from the thirteenth century, and inscriptions in the St. Matthew testify to a long history of sale and resale among students at the University.\textsuperscript{22}

Such theological texts were common in Dominican conventual libraries, as were the \textit{Vitae Patrum} (Évora, Biblioteca Pública CXXIV/1-12), various treatises on the Virtues and Vices (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 10157) and the other preaching aids supplied by Philippe le Bel — the \textit{Speculum historiale} and \textit{De proprietatis rerum}.\textsuperscript{23} Medical texts, on the other hand, such as the practical handbook containing Albohali Evenzoay's \textit{De regimine sanitatis} and Petrus Hispanus' \textit{Thesaurus pauperum} (Berne, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 428) are

\textsuperscript{17} Discussed in Chapter 2 Part 2.
\textsuperscript{18} See Chapter 2 Part 3, including n. 131.
\textsuperscript{19} 'Le 26 de Septembre 1545 trepassa venerable religieux maire Charles Lopis du couvent de Chartres...de son bien fut donné 808 et quantité de beaux livres pour la Librairie des freres il estoit confesseur' (Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 12)
\textsuperscript{20} Only a student who became a lector was permitted to retain his school-books, and these were to be returned to his convent when he discontinued lecturing (Humphreys, n. 14 above, 39). The presence of such books at Poissy indicates that not all incoming friars abided by the rules.
\textsuperscript{22} See individual Catalogue entries for further detail of this and other manuscripts.
\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Humphreys, n. 14 above, 90-97.
a rare component of friars' libraries; although a Dominican himself, Petrus Hispanus' works are otherwise unrecorded.24 Neither were grammar books, like the Graecismus, common.25

The surviving manuscripts from the friars' library at Poissy predate their owners' establishment there in about 1308. They are all texts for private reading or reference; liturgical books are absent. It is uncertain exactly when most volumes came to the house, although their inscriptions register them in the friar's communal library between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (see Table 6.1). No pressmarks are indicated, so perhaps the holdings were not especially complex. None of the manuscripts registers a previous friar-owner; nor is there evidence of individual friars formally borrowing a volume as is documented for the Dominican convent at Barcelona.26 Two of the volumes, BN lat 11281 and Clm 10157, were already severely fragmented when their seventeenth-century ex libris was written on the first surviving folio. Still, even an incomplete book could be useful in a convent library, as the inscription at the beginning of a fragmentary, unbound copy of Cicero's Orationes owned by the Dominican friars in Paris makes clear: 'Ce manuscrit quoique imparfait et imprimé, peut avoir son utilité pour les différentes leçons'.27

Humbert of Romans recommended that library books have an introductory inscription identifying text and ownership along the following lines: 'iste liber vel istud volumen continet hoc et hoc, et est talis conventus fratrum predicatorum' (this book/volume contains '......'; and belongs to the Dominican convent at '......').28 The advice was followed in the earlier Poissy inscriptions (see Table 6.1). These were written by at least three hands, each using a slightly different version of the formula. One person was responsible for the short seventeenth-century inscriptions, and these are identical in every book whether owned by friars or nuns (see Table 6.1). And although one might expect such inscriptions to go back earlier than the fifteenth century, presumably the Poissy friars' (and nuns') librarians were as negligent as those of other houses in this regard. In 1439 and 1456, for instance, the Chapter General had to insist that inventories be made of books and that the visitors ensure they are kept updated;29 and in 1495 the Master General stipulated that the convent at Pavia have an inventory of all books in their library prepared within three days of receiving his letter.30

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24 Ibid., 98; idem, "The Medical Books of the Medieval Friars", Libri, 3, 1954, 98.
25 There was a copy of the Graecismus at Bologna, another at Barcelona (idem, n. 14 above, 94; C. Douais, Les assignations des livres aux religieux du couvent des Frères Prêcheurs de Barcelone (XIIe-XVe siècles), Toulouse and Paris, 1893).
26 Ibid., 15-16 and passim. But see below (Part 2a) for evidence of a similar practice by the Poissy nuns.
27 Paris, BN, n.a. fr 5416, Catalogus codicum manuscriptum ex monasteris...Jacobi ad s. Jacobi, Jacobi ad s. Honorat...in Bibliothecam Caesareae Illitterum..., 50.
29 ACGOP, III, 243, 243.
30 Santa Sabina, IV, 14, f. 130.
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<th>A. FRIARS' COLLECTION</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MEDICAL TEXTS</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est de commun libraria fratum beati Ludovici de pissiaco ordinis predicatorum</em></td>
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<td>Berne 428</td>
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<td><strong>GRAECISMUS</strong></td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BN lat 11281</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GLOSSED OT BOOKS</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est fratum predatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clm 10008</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BRITISH, POREEE: BIBLICAL EXPOSITIONS</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber expositionem prologorum in biblia est de communis librarium fratum predatorum ludovici de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clm 10066</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<td><strong>GLOSSED NT BOOKS</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber continent evangelium mathe et luce glossata est de commun librarium fratum beati ludovici de pissiaco ordinis predicatorum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clm 10026</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SENTENCES, VIRTUES AND VICES</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>In isto volumine continentur primo meditationes bernardi...Et est de commun librarium fratum predatorum [sancti ludovici de pissiaco]</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clm 10157</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est a generoso? Ioanne de ....</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VITAE PATRUM</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber de vite sanctorum patrum est de commun librarium fratum predatorum sancti ludovici de pissiaco</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evora ms</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Vita heremitarum Anno 1301. Ex bibliotheca [fratum praedicatorum .......]</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DE PROPRIETATIBUS RERUM</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est de commun librarium fratum beati ludovici de pissiaco ordinis predicatorum</em></td>
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<td>Hunter 391</td>
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<tr>
<th>B. NUNS' COLLECTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARGARET OF HUNGARY</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est sororum ecclesie beati Ludovici de Pissiaco et est de dono domine sororis Marie de Claromonte</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arsenal 1072</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>READINGS: BAPTIST ETC.</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est sororum eccl. beati Ludovici de Pissiaco</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL Add 32579</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROSARIUS</strong></td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>BN fr 12483</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>READINGS: BERNARD ETC.</strong></td>
<td>s. xv-xvi</td>
<td><em>Ce livre est de legilise monseigneur saint Louys de Poyssi de lorde Saint Dominique pour lusage des dames religieuses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clm 10025</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HUMBERT ON RULES</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est de conventu sororum ecclesie beati ludovici de pissiaco et est de dono sororis alpis loutrel condam priorisse</em></td>
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<td>Clm 10154</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GESTA BVM</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est sororum ecclesie beati Ludovici de pissiaco</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clm 10156</td>
<td>s. xvii</td>
<td><em>Ex bibliotheca fratum praedicatorum de pissiaco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASCETIC TEXTS</strong></td>
<td>s. xv</td>
<td><em>Iste liber est de regali monisterio sororum beatissimi Ludovici de Pissiaco post mortem predictarum sororum Cecilie et cetera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg lat 160</td>
<td>s. xv-xvi</td>
<td><em>Iste liber de consideratione novissimorum et est [............]</em></td>
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At least six of the books identified as belonging to the friars had left Poissy before its dissolution (see Table 1.1). No friars' library is mentioned in the Revolutionary inventory and books are absent from the ensuing auction of items the friars had owned in common.\textsuperscript{31} There is little doubt, therefore, that the library had been completely dispersed. Whatever the extent of this collection, which had been formally constituted by the fifteenth century, the eight volumes known to have survived provide a valuable addition to information concerning the library contents of the Dominican friars, most particularly of those attached to a female institution.

2. The nuns' holdings

a. Communal ownership

The books held in common by the nuns were generally inscribed with a Latin \textit{ex libris} in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, in terms similar to those of the friars' books (see Table 6.1). In keeping with the recommendations of Humbert of Romans, the inscription also names the book's donor, if any. Thus it is stated that a Life of St. Margaret of Hungary (Arsenal 1072) and Humbert of Roman's Commentary on the Augustinian Rule (Clm 10156) were given to the community by Marie de Clermont and Alix Loutrel respectively, both of whom were at one time prioresses at the house.\textsuperscript{32} The two books are written in Latin and the small size of their script indicates that they were probably designed for private reading. A rhymed anthology in the vernacular which centres on the Virgin, the \textit{Rosarius} (BN fr 12483), was also most likely owned in common by the nuns at this time.\textsuperscript{33} Its French text naturally falls into short sections so the lack of any user-marks does not necessarily imply private rather than public reading, although the closely-written script suggests the former.

Larger reading books received similar ownership inscriptions. They have been marked at various periods with stress-marks over the passages which an individual nun would read to the community at meals or to a group in the workroom. Two of these books are compilations of the Life of John the Baptist and the History of the Dominican Order (Add 32579) and the Life and Miracles of the Virgin (Clm 10156); each was made specifically for the house.\textsuperscript{34} An earlier manuscript — similarly sized and stress-marked — is an anthology which includes a number of Bernardine texts (Clm 10025). It was probably purchased second-hand expressly for table reading since in the fifteenth century St. Bernard's sermons were broken up into short passages, with the label 'lectio' written in the margin. Some are also numbered in reading order and one marginal note makes a specific

\textsuperscript{31} Discussed in Chapter 1 Part 1.

\textsuperscript{32} See Catalogue entry for Arsenal 1072 regarding the accuracy of allegation of involvement of the founding nun Marie de Clermont.

\textsuperscript{33} The manuscript had lost its first 22 chapters — and, of course, any earlier ownership inscription — by the time its seventeenth-century \textit{ex libris} was added.

\textsuperscript{34} See Chapter 2 Part 2 and specific Catalogue entries.
reference to 'collatio'. The manuscript's *ex libris*, although in French, follows the usual format (Table 6.1).

It is instructive that none of the ownership inscriptions mentions a library, whereas all those in the friars' books do. And since a communal library as a physically discrete area was not fashioned for the nuns until 1733, it appears that until this time commonly-owned books were stored where they were used. In about 1584 at the 'trentay' of Françoise de la Riche, a picture-bible and two fine books of the Life of Christ, went specifically to the workroom. Indeed, this habit must have persisted until the Revolution for, despite having a library at this time, the nuns kept in their refectory — in an 'armoire' and elsewhere — 'trois volumes de livres de prières' and 'un livre contenant la vie des saints'; almost certainly these were books that were read during meals. The few surviving texts for public reading at Poissy are all in Latin, in contrast to the books used for the same purpose by German nuns in the fifteenth century, which are predominantly in the vernacular. Nor does evidence survive from Poissy of an extensive range of material for refectory reading, such as that transcribed by the reformed nuns of St. Catherine's at Nuremberg and then rigorously arranged in their library, pressmarked and catalogued according to a systematic reading plan for the entire year.

Liturgical volumes that were not individually owned do not bear inscriptions. These include the church missals associated with the nuns' choir (Garrett 41 and Egerton 3037), which were no doubt cared for by the nun-sacristan in line with Humbert's recommendation. The inventory of 1790 records that two missals were stored, with a pulpitary, in an 'armoire' in the nuns' choir and that a set of ten large choirbooks (probably antiphonaries and gradualists) was stored nearby in a second 'armoire'. A large breviary was bought in 1733 for the centre of the choir, to be rebound some forty years after purchase; at least one book for the choir was chained at its place of use. It is likely that these practices continued

35 See Chapter 4 Part 3 and Catalogue entry.  
36 Discussed in Chapter 1 Part 1.  
37 'Françoise le Riche... a son trentay fut presente... une bible imaginée pour la salle [d'ouvrier] avec deux autres beaux Livres de vitta christ' (Paris, BN fr. 5009, f. 19v).  
38 See Chapter 1 n. 10.  
39 Hinnebusch, n. 14 above, 385-386; *ibid.*, n. 21 above, 203-204.  
41 See Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, 249-251; Humphreys, n. 14 above, 29.  
42 For the 1790 inventory see Chapter 1 Part 1, including note 10.  
43 'Paye par le mesme [Pere Engalbet du noviciait] la somme de vintie six livres dix sols pour un grand Breviare pour le milieu du chouer' (Yvelines, 73 H 21, Poissy Accounts, 1733); 'Paëd huit livres par les mains de Soeur de Nocé, pour avoir fait relieu le grand Brevinaire du chouer' (*ibid.*, 73 H 26, Poissy accounts, 1774).  
44 Two of the sparse surviving accounts involve a chain and fastenings for books in the choir: 'Guillaume le serrurier... une chaine de fer qui aeste mise au quart return du destre chouer pour tenir le livre...' (*ibid.*, 73 H 42, Poissy Sacristy Accounts, 1 Sep 1626); '...au sieur Charier sellier à Poissy pour avoir racomodé toutes les attaches des livres du chouer' (*ibid.*, 73 H 23, Poissy Accounts, 1766).
customs earlier established by the nuns for the storage and care of the larger, imposing manuscripts in communal use in choir. No large volume has survived.

The *Liber capitularius* (Clm 10170) more than likely rested on the lectern in the chapterhouse, where it was read every day of the year. At Poissy this volume may also have had a special rôle in the ritual for the election of a new prioress. From the chapterhouse grill the presiding Dominican friar exhorted the nuns to follow prudent election guidelines, then holding 'le livre des constitutions' in his hand he solemnly called on them to do so.45

The extraordinary longevity and the varied fortunes of this volume are considered below.

None of the books mentioned so far was at any time personal property. But books that had been privately owned could enter the public domain on their owner's death. This seems to have happened when a nun died without a declared wish to bequeath her belongings to another, or when she specifically requested that her books go to the office of the prioress, subprioress or chantress. On the death of their first nun-owner Marie de France in 1439, for example, two extensively illustrated manuscripts, the Psalter of St. Louis and the Belleville Breviary, entered into communal possession; an inscription in the breviary volumes states that they were later purchased from the community (discussed below), while the psalter was lent some time before 1484 by the prioress — presumably acting as its communal custodian — to queen Charlotte de Savoie.46

Books bequeathed to the offices of subprioress and chantress are invariably liturgical. A breviary (Arsenal 602-3) and a ferial psalter and hymnal (Mazarine 381) each went to the subprioress after having been owned by a succession of individuals or pairs of nuns; Marie de Pardieu, joint owner of Mazarine 381 with her niece Susanne de Mailloc (whom she pre-deceased), presented the office of subprioress with a missal when she died in 1571; and after the death of Denise de Brinon the subprioress received a monetary donation marked expressly for choirbooks.47 Brinon's processional (New York private coll.) was later owned by individual nuns. It then went to the chantress after which it was assigned to an unidentified novice.48 Antoinette de Ranty bequeathed her psalter (Arsenal 604) 'pour servir au choeur'.

The Poissy subprioress and chantress appear, therefore, to have been the agents through which uncommitted liturgical books were transferred, or sometimes perhaps sold (see below), from the communal holding to individual nuns in the sixteenth century at Poissy. This is in part analogous to the distribution of books (among them forty-five breviaries, three diurnals and one psalter) to individual friars according to need which is recorded for

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45 See Santa Sabina, XII 30510, no. 98: account of election held 2 Sep 1664. Election rules and qualities to be sought in a prioress concern Cap. XXIII of the Poissy nuns' Constitutions: *De creacione prioris* (Clm 10170, f. 143).

46 See individual Catalogue entries for details.

47 See Catalogue entries for inscriptions in Arsenal 602-3 and Mazarine 381; 20 Dec 1571: [Marie de Pardieu]'a son Trentay fut donné 200[francs] et un beau messel a l'office de souvreure' (Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 15); 28 Apr 1586: 'Le trentay de feu Sr Denise Brinon fut donne...a Loffice de souvreure pour les Livres du choeur 30[francs] (Yvelines, 73 H 42).

48 See Catalogue entry.
the Dominican convent at Barcelona from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century; payment was sometimes required to secure lifelong proprietorship of a volume. Humbert of Romans had held the cantor responsible for the supply of sufficient numbers of up-to-date liturgical books for use in choir and for their refurbishment; Humbert's subprior was to ensure that a Vita patrum and a Liber collationum — books for reading at meals — were in the house; the sacristan was to see to the books necessary for the mass. Evidence from later centuries shows that the duties of the chantress at Poissy met with Humbert's recommendations. A note in a prosar (Egerton 2601) states that, along with an apparently upgraded or refurbished gradual (or missal), it was to be delivered to two nuns. One of these recipients was Anne de Melleville, the chantress who in 1673 purchased copies of the offices of newly-canonicalised saints. In the later eighteenth century it was again the chantress — Anne de Barville de Nocé — who at various times saw to the purchase and binding of liturgical books such as a martyrology and a collector, to the rebinding of her own choirbook, the large 'breviary' of the choir and a second collector, to the repair of another choirbook, and to the purchase of breviary supplements; in 1626 it was the nun-sacristan who organised the purchase of a missal and a processional through the prior. The exact involvement of the subpriorress in the distribution of books at Poissy is less clear.

b. Personal acquisition and disposal

Ownership inscriptions in two illustrated manuscripts provide evidence that individual Poissy nuns purchased for their own use certain books held by the community, and that these volumes were then theirs to give away as they were permitted or wished. Marie Jouvenal des Ursins bought the Belleville Breviary from the community in 1454 for 120 écus and provided it with new clasps:

'Ces belles légendes appartiennent à seur Marie Juvenal des Ursins, religieuse en l'égisé de monseigneur saint Loys de Poissy. Et les onchat du couvent l'an mil

49 Douais, n. 25 above, 16 and passim.
50 Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, 212, 238-239, 249.
51 Recorded as a note inside the front cover of Egerton 2601 (see also Catalogue entry): 'Cy livre avec un autre de messes(s) doit estre recevoir aux Dames de Melleville et de Hennequin religieuse(s) de Poissy et qui une lesone prester(?) fut le faire un de (nuestre dame?). I thank Dr. Christopher de Hamel for reading and interpreting this document.
52 '61 l12s payées par les mains de seur Anne de Melleville chantre pour avoir achedé des cayers, des offices, des sains canialers de nouveau, payé par ordre de Madame.' (Yvelines, 73 H 18, Poissy accounts 9 Jan 1673 - 3 Dec 1673)
53 1768: 'Païé par les mains de Soeur de Nocé une livre dix sois pour la relieure d'un livre de choeur à la chantre.' 1774: 'Païé une livre, par les mains de Soeur de Nocé, pour avoir fait racoonoder un livre de choeur; Païé huit livres par les mains de Soeur de Nocé, pour avoir fait relieu le grand Breviaire du choeur.' 1777: 'Païe dix sept livres dix sous au Reverend pere Jacob, Jacobin, au Convent du Noviciat à Paris, savoir seize livres pour l'emplette d'un martirologe et d'un colectaire, et une livre dix sous pour un suplement de breviaraie, le tout donné à l'office de chantre.' 'Païe neuf livres par les mains de seœur de Nocé, chantre, à Baily, pour avoir relieu deux colectaires et un martirologe.' (Ibid., 73 H 24, 73 H 26, 73 H 27). 1616: 'A nostre maître Chevalier vicara baillé dix livre pour un missel qui la pris la paine de nous faire acheret et pour un processionner estoisante quatre solz...' (Ibid., 73 H 42, Accounts of Sacristy).
54 See Catalogue entry for further analysis of this purchase, the alterations made to the book and the identity of 'monseigneur le patriarhe'.

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Marie des Ursins gave the manuscript — which by this time probably bore the family arms on its page-edges (Fig. 91) — to her Ursins nieces who had joined her at the house. They, in turn passed it onto their nun-nieces, Claude and Marie des Ursins. Claude gave it to her great-niece and 'escolière' Antoinette de Ranty who subsequently bequeathed it to the office of prioress, in memory of all earlier Ursins-Ranty owners:

'Lesquelles elles donna à ses nièces, seurs Guionne et Michelle des Ursins, qui les donna à ses nièces seurs Claude et Marie des Ursins, et Ladicie seur Claude demeurant la derniere d'elles toutes, les a donné à son escolière et belle nièce Antoinette de Ranty, après la décès de laquelle sont demeurées pour estre mises en la memoire d'elles toutes à l'office de priere. Faict le XXIIIe d'octobre mil cinq cens cinquante neuf.'

Since the second Marie des Ursins died before her aunts, they must have given the breviary to her (and Claude) rather than bequeathing it.55 The reference to Claude as outliving all the Ursins indicates that ultimately the volumes belonged to whichever Ursins nun lived longest. In other words possession was relinquished by the donors only as long as the recipients remained alive; the book was to stay within the family as long as possible. By the time Ranty was professed, in 1535, all Ursins co-owners except Claude had died.56

Successive fifteenth-century inscriptions in the second manuscript, a compilation of two ascetic texts for private reading (Reg lat 160), state that it was initially the property of nuns of the Loutrel family and that it passed into the communal holding after the death of the last of these:

'Ce livre est a suers Cecile et Alips Loutral...et apres culz a suer Jehanne loutral'
'Tiste liber est de regali monasterio sororum beatissimi Ludovici de Pissiaco post mortem predictarum sororum Cecile et cetera.'

A later inscription declares that the book was subsequently purchased from the community for a group of four nuns, ownership remaining with the last of these to die:

'Ce livre est a suers Marguerite la Bosse, Jaquelin Patin, Perrecet Fouviere et Katherine Courtin religieuses en leglise monseigneur saint Loy de Poissy demourant a la survivant et lout achete de coupant.'

Little is known about these four women. Apparently unrelated, they may have had some common interest in devotional study and ascetic practice. Perrecet Fovière (or Fournier) was singled out in the monastic chronicles for her great talent for meditation and retreat, her assiduous reading of holy books and her abstinence.57

The type of brief documentation of changes in personal ownership in these and a number of other Poissy manuscripts that retain their endpapers was a normal Dominican

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55 Marie des Ursins entered at 12 years of age, in or before 1466 when all five Ursins were at the house, and was 27 when she died; her great aunt died in 1479 as prioress, her two aunts in about 1533 (see L'année dominicaine, ed. J.-B Feuillet, Amiens, I, 1678, 723-724, III, 1680, 363; Paris, BN, ms fr 5009, f. 4v; Anselme, Histoire généalogique, VI, 1730, 404).

56 For date of Ranty's profession see Paris, BN, ms fr 5009; Claude died in her 70s (L'année dominicaine, ed. T. Souege, VII, Amiens, 1693, 91).

requirement. But in the case of the breviary now ms Chantilly 804, which was sold outside the Order in 1473, a more stringently legal document recorded the transaction. A formal bill of sale is set out in the front of the book. It states that the survivor of the pair of nun-owners has sold the breviary for 80 écus to the named buyer, and that payment has been delivered. The document is signed by the intermediary in the transaction as a witness:

'Le quel depuis cest assavoir Ian mil quatre cens soixante treze par la dicté katherine nicolas sevrivante des deux, a este vendu la somme de quatre vings escus dor. a madame Gillette durval mareschelle de bretaigne. Et lesquelz quatre vings escus ont este bailliez contens a ladicté Katherine par la main de Religieuse personne frère Guillaume Romain pour lors provincial des celestins'.

'Ita est frater Guillermus Romain provincialis ordinis Celestinorum'.

Chantilly 804 was the second Dominican breviary owned by the pair of nuns Catherine la Chandelier and Catherine Nicolas. Their other version, Arsenal 107, was made specifically for nuns' use at Poissy whereas the format of Chantilly 804 is idiosyncratic, and was almost certainly designed for a lay person. This could be why its owner, when she had two breviaries to herself, sold it as the less appropriate. To do so she ought first have obtained permission to sell the volume outside the Order, and although some fourteen years later a Catherine Nicolas did receive approval from the Master General to sell or give away her possessions, the recipients could only be Dominican nuns. Nonetheless unauthorised private sales outside the Order seem to have been widespread, for the Dominicans were continually legislating against the alienation of books.

Inscriptions in extant breviaries used at Poissy show that they were owned either by a single nun or by a pair together, as in the two jointly owned by Nicolas and Chandelier. When a breviary was owned and used by two nuns, the pair must have sat beside each other in choir, in most cases because they had entered at the same time. This was normal Dominican practice; it was the duty of Humbert of Romans' cantor to assign novices or newly arrived religious to the left or right choir according to the needs of musical balance, and to position them in the stalls according to their length of time in the Order. The identical ownership inscriptions in the breviaries Arsenal 107 and Chantilly 804 possibly reflect the arrangement of the nuns in choir, since the relatives of neither owner (if they had any at Poissy) had any claim to the two books; either co-owner could dispose of her property as she wished:

'Ceste legende (ce brevairs) est a seurs K. la chandeliere. Et K. Nicolas. Religieuses en leglie monsier Saint Loys de Poissy. Et demoura Dutout a la survivant deux deux.'

58 Hinnebusch, n. 21 above, 213.
59 See Catalogue entry.
60 Santa Sabina, IV, 9, ff. 23, 37v.
61 See Humphreys, n. 14 above, 34-36; Hinnebusch, n. 21 above, 205-207.
62 Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, II, 242.
63 Although a Catherine Nicolas is stated to have had a sister and a niece at the house in 1409 (in a transcription from earlier records), the dates involved (if this one was transcribed correctly) make it improbable that this is the same nun: 'Les soeurs Catherine et Margerite Nicolas vivoient en 1409. S. Marie Nicolas leurs niece' (Paris, BN, ms fr 5009, f. 4v).
In certain circumstances, however, family members could co-own a breviary and share its use in choir. The two-volume compilation, Arsenal 602-3, for example, was given to two sisters by a nun deemed their 'maîtresse':

'Ces legendes sont a seurs Richard et Jehanne Gouverne Religieuses en leglise monseigneur saint loys de poissy et a la sourvivant dicellez. Et leur donna seur marie helard, leur maistresse Religieuse ou cedit lieu.'

Although little is known of the Gouverne sisters, it seems that they probably entered Poissy together as, indeed, was often the case with siblings. In their sole mention in monastic records — in 1469, most likely at their entry or profession — their names are linked. Moreover the fact that they were placed under the tutelage of a single 'maîtresse' implies that they were at a similar stage of religious development. It is quite likely, therefore, that they did sit next to each other in choir, sharing the same book, and that their co-ownership was a practical measure and not only a result of their consanguinity. As for the Belleville Breviary, which does not appear to have had a consistent liturgical rôle at the house, if it were taken to choir for a special occasion then either set of Ursins nieces could have shared it since each sibling pair was effectively the same age and had entered at the same time.

Among the Poissy manuscripts only two — the breviary sets Arsenal 602-3 and the Belleville Breviary — are inscribed as being given by a 'maîtresse' to her 'escolière' or 'disciple'. This kind of relationship, between an older nun and one or more young postulants or religious, perhaps had its origins in the fourteenth century with princesses coming to the house as children. When, for example, the infants Marguerite de France and Marie de Bourbon entered in 1351, Alix de Sauqueville was appointed their governess and mistress. Catherine de Harcourt later had 'la garde et gouvernement' of her cousin Marie de France, the niece of Marie de Bourbon. The tradition persisted at the house into the eighteenth century.

A number of inscriptions record the handing on of books between relatives. Poissy nuns kept their surnames and used their family arms, and surviving records attest to no less an awareness of their lineage than that held by their lay-relatives. Family gift giving at Poissy was directed from aunt to niece or vice versa, i.e. as vertically as possible between one generation and the next and not between members of the same generation. Thus the Belleville Breviary passed through four generations of Ursins aunts to their nieces. When there were no longer nuns of the family at Poissy, the surviving member Antoinette de Ranty left this luxury volume to the office of prioress, and her illustrated psalter for use in

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64 Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 5.
65 Although liturgically inadequate for use at Poissy the text of the Belleville Breviary was never updated, while the survival to the present of its old velvet covers indicates that the volumes found no more than infrequent use (discussed in Chapter 4 Part 3 and Catalogue entry).
66 Guionne and Michelle were their parents' ninth and tenth children; Marie and Claude were eleventh and twelfth (Anselme, Histoire généalogique, VI, 404).
67 L'année dominicaine, ed. T. Suesges, Amiens, IV, 1689, 42; Sauqueville was elected prioress in 1354 (Moreau-Rendu, n. 1 above, 110).
68 This corresponds to the directly vertical operation of gift-giving in return for prayers which has been observed between the lay members of medieval aristocratic families in England (J. T. Rosenthal, The Purchase of Paradise: Gift Giving and the Aristocracy, 1307-1485, London and Toronto, 1972, 17).
the choir. Another nun, Marie de Fortia, transcribed a gradual which she then had illustrated (Bourke 52), and presented it to her aunt, Geneviève de Courtin for her sole use. However, like the sequential owners of the Belleville Breviary she retained a certain degree of possession. In the usual fashion of such inscriptions the survivor of the two would own the book:

'Ce livre a este faict par Sr Marie de Fortia pour lusage de Sr. Genevieve Courtin sa tante et est pour la survivante des deux.'

Central to a number of family inheritances of books at the house is Marie de Pardieu. She passed on her illuminated horae (Bowes 8) to her great-niece with the obligation to recite daily the penitential psalms on her behalf. This book had previously belonged to Pardieu's great-aunt, Marguerite la Chaussée, who had transcribed its text in 1471. In 1514, la Chaussée's niece, Isaboeu de Vaudricourt, presented a finely ornamented psalter-hymnal (Mazarine 381) to her niece Pardieu at her profession. When Susanne de Mailloc — another niece of Pardieu — entered Poissy, her aunt made her co-owner of this book, with the the survivor to have sole possession. Pardieu, as mentioned above, also had a missal which she did not pass on to either niece, but left instead to the office of sub prioress.

Mazarine 381 was a newly-made manuscript received as a gift on profession. I have argued in Chapter 5 that certain other sixteenth-century manuscript-owners also received their well-illustrated processionals (which had been transcribed and decorated by the nuns) at the time of their entry or profession. Some of the surviving later registers of accounts sent to the parents of novices for the combined costs of their reception and profession (the earliest from the year 1631) itemise books. One refers to rebinding an extant breviary and the purchase of a 'journal':

48s pour la reliure d'ung breviere et ung journal' (Catherine le Tonnelier, professed 24 Jun 1631)\[70\]

A number of others itemise similar sums of money for a 'diurnal' or 'journal' and sometimes for an 'heures':

'50s pour les heures et ung journal' (Ysabel Testu, 14 Jul 1631)\[70\]
'50s pour ung journal et des heures' (Anne Lusson, 1631)\[70\]
'pour un grand Diurnal, 40 sols' (Anne Bodin, 21 Aug 1635)\[70\]
'40 sols à un Diurnal' (Susanne Aveline, 20 Oct 1653)\[70\]
'Pour un petit Diurnal 40 sols' (Thérèse de Berulle de Monteguillon, 28 Sep 1673)\[70\]
Pour un diurnal 35s. Pour un petit livre de Constitutions 8s. (Reception only: Mademoiselle de Sanas, 17 Mar 1693)\[71\]

These entries obviously refer to the books needed by novices at the house: from the diurnal they would learn the psalms of the day hours and weekly vespers, while the 'heures' contained the Office of the Dead and the Office of the Virgin which they were also to know

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69 Compare the circumstance of Anne d'Ammerval and her aunt and 'maîtresse', Marguerite de Moulin, who died in 1582 within hours of each other. Each owned a 'logis' and since there were no more family members at the house ("il n'estoit demeuré personne de leurs apartenance"), the dwellings were sold by the community to two other individual nuns for 1400 livres (Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 17).

70 Account for reception and profession of Catherine le Tonnelier de Conty, 24 Jun 1631 (Yvelines, 73 H 15).

71 Yvelines, 73 H 15, 73 H 17-18.
by heart.\textsuperscript{72} All the entries reflect near-contemporary prices for comparable printed volumes.\textsuperscript{73} Catherine de Tonnelier, for whom the breviary was rebound, had two aunts well-established at the house;\textsuperscript{74} it seems then that they may have provided their niece with this text, thus obviating the need for her to purchase a diurnal. Other reception accounts do not mention books at all; in these cases, too, the novices may have received their books from relatives at the house or else from communal holdings. Unfortunately none of the volumes itemised in the accounts cited can be identified.

Information in some extant manuscripts rounds out what can be gleaned from these records. The processional Sotheby 95, for example, belonged to Thérèse de Berulle de Monteguillon, who is referred to in the entries listed above. As in a number of surviving manuscripts from Poissy, a large time-gap exists between the two indications of ownership in this book and there seems to be no relationship between the owners. It is likely therefore that the book was redistributed through the channel of chantress (or subprioress). Family arms show that this processional was made in the 1530s for Louise de Chabannes.\textsuperscript{75} The next sign of ownership is the surname 'Monteguillon' written in a seventeenth-century hand. As we have seen, Monteguillon was professed in 1673. Since the book's pointillé-style covers can be dated to the period 1670-80, it may have been rebound for her on this occasion.\textsuperscript{76} Similarly, the red morocco covers, decorated in pointillé, of the New York processional (made originally for Denise de Brinon in the 1530s) date from about 1650 (Fig. 171). They bear the name of Marie de Giry, a nun who professed in 1649, so it is probable that this book, too, was rebound for a nun's profession.\textsuperscript{77} Monteguillon had two older sisters already well-established at the monastery who could have presented her with her processional;\textsuperscript{78} but there is no record that Giry had nun-relatives there. In addition, none of the extant accounts for vestiture-profession mentions a processional, only the book-related expenses that were authorised outside the house. The community, therefore, may have provided some of the newly professed with processionals or, alternatively, they may have purchased them themselves from monastic stocks.

Other evidence from the accounts of this period shows that once a nun was established at Poissy, common funds were used to buy new books or to rebind others according to her

\textsuperscript{72} See Chapter 2, n. 106 for Dominican liturgical requirements of female novices; the printed Dominican horae included both offices.

\textsuperscript{73} Compare listed costs of printed Dominican liturgical books of small size, albeit from a few years later. The least expensive diurnal from the press of the widow Jouvenal in Paris, for instance, cost 2 livres 10 sols [50 sols] in 1738, an Office of the Virgin cost 2 livres [40 sols] (Dominican diurnal, London, BL 03440,p.1, end of book); in 1707 the printery at S. Jacques charged 3 livres [60 sols] for a processional that included the Office of the Dead and Requiem Mass (Dominican processional, London, BL 3367.b.3, verso of title page).

\textsuperscript{74} Marie and Madeleine Soppithe, who themselves had aunts or other close older relatives at Poissy (see Paris, BN, ms fr 5009, ff. 7, 8v-9).

\textsuperscript{75} See Catalogue entry and Chapter 5 Part 2 for details.

\textsuperscript{76} My thanks to Dr. Christopher de Hamel who kindly informed me of his estimated date of binding.

\textsuperscript{77} See Catalogue entry for details.

\textsuperscript{78} Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 9v. Anne de Berulle and Madeleine de Berulle de Servilly were pensionnaires in 1653 and were professed in 1660 and 1661, more than ten years before their younger sister (see Yvelines, 73 H 17-18, 73 H 3-4)
needs. In 1631-32, 1635-36 and 1653 'livres de devotion' were purchased for several members of the community; breviaries and other books were constantly being rebound for individual owners; and certain nuns were bought a 'journal' or 'diurnal' and 'heures':

'paye 31 pour les livres de devotion pour Sr Y. de Bermond [Isabel Bermond] et Sr Mamelot [Marguerite Mamelot] (2 Dec 1631)

'40 sols pour le breviere de St Margueritte de Prunelay qui a este relyelye' (16 Jan 1632)

'50s pour des heures et ung journal a St Marie Vion' (16 Apr 1632)

'16s pour deux livres qui ont este reliées a St' Anthoinette Coutel' (18 May 1632)

'4l 10s pour deux grand journaux, ung pour St Marie Galmet, et St' Anne Maillard' (10 Jul 1632)

'12s pour deux livres de devotion pour St Marie Vion' (10 Jul 1632)

'faict depense de 6l 15s scavoie 55 sols pour un grand diurnal a lusage de Madame [Prioress: Louise de Gondy], 35s dun breviaire relie a Madame sa seur [Madeleine de Gondy], 45 sols, pour un grand diurnal, donne a St Loyse Fosse' (Sep 1635)

'50 sols pour des livres de musique et de tablature donnez a St Marie Jubert' (29 Dec 1635)

'58s payez scavoie 34 sols pour plusieurs livres de devotion, donnez a St Lucrese d'Orval, 24 sols, pour une paire d'Heures a Charlotte Danquechin' (8 Mar 1636)

'79 sols scavoie 29 sols pour les heures donnees a Sr M. Baudichon, 50s d'un grand Diurnal a St Anne Lusson' (17 Jul 1636)

'Rembourcé a Reverand Pere Molin huict livres pour un Breviaire donné à l'usage de St Marie Vion' (16 Nov 1635)

It is worth noting that the nuns for whom these books were bought, or whose own volumes were rebound, had been in the house for a considerable time, and several of them held senior positions. Vion, one of the youngest of the group, acquired a number of new books during these years, including devotional volumes and a relatively expensive breviary. The 'heures' and 'journal' she received as a 29-year-old in 1632 must have replaced the copies she had owned as a novice.

In addition to books which nuns gave as gifts to each other, the princesses at Poissy in the fifteenth century — Marie de France, Marie de Bourbon and Catherine de Harcourt — received manuscripts taken from the royal libraries by their relatives. These include the Psalter of St Louis which Charles VI gave to his daughter, Marie de France, the only manuscript that can be identified as a gift from a parent although Charles VI's wife, Isabeau de Bavière, bequeathed to her daughter the books in her chapel at her death. No other surviving Poissy manuscript mentions a lay benefactor, despite Humbert's requirement that reference to donors should be included in the ownership inscriptions of books held in

79 Madeleine de Gondy was received between 1563 and 1583, Jubert by 1603, Amelot and Baudichon between 1583 and 1623, Bermond in 1623; apart from the prioress Louise de Gondy, other office-holders included Coutel (dépositaire in 1626), Maillard (visorôtier in 1624), Orval (mistress of converses, 1626), Prunelay (subprioress, 1631); Galmet was 55 years old at the time she received her book, Fosse 61, and Danquechin 65 (see Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 8 [Gondy], 8v [Baudichon], 9 [Amelot/Bermond]; Yvelines, 73 H 15 [Prunelay], 73 H 42 [Coutel/Orval]; Santa Sabina, XII 30510, no. 15 [Maillard/Fosse], no. 24 [Gelmet/Danquechin], no. 79 [Jubert]).

80 Vion was received at some time between 1583 and 1623, and was 21 years old in 1624 (Paris, BN ms fr 5009, f. 8v; Santa Sabina, XII 30510, no. 24).

81 See Chapter 4 Part 3.

82 See Chapter 4 Part 3.
Dominican libraries. Was this because, unlike their counterparts at certain other female houses, nuns at Poissy did not generally solicit books? The English Bridgettine nuns at Syon, for instance, deliberately sought gifts of books for their library, paying due honour to the benefactors. External donors are also noted in three of the small number of books identified as coming from the English Dominican monastery at Dartford; and Cecilia of York is known to have bequeathed certain books to her nun-daughter there.

Where did the nuns store the books that they owned privately? The rather thick, ungainly shapes of their extant breviaries, gradual and antiphonaries were hardly amenable to frequent carrying around. It is not surprising, then, that in 1790 books for use in choir — although perhaps by now all printed versions — were located in the nuns' choir stalls: "plusieurs livres de chants, placés sur les différens pupitres des stalles". In other words such books were probably left at their user's place in the choir. No doubt the nuns kept smaller manuscripts — devotional volumes and processions — in their dormitory cells or rooms. Indeed the three small book-cases that Louise Fossard took with her after the dissolution probably reflect the nuns' normal method of storing their personal books. Since, also, all evidence points to private ownership of processions at Poissy, there would have been no need for the nun-subdeacon to distribute these before a service or replace them afterwards, as the instructions in the Dominican processional advise. Likewise, the breviaries already in place in the choir stalls must have dispensed with one of the duties assigned by Humbert to the cantor or a delegate, namely to bring all books for use in choir (other than processions) from their appropriate storage place, usually the choir or sacristy, to the stalls, and to return them when the office was over.

c. Maintenance and abuse

We have already seen how the nuns continually updated their liturgical books in the fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries, in particular the individually-owned processions which were unavailable in printed format. Indeed, most liturgical volumes display some alteration or addition, and this is also the case with the books of the Bridgettine nuns at Syon. At Poissy this process of updating continued into the later centuries. Two

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83 Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, 264; Humphreys, n. 14 above, 42.
86 Yvelines, III Q 60, Expedition du procès verbal d'inventaire du Prieuré Royal de St Louis de Poissy, 11-18 June 1790.
87 See Chapter I, n. 35.
88 London, BL Add ms 23935, ff. 105, 106v.
89 'Item, debet procurare quod aliquod armarium habeatur in choro, vel in sacristia, vel alibi...in quo libri omnes de choro reponantur, praeter libellos processionales; et inde per ipsum, vel per alium...deportentur ad chorum tempore officii, prout necessarii fuerint, et postea reportantur' (Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, 239).
90 de Hamel, n. 84 above, 107.
processionals (Add 14845 and Fitzwilliam 42) have a second celebration for Corpus Christi (Homo quidam...) transcribed in a French 'humanist' hand, which probably copies that of printed books (Fig. 169). An expanded ceremony for the profession of a nun and a procession for All Saints (Summe trinitati...) have been inserted into Lewis 7 and the New York procession; the procession for All Saints was also added to Bowes 3 and Add 14845. These additions are either in 'humanist' style or a running hand. Since two manuscripts containing 'humanist' elements — the new gathering inserted in Add 14845 and a replacement folio in the procession Soissons 84 — retain covers dating to the late sixteenth century, it is probable that all the text in this style dates to this time. In another imitation of printed books, the sixteenth-century procession-prosar Egerton 2601 was modernised in the seventeenth or eighteenth century by means of an index. Noted additions were also made at this time to the antiphonary, Add 30070, which had been in the house from its foundation, although the book was by no means completely updated. New feasts were continually added to Liber capitularius and alterations made to their rank, from the early fourteenth century until the 1670s, a stretch of almost four hundred years. Probably most of these additions were entered by the nuns themselves, though by 1733 they were paying their friars to transcribe noted offices.

Book covers were replaced at need, either to allow for the incorporation of gatherings with new material, or when a binding had become dilapidated. Humbert of Romans included in the duties of the cantor the updating of both text and music of liturgical books and their general maintenance in good condition; this responsibility extended to admonishing those who handled the books carelessly. A number of surviving Poissy choirbooks retain their late medieval French blind-stamped leather bindings. These include three breviaries and two psalters (eg. fig. 78), while the Melbourne antiphonary still has metal-protected leather covers from around this period (Fig. 79). Since no two dies used in the blind-stamped covers are identical these books may have been rebound at different times or at different establishments. These covers are all of a hard-wearing nature, and some have required repair; nevertheless their survival up to the present may indicate that these particular volumes were not used in choir in the later period. This supposition is supported by the lack of any later liturgical additions to either the breviaries or to the Melbourne antiphonary. Both psalters are non-liturgical, even though Arsenal 604 was given on its owner's death for 'use in the choir'. Since, by contrast, two ferial psalters made in the period 1320-1340 were last re-covered in the mid-seventeenth century (Waddesdon 2 and Sotheby 74: 60), it is possible that their non-liturgical counterparts (lacking in antiphons) were not in regular

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91 The processionals Add 14845 and Soissons 84 are covered in Duodo and recessed-panel styles respectively (see also below). The binding of Fitzwilliam 42, which also has an added gathering in 'humanist' style, was executed in the mid-sixteenth century and could have replaced one contemporary with those of Add 14845 and Soissons 84.
92 1733: 'Donné par ordre de M4 au R4 Pere Pons qui aide a chanter, 24l en reconnaissance des peines qu'il est donnée a noter plusieurs offices de saints nouveaux' (Yvelines, 73 H21). In 1768 the cantor transcribed a complete liturgical book for his own use (see Chapter 5, note 102).
93 'Pertinet etiam ad eum libros ecclesiasticos corrigere diligenter in cantu, et verbis, et punctationibus, et accentibus, et hujusmodi...et illos de choro mundos servare, praeparare, et reparare in camitos et cooptoristis, et in ligaturis, et male tractantes accusare' (Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, 238).
liturgical use. It should be noted, however, that the 1514 liturgical psalter (Mazarine 381) retains its original plain leather covers.\footnote{Triibner 126, a psalter that was rendered liturgical by the addition of antiphons, provides no information in this regard since it was rebound after leaving Poissy.}

The surviving seventeenth- and eighteenth-century account books record the rebinding of choirbooks belonging to individuals and those held in common. As mentioned above, a breviary was bound in 1631 for the novice Catherine le Tonnelier, at a cost of 2 livres 8 sols; new covers for the breviaries of Prunelay in 1632 and Madeleine de Gondy in 1635 cost 2 livres and 1 livre 15 sols respectively. In the following century, under the more liturgically exacting prioress Jean de Mailly, a large number of choirbooks seems to have been gathered up and sent for rebinding at a cost of 42 livres.\footnote{30 Mar 1733: 'Payé par les mains de Sr de St Hermine la somme de quarente deux livres au nomme de Chairepère relieur a St Germain pour la relieure de plusieurs livres de chants qui servent au choeur...′ (Yvelines, 73 H 21).} As noted above, the chantress had her own choirbook (presumably her antiphonary) rebound in 1768 for 1 livre 10 sols, the large choir breviary for 8 livres in 1774, and two collectors and a martyrology for 9 livres in 1777. From these incomplete accounts, therefore, it appears that rebinding of choirbooks took place at intervals, either for individuals at need or when a particularly zealous chantress or prioress took charge. Brand new breviaries and diurnals were also purchased for the use of individual nuns in choir in the seventeenth century as detailed above, whereas in the eighteenth century money for books appears mainly to have gone to acquisitions for the new library.\footnote{For details of library expenses see Chapter 1 nn. 14-16.} Even so, the prioress received in 1733 a diurnal covered in morocco that had been purchased for the sum of 9 livres, while the large breviary (mentioned above) and a collector, costing around 26 livres and 11 livres respectively, were bought for the choir; 16 livres was spent in 1777 on a martyrology and a new collector.\footnote{1733: 'Payé par Mr l'Abbe Donnant demeurant a Paris, la somme de neuf livres pour un Diurnal relié en maroquin et donné a Madame [Prioress: Jeanne de Mailly];' 'Payé par le Rde Pere Coulon Jacobin la somme de onze livres cinq sols pour lachapt dun colterre [collectaire] pour le choeur' (Yvelines, 73 H 21). For details of breviary see n. 43 above, for purchases in 1777 see n. 53 above.}

Many processionals and other small liturgical volumes retain leather bindings from the later sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Almost all are gilt; morocco is common and some are very fine indeed. And even an unillustrated manuscript processional could be deemed worthy of a first-class Parisian binding. So we find that in the late sixteenth century Rawl. liturg. f 35 received a fanfare binding and Add 14845 was rebound in Duodo style (Fig. 174).\footnote{All bindings are described in Catalogue entries; on Rawl. liturg. f 35 see also Bodleian Library, \textit{Fine Bindings from Oxford Libraries 1500-1700}, Oxford, 1968, 68 (no. 91).} Neither the mise-en-page nor ornamentation of these two books is particularly prepossessing and the latter volume is such a jumble of successive additions that it must have been difficult to use. Other modish bindings include the gilt penitential covers bearing the Passion or flame and tear motifs, initiated in the reign of Henri III, that protect three books bound in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (eg. Fig. 160).\footnote{Bourke 52 (gradual-prosor), Walters 107 (processional), Sotheby 74: 60 (psalter-processional). For discussion of penitential and related bindings in the reign of Henri III see L.-M. Michon, \textit{La relieure}}
designs decorate three others that were rebound in red morocco after the mid-seventeenth century (eg. Fig. 171). Two books bear identically-patterned gilt covers of brown morocco from the same period; of equal size, this processional and prosar written by the same hand in the fifteenth century were obviously still considered a matching pair at the later date. Shell-clasps survive on two small manuscripts covered in gilt brown morocco, while the barely relieved, sombre covers on books rebound in the late seventeenth century are in tune with the minimal decoration preferred at the court of Louis XIV (Figs 172 & 173).

The fine covers sometimes placed on relatively mediocre handwritten books give some indication of the value the nuns attached to their vellum manuscripts. Perhaps, though, a manuscript always retained precedence over a printed version, for no matter how poorly arranged it had become through piecemeal addition, or how plain the ornament, it still presented the viewer with a satisfying range of coloured pen-flourished initials or painted work; margins were generous and the pages harmonious, and the book handled easily with its vellum pages readily turned and opening out flat (eg. Fig. 76). Certainly the nuns kept on using their sixteenth-century vellum processionals, written in gothic characters and rebound in the seventeenth century, up until the final years of the house.

One of the precepts instilled into a Dominican novice was that care must be taken of books, and the evidence discussed so far shows that the nuns at Poissy observed this mandate. Some books, however, were deliberately damaged, most seriously by having their illustrations cut out. In all cases where this can be shown to have occurred while the books were at the monastery, the pictures alone (and of course any text on the back) were carefully excised. This happened with the Belleville Breviary and the Liber capitularius (Cml 10170), both of which apparently never left the house. The early missal (Garrett 41) and breviary (Chartres 552), which formed part of Philippe le Bel's foundation endowment, underwent the same treatment.

Who cut out the pictures? It is instructive that never are all images excised from a book. Rather, the first and usually the last pictures survive with a group in the middle removed, suggesting perhaps that the exercise was a clandestine one. Certain books (although not


101 Waddesdon 2 (psalter-processional), Sotheby 95: 108 (processional), New York private coll. (processional).

102 Leber 144 (processional), Boston 80.504 (prosar); the leather colour now varies slightly between the two.


104 'Soeur de Larie' is inscribed in the New York processional (Marie de Larie, professed 1720); Sophie van Dam (1733) and Melanie Sanguin (1739) had use of Tribner 112; Chartres 6 was used by Angelique de Villers (1768); the last two nuns were still alive and at Poissy in 1790 (Yvelines, 73 H 5, 73 H 7, III Q 60-61).

105 Constitutions for use at Poissy, Cap. XV, *De noviciis et earum instructione*: 'libros et vestes et res alias monasterii custodiant diligenter' (Cml 10170, f. 137v).
those just mentioned) contain scribbles and childish efforts at writing, which include renditions of the alphabet and names of particular girls.\textsuperscript{106} It would seem, then, that some of the petites desmoiselles at Poissy had unsupervised access to manuscripts possibly considered obsolete by that time. The thick dark brown leather covers of the \textit{Vitae Sororum d'Unterlinden} (BN lat 5642) — inside which are inscribed the alphabet and proper names, with one of these even cut into the vellum page — have numerous slash-marks; the book could have acted as the young girls' cutting-board. Strips of parchment, which might also have served as writing materials for the girls, have been cut from the margins of two manuscripts that in the seventeenth century lacked many gatherings. One of these volumes, the \textit{Graecismus} (BN lat 11281), also contains alphabet scribbles and crudely drawn pictures.\textsuperscript{107}

One of the manuscripts damaged by excision was later rehabilitated. As mentioned above, the \textit{Liber capitularius} gives evidence of continued updating from soon after 1300 until the 1670s. The folios containing the Augustinian rule, which is marked to be read in fourteen instalments, became so worn as to require replacement in the sixteenth century, while the Constitutions, read in over eighty sessions, are fairly soiled. At some stage eight of the thirteen historiated initials in this book were excised. The damage was, however, later repaired. Appropriately shaped vellum patches were pasted to cover the holes and the missing text rewritten on the reverse in a hand similar, but not the same as, that responsible for some of the book's seventeenth-century liturgical updates. Simple decoration in red ink was substituted for the historiated initials. Presumably the manuscript was then restored to use in the house.

How, though, was the manuscript allowed to become damaged? A copy of the \textit{Liber capitularius} should have been in daily public use. Either the manuscript copy fell into disuse because the nuns purchased a new printed version (but at some stage later decided to reinstate their old manuscript);\textsuperscript{108} or else the book was quarried at a time when discipline was so lax that liturgical procedures were forgone. This was certainly the state of affairs at the time of the second attempted reform of the community, in April 1625. In compliance with articles sent by the Master General read in the vernacular in Chapter (and, later, Papal Bulls), the nuns were forced to swear obedience to their Constitutions under pain of excommunication.\textsuperscript{109} As late as 1648 discipline had not been re-established, and at that time

\textsuperscript{106} Found in breviaries (Arsenal 107, Rawl. Liturg. e 2), \textit{Graecismus} (BN lat 11281) and \textit{Vitae Sororum d'Unterlinden} (BN lat 5642).

\textsuperscript{107} The other manuscript is the \textit{Rosarius} (BN fr 12483).

\textsuperscript{108} Although purchase of a printed martyrology was documented in 1777 (see n. 53 above), this postdates the events under discussion. An earlier copy of the Dominican martyrology, printed in 1604 (now London, BL Legg 109), seems to have been altered for use in a French house. Among numerous other changes and additions, the feast of St. Louis has been altered from simplex to totum duplex. Stress-marks have been added above the text as well as indicators of vowel length. No dedication was added so ownership of the book remains undetermined.

\textsuperscript{109} See \textit{BOP}, VI, 38-39 (Bull issued 26 Jun 1625), 70-71 (Bull issued 19 Sep 1629); \textit{Liste des prierses}, n. 12 above, 15; \textit{Statuts et Ordonnances faites par le Reverendissime General de tout l'ordre des Freres Precheurs, du Commandement de notre Saint Pere le Pape Urbain VIII…pour la reformation, & regime des Religieuses du meme Ordre, au monastere de Poissy (11 Mar 1625) in Recueil de la fondation, Privileges et Confirmation d'ieux, Antiquites, statuts & ordonnances…du Monastere Royal des Dames de Saint Louis de Poissy…}, s. l., 1695, IV; Santa Sabina, XII 30510, nos 29, 30-31.
the prioress of Poissy requested a mitigation of the Rule and Constitutions for her community.\textsuperscript{110}

To my knowledge, none of these excised pictures survives so it is not clear to what use they were put. However, two processionals from the house reveal that at the end of the sixteenth century cut-out decorative and illustrative elements from earlier manuscripts were used to ornament texts newly-transcribed in French humanist script.\textsuperscript{111} Soissons 84 might have lost its first page, or it may have become grubby or torn. Alternatively, the minimal decoration on this page could have been considered inadequate in view of the new black leather covers with recessed panel design in gold that were intended for the book (Fig. 170). In any case, the book now opens with a single-folio replacement on which has been copied afresh the beginning of the procession for Palm Sunday (Figs 167 & 168). A number of decorative pieces from different manuscripts from fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were pasted around the text to form a border. Ornamental initials, including the letters from the original folio, were attached to appropriate parts of the text and to the lower margin to form the initials of the nun-owner S\[oeur\] A. B. The pieces comprising the border on the right have been lost, but the glue stains are still obvious.

When a second celebration for the feast of Corpus Christi was added to the processional Fitzwilliam 42, it was also surrounded by an ornamental border made up of elements culled from earlier manuscripts (Fig. 169). One of these was a thirteenth-century illustrated bible or gospel book, from which an image of an apostle holding a book (perhaps St. James) and animal motifs have been cut; integrated with this are various decorative pieces cut from letters and borders dating from the fourteenth-century.

Pasted-in ornamentation, consisting of cut-outs from either painted vellum, like those used at Poissy, or woodcuts, decorates books made for the English Bridgettine nuns at Syon in the early sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{112} A similar situation seems to have obtained in both instances: as aptitude for book illumination declined in each house, so materials available from other sources were used to compensate. Evidence from Poissy indicates that, as was also sometimes the case at Syon, the decorative material excised for re-use came from an earlier manuscript book. In the late sixteenth century at Poissy various factors may have contributed to the recycling of pieces from earlier books to ornament newly-written additions and replacements. It is likely that a number of obsolete manuscripts would have been available for this process; new printed books, for example, were relatively inexpensive compared with the time and cost of an extensive updating of the old.\textsuperscript{113} Decreasing numbers of nuns must also have rendered superfluous many of the books formerly in use. In the 1540s and 50s, the community numbered 150; by the turn of the century it had

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.}, nos 41, 43.

\textsuperscript{111} See earlier, and n. 91 above, for the dating of these additions relative to the extant bindings.

\textsuperscript{112} See de Hamel, n. 84 above, 100; M. C. Erler, "Pasted-in Embellishments in English Manuscripts and Printed Books", \textit{The Library}, 14, 1992, 191-201.

\textsuperscript{113} Compare the later (eighteenth-century) cost of preparation of a manuscript with notation by a friar at the house, whose small, 104-folio book cost over 80 livres in 1768 (Chapter 5, n. 102) or, as itemised above, 24 livres paid for hand-produced noted updates in 1733 against 9 livres for a new, relatively expensive morocco-covered breviary for the prioress.
declined to sixty, more than halving the need for such books as processional and breviaries.\textsuperscript{114}

The re-use of decorative elements probably resulted, in some cases at least, in the destruction of the book from which they were taken. The thirteenth-century manuscript whose excised pictures enliven the addition made to Fitzwilliam 42, for instance, seems not to have survived. Other books may have been lost when nuns, forced to leave the monastery because of war or illness and stay at other houses or with their families, failed to return or left their books behind them. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, such absences recurred during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They continued from time to time thereafter. The wars of religion in the 1560s, for instance, caused the nuns to take shelter at Pontoise or with their parents; in the 1630s they went home for periods of up to seven weeks; and for at least six months during the civil war of 1652-53 the older nuns and novices preserved their enclosure in the monastery at Rouen whereas others returned to their families in Paris.\textsuperscript{115} Individuals were also absent for various periods, either for their health or 'on leave' ('congé').

The possession of a diurnal (Rouen Y 233) by a member of the family of Catherine de Manneville a century after her ownership at Poissy (recorded in 1581) may have resulted from such a situation. Evidence concerning impending flights from the monastery, in 1636 and 1652, reveals the care taken to store together in a secure place precious reliquaries and important monastic papers; but there is no specific reference to books.\textsuperscript{116} Nevertheless, as late as the 1790s, in the final years of the house, manuscript volumes in gothic script had been sufficiently well maintained so as to be still in use, and borne, as we have seen, the names of nuns present at the monastery's dissolution.

d. The overall holdings

Sixty-one distinct manuscripts and two leaves were either demonstrably or arguably owned by the nuns at Poissy. These books were not all together in the monastery at any one time and so represent a flux: we know, for instance, that by 1473 Chantilly 804 had already left the house while many other books were yet to be made. Accordingly, the number of surviving manuscripts is not directly comparable with that of libraries or other holdings for which a medieval or later inventory exists, for such a count most often represents a co-

\textsuperscript{114} Recorded numbers of professed nuns at Poissy over this period are 1546 (150), 1550s (147), 1562 (114), 1603 -1650s (58-60); for numbers over the entire history of Poissy (with references) see Graph 2.

\textsuperscript{115} Paris, BN, ms fr 5009, ff. 13v-14v; Yvelines, 73 H 16, f. 147, 73 H 17; L'année dominicaine, n. 55 above, 727-728 (de Buz); \textit{ibid.}, ed. J. Lafon, II, Amiens, 1712, 214 (Boîte); R. Labarraque, \textit{Poissy à travers les âges}, Alençon, 1948, 61-62, 104.

\textsuperscript{116} In 1636 the nuns paid 'a faire les muses et lieux de seurete, pour y mettre des meubles qui sont a l'usage des Sr', devant le temps de la guerre' and purchased 'une aune de toile, empoilée en sac, a mettre papiers importants en lieu de seureté a cause de la guerre' (Yvelines, 73 H 16, ff. 103, 116). In 1652 their 'reliques de l'église' were taken to Paris for storage with 'monsieur le premier president de Belleure lors que Madame et le Couvent sortirent du monastere à cause de la guerre'; the accounts also record an offering of candles made to St. Anthony of Padua because of a deposit book lost during the transport of papers at this time (\textit{ibid.}, 73 H 17).
existent collection of books. Moreover, since the extant and otherwise known volumes from Poissy are but a few of those that once did exist, their distribution patterns are doubtless affected by factors influencing their survival rate. Nonetheless, the breadth of book type from Poissy points to a not unrepresentative sample: manuscripts survive from all periods; they represent both private and communal holdings; and they were used variously in church services, both inside and outside the choir, for public reading, and for private devotion and reference. Some comparison with other nuns' collections is therefore justifiable if expressed in general rather than specific arithmetic terms.

The manuscript collections of Dominican nuns consistently reflect a preference for liturgical and devotional compilations intended for religious and monastic use; moreover, the books in monastic libraries in Germany and those privately owned by the English nuns at Dartford were frequently in the vernacular. Joanna Cannon has observed that illuminated choirbooks from nuns' houses in the Province of Rome far outweigh those used by friars, but Dominican processions, whether owned by females or males, are largely unillustrated.

Table 6.2 shows that liturgical compilations also make up the majority of manuscripts known from Poissy: 51 volumes compared with only 11 divided between public and private reading and reference. From Table 6.3 it is evident that the processional far outnumbers all other surviving liturgical texts. This is doubtless influenced by the fact that many of the processions are among the most recent additions to manuscripts made for use at the house. Furthermore, since every nun probably owned a processional a relatively large number might be expected to survive. Psalters are the next largest surviving group (even when we neglect this text as an integral part of the breviary or diurnal), and again each nun may have possessed her own. Not only were the psalms the basis of daily liturgical observance, they were also recited during the vigil over a newly deceased, as part of the anniversary commemoration of the dead, and as a penance for lesser transgressions. There are fewer breviaries and prosars. Since each choir-sister needed access to these texts, their survival rate is relatively low compared with that of Poissy missals, antiphonaries and graduals whose actual numbers must have been small. While the Office of the Dead is contained in the breviary, it also occurs in more readily portable books from Poissy, usually combined with a processional. Most of the processions exclude, however, the liturgy for dying and death and the funeral rites which were placed to either side of the seasonal processions in Dominican liturgical prototypes. Despite the high survival rate of large manuscript choirbooks from Italian female houses, as mentioned above, and the number

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117 Himmebusch, n. 21 above, 203 (with further references); Regensburg, Dötzseanmuseum, 750 Jahre Dominikanerinnenkloster Heilig Kreuz Regensburg, exhibition catalogue, Munich and Zurich, 1983, 46.


119 See Chapter 5, Part 3 and n. 106.

120 Constitutions for nuns at Poissy, Cap. XVI. De levi culpa: 'Pro huius culpis unus psalmus vel plures secundum quantitatem exessuum...'; and Cap. XVIII, De gravi culpa: '...tres dies in pane et aqua et tres discipline in capitulo, coram omnibus recipiendae, vel plus, et psalmi, et venie, prout secundum exessuum maiores vel minores...' (C1m 10170, ff. 139v, 140v).

121 Eg. London, BL, ms 23935, 96v-98v, 105-106v.
### Table 6.2. BOOKS OWNED BY NUNS AT POISSY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liturgical and para-liturgical books (50 compilations in 52 volumes)*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antiphonary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antiphonary - Hymnal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breviaries — 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breviary Offices with Diurnal psalter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diurnal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gradual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gradual - Prozar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horae — 2 (one is single-folio fragment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horae - Liturgy for Death and Burial - Processional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horae - Processional - Liturgy for Death and Burial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horae - Processional - Office of the Dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liturgy for Death and Burial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missal - Processional - Prozar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missal in French</td>
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<tr>
<td>Processional - Liturgy for Death and Burial — 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processional - Office of the Dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processional - Prozar — 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processionals — 13 (one is single-folio fragment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prozar — 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalter — 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psalter - Office of the Dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psalter - Hymnal - Office of the Dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psalter - Marian Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalter - Processional - Liturgy for Death and Burial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalter - Processional - Office of the Dead</td>
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#### Books for reading (11 compilations)

| In public — 4 | In private — 6 | Reference — 1 |

* Arsenal 603 and Belleville Breviary are 2-volume breviaries

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**extant from St. Gall, Regensburg and Northern French and Flemish Dominican monasteries, not one such book has survived from Poissy.**  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poissy: Dominican nuns (73 texts in 51 volumes)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breviary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prosar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exequial liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Gall: Dominican nuns (48 texts in 47 volumes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breviary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psalter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syon: Bridgettine nuns (40 texts in 40 volumes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breviary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers of copies of separate liturgical texts calculated from manuscripts listed in:

The Poissy liturgical texts were combined in various ways (Table 6.2). A hymnal could be combined with a psalter or an antiphonary, a processional with a *horae* or a psalter, a prosar with a processional or with a gradual; and for the convenience of the priest a processional and prosar without notation could follow the missal text. No single preference is obvious. Such combinations of liturgical texts, however, do not occur in the surviving manuscripts listed for the German Dominican nuns at St. Gall, nor, except for one processional combined with the exequial liturgy, among those of the nuns at Regensburg. Liturgical volumes owned by the Syon nuns are also restricted to a single genre.

The range of texts in the 90 manuscripts and 15 incunabula surviving from St. Gall, as listed by Vogler, differs from our sample. There are as many books intended for reading as liturgical volumes; and many of the former contain allegorical and mystical texts, especially those written by the German friars. Nevertheless, lives of Dominican nuns — including St. Margaret of Hungary — are represented in both collections, as are the Constitutions and works of St. Bernard. And, if we take into account historical references to the books the Poissy nuns read, albeit lacking in exact detail, the extent of their reading can be broadened. As well as the *Vita Christi* and picture bible already mentioned, evidence from the sixteenth century informs us that, in addition to being attracted to *les belles-lettres*, nuns

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123 See Vogler, n. 122 above, 233-242; Diözesanmuseum, n. 117 above, 60-65.
124 See de Hamel, n. 84 above, 114-124.
125 See Vogler, n. 122 above, 83-89.
read privately the Church Fathers and books of piety, and studied the Holy Scriptures.\textsuperscript{126} This range displays some similarities with that indicated by extant volumes from St. Gall. Moreover, liturgical volumes may have had a better survival rate than other works at both monasteries, although this is documented only for St. Gall.\textsuperscript{127} As at St. Gall, the proportion of extant manuscripts from the nuns at Regensburg favours liturgical volumes, albeit only slightly.\textsuperscript{128} Of 56 volumes belonging to the nuns at Syon (or which are not clearly definable as belonging to women or men), 27 are purely liturgical, 13 para-liturgical and 16 either library holdings or copies of the Rule or martyrology.\textsuperscript{129}

The extant manuscripts from Poissy can be set alongside these studies made of other women's collections (see Table 6.3). The total number is comparable with the holdings from St. Gall, despite the fact that those from Poissy underwent widespread dispersion while the St. Gall books remained in the neighbouring city. Taking this into consideration, together with the fact that in its heyday Poissy housed more nuns than St. Gall, there were probably more manuscripts to start with in the French house and their survival rate is lower. When compared with the fate of manuscripts from some male Dominican houses, however, the survival rate of Poissy manuscripts is very high indeed.\textsuperscript{130}

Whereas the processional is the prime liturgical survivor from Poissy (33%), outnumbering psalter texts almost 5:2, and the breviary, prosar and exequial manual by around 4:1, at St. Gall breviaries account for almost half the total number of extant manuscripts (48%) and are more numerous than processions or psalters by a factor of six (Table 6.3). In the Syon liturgical holdings, psalters are the largest group (30%), outnumbering the breviary and processional by 2:1 (Table 6.3). Despite these different patterns of survival of particular texts, however, the 63 identifiable volumes of the Poissy nuns (Table 6.2) comprise effectively the same sort of liturgical and religious texts documented for these other women's houses. Likewise, extant manuscripts made for or by the nuns at Poissy and at the other Dominican monasteries reflect the same concern for the production criteria formulated by Humbert of Romans, namely that books should be strongly-made and written legibly.\textsuperscript{131} What distinguishes the Poissy manuscripts, however, is the large percentage of illustrated volumes (74%),\textsuperscript{132} the particularly fine vellum used for their

\textsuperscript{126} See L'ann\'ee dominicaine, ed. T. Sougees, Amiens, I, 1684, 71 (Jeanne de Brinon, d. 1584); V, 1691, 357 (Perrecte Fournier, d. 1521, a co-owner of the ascetic texts, Reg. lat 150, discussed above); VII, 1693, 91 (Claude des Ursins, d. s xvi 1/2); ibid., ed. J. Lafon, II, 1712, 125 (Fran\'oise Odeau, d. 1644), 210 (Anne des Marquets, d. s. xvi in.). On the last three, all of whom were themselves authors, see also Chapter 5 Part 2.

\textsuperscript{127} See Vogler, n. 122 above, 233-270: 323 books have been identified, 105 of them extant.

\textsuperscript{128} See Di\'etessenamuseum, n. 117 above, 43-46, 60, 62-65.

\textsuperscript{129} See de Hamel, n. 84 above, 114-124.


\textsuperscript{131} 'De officio gerentis curam scriptorum: ...omnia quae facit scribi plus sint de legibili littera et durabili' (Humbert of Romans, n. 28 above, 287; Humphreys, n. 14 above, 26).

\textsuperscript{132} This figure includes the manuscripts Add. 4511, Bowes 8, Egerton 2601 and Rawl. Liturg. e 2, books enhanced elsewhere with superior illumination but whose illustrated nature is suggested only by torn out or excised folios or parts of folios; it excludes finely illuminated, but unillustrated, volumes despite their exceptional quality (eg. Clm 10155 and Mazarine 381).
production, and the range of *de luxe* leather bindings which, like much of the illumination, is representative of the best Parisian work. In contradistinction to their German counterparts, surviving Poissy books are rarely written or rubricated in the vernacular.
Conclusion

The number of manuscripts surviving from Saint-Louis de Poissy is exceptionally high compared with that published for other Dominican establishments in France, Flanders or England. This is true of both books belonging to the nuns or those of the small number of friars resident at the monastery. The corpus of some seventy extant manuscripts provides, therefore, an excellent basis for the study of the acquisition and upkeep of medieval books in a female religious house, keeping in mind also that Poissy was a richly-endowed, royal French foundation and that its Dominican culture was apparently non-ecstatic. Accordingly, findings concerning the Poissy manuscript holdings should provide a useful basis for comparison with other collections.

Not only are the extant volumes relatively numerous, they also cover a wide time span — from the period of the earliest building work on the house until the last decades of the sixteenth century. Moreover, groups of manuscripts survive from certain quite narrow periods. Books made specifically for the house were demonstrably either produced completely in Paris or completed by Parisian illuminators after primary execution at Poissy. This, then, has permitted a rigorous examination of each group for similarities and differences, being confident that any observations are valid since the books within a group were made at the same time and for the same commissioners (i.e. certain potential variables can be reasonably considered to be constant).

There is, however, a potential for bias in the surviving manuscripts. Were only illustrated volumes treasured and therefore preserved, for instance, or was only one example from a number of copies retained in later years? In fact, both richly illustrated and austere volumes survive from Poissy; no period seems obviously either to be favoured or ignored; and books produced to satisfy a wide variety of different religious requirements are extant, some in multiple copies. Of the four manuscripts stated in royal medieval inventories to have been given to Poissy nuns, two have survived; they happen to be the most richly produced of all from the house but show no evidence of regular use. Also extant are a number of nondescript, small processionsals that continually received textual additions, thus prolonging their usefulness in changing worship regimes. The observation that 'les lecteurs mouraient beaucoup plus vite que leurs livres' is especially true of the Poissy nuns and their
books, and is evidenced equally by the nuns' continued updating of handwritten books and by the inscribed names of successive owners over a number of centuries. It is clear from this that such manuscripts continued in use long after printing had become the norm, some even into the eighteenth century.

As has previously been observed for other female religious houses, the surviving books represent only those which served religious and monastic observance by the nuns or their individual private devotional needs. Volumes from the friars' library again mirror comparable Dominican collections, and these largely consist of texts used in the medieval schools and compilations suitable for use as preaching aids. There is, therefore, a vast difference in the overall contents of surviving books owned by the nuns and by the friars at the house. Moreover, the dates of production of these collections also diverge. The books belonging to the friars were mainly produced in the century before the establishment of the house; they were therefore in use in at least one other convent before they were brought to Poissy. Only a few of the nuns' extant books came from elsewhere, most being made specifically for use at Poissy and over a much longer period than is the case for the friars' holdings.

The first volumes made for the house formed part of Philippe le Bel's foundation endowment, together with relics and altars. They were produced several years before the nuns' entry and there is some indication that they were already in use before this time. A number of these manuscripts survives, sufficient to show that the commission, which was executed through friars at the Dominican convent of St. Jacques in Paris, was designed to cover all the book needs for public religious observance at the house, by both nuns and friars. The quality of the manuscripts is uniform; all are written on fine vellum and the liturgy is current and is certified correct, as might be expected of a commission contracted by friars at the then Dominican liturgical centre. Execution of the books' design was also conducted in Paris, almost certainly in the vicinity of the convent where workshops of considerable skill and experience in the production of religious books were clustered. But although a plain, but correct book was urged by Dominican pundits like Humbert of Romans, and numbers of sparsely decorated liturgical volumes survive from the houses of French friars and German nuns, the manuscripts made for Poissy are illustrated and gold is used throughout. Nonetheless the text always retains its primacy and illustrations are limited to carefully selected feasts. In contrast to the extensively illuminated breviary illustrated by the master Honoré for the king's own use, therefore, his commission for the nobly born nuns was tempered so that the degree of ornamentation was balanced between the requirements of a royal munificence and Dominican reticence. The accomplished illuminators keep within the normal artistic measures of the time; they were probably advised by the commissioning friars.

A group of manuscripts produced for use in choir between c. 1335 and c. 1345 closely resembles those of the king's commission, being similarly illuminated with small, simple and

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1 A point made in warning against confusing the number of books produced with those extant in any period (C. Bozzolo and E. Ornato, "La production du livre manuscrit en France du nord" in Pour une histoire du livre manuscrit au Moyen Âge, Paris, 1983, 18).
predictable religious motifs at selected feasts only. The illustrative schemes of both groups reflect Dominican tradition and an image generally symbolises the sense of the feast it introduces rather than illustrating adjacent text. Talents of the illustrators are also similar to those of the artists of the earlier group. Again, too, function is balanced with a tempered luxury, the manuscripts displaying a considerable reserve compared with those contemporaneously illuminated for lay noble patrons by artists such as Jean Pucelle, even though a number of the illustrators reveal his artistic influence. These books were commissioned more than thirty years after the nuns' entry, probably as a response to the completion and consecration of their church in 1331. It is likely that the nuns initiated this commission; its execution in Paris and the presence in each book of current Dominican illustrative themes indicates that again the Paris friars acted as intermediaries.

Some of these choirbooks were subsequently updated in a limited way, but since no later manuscript editions survive the nuns probably began to purchase printed paper versions as soon as these became available. However, certain liturgical texts specific to Poissy could not be purchased. Primary among these was the processional; and the high rate of survival indicates that each nun was probably supplied with a small personal copy.

Processionals made before about 1500 are unillustrated and are variously combined with other texts such as a psalter or Book of Hours. Some versions are quite plain while an example like Waddesdon 2 bears fine-quality marginalia and psalter illustrations, executed perhaps by Jean Pucelle and his artistic successor Jean le Noir. The marginal grotesques in this book are comparable in quality and inventive whimsy with those in contemporary Books of Hours made for royal secular owners. It is thus distinctly different from the contemporary choirbooks which were probably made as community commissions under the care of the chantress, but it is even less like other very plain processionals made during the same period. The wide differences in the quality of these small multi-liturgical compilations indicate that they could be made to individual order for each nun if she wished.

The group of handwritten books that survive from the sixteenth century once more reveal that illustration was carried out in Paris, most probably in the area where religious book illumination was still being practised into the 1530s, that is near the rue St. Jacques. For a period of almost three centuries, therefore, the manuscripts made for use at Poissy seem to have been executed totally, or in part, in the same area of Paris. As with the previous commissions, these manuscripts demonstrate Dominican patronage of illustrators who largely re-work contemporary liturgical motifs rather than of the more ambitious illuminators patronised by the court. Nevertheless these artists produced early representations of the newly sainted Louis IX and the apotheosis of St. Dominic in the fourteenth century, and in the sixteenth century explored new representations of St. Joseph, of St. John the Baptist taken from contemporary mystery plays, and dogmatic eucharistic motifs. At all periods a range of pictorial subject matter emphasises certain feasts, making a set illustrative canon unlikely.

The use in sixteenth-century processionals of an archaising script and painted decoration can be traced back to the direct copying of older manuscripts at the house and the
deliberate matching of scribal styles when a passage was removed and replaced in an earlier book. There seems to be no doubt that this practice was developed by the nuns themselves and the same hands can be discerned in the text and decoration of a number of books. Moreover, recurring decorative motifs from previous centuries were used, combined and developed in the manuscripts.

The books which the nuns owned personally were often individualised by means of their illumination. Many display their owner's arms, and depictions of a nun or nuns is not uncommon. Examples of the practice already occur in Philippe le Bel's commission and since such small portrayals also occur in thirteenth-century Parisian manuscripts made for Dominican friars, their presence in the earlier commission seems to continue this trend. It is a feature also of the second group of choirbooks, where it again occurs spasmodically, although whether the artist, the friar-mediator or the nuns initiated the inclusion is unclear. In the later processions, though, a change is obvious. Now, in a similar manner to that of the illustrated Book of Hours, an individual owner has herself positioned within carefully selected pictures in her processional. A nun might thus choose a selection of feasts for 'portrait'-association, and these tend to reflect her own name or the saintly affiliations of the monastery. These requirements are so specific that they must have been communicated expressly to the artist involved.

A rearrangement of the processional in the sixteenth century, so that the Presentation of Christ in the Temple replaced an illustration for Palm Sunday on the opening page, could be manipulated to underscore a nun's own presentation by including within the imagery her commendation by her patron saint. Such practices, together with biographical evidence concerning certain contemporary nun-owners of processionals, indicate that a processional was sometimes received by a nun on the occasion of her profession.

The many small compilations which include a processional — all made by or for the Poissy nuns — were influenced in a number of ways by the changing nature of the Book of Hours. In common with the psalm illustrations of Waddesdon Manor 2, the processional offices in manuscripts dating from around the 1530s frequently begin with a large miniature above a few introductory lines of text surrounded by a full border. This recalls the common artistic treatment at the beginning of each Hour of the Virgin and suggests that the illustrations of these personally owned and commissioned liturgical books could also have served their owners in a private devotional sense. Another influence from Books of Hours, current in fifteenth-century Poissy processionals but later absent, is the transcription, sometimes as an addition, of prayers for use during mass. Since at this time the nuns were frequently forced to stay with their families because of wars, such practices perhaps evolved through observing lay devotional routines.

Poissy liturgical manuscripts frequently demonstrate such close conformities that they can virtually be recognised from their appearance alone. For over two hundred years the nuns' breviaries, antiphonaries and other smaller choirbooks were clearly written in gothic liturgical script on fine-quality vellum, and decorated with modestly sized images contained in a relatively unobtrusive border. A well-defined standard for the making of these books is evident. Illustration was limited to a range of important feasts, helping to order the difficult
liturgical texts and perhaps serving as a mnemonic. In books for reading — where finding one's way around the volume was straightforward and the use of place-markers probable — illustrations marked only one or two major divisions of the book. The processional is also simple to use and was earlier unillustrated. However, this aspect changed in the sixteenth century when each feast was usually illustrated, although this can have had little function in using the volume in a liturgical sense. The commissioner's greater concern is likely, therefore, to have corresponded to that of the lay owner of a Book of Hours: the book could satisfy her need for prestige and display; it could demonstrate her vicarious presence at eternal worship in its illustrations; or it could supply devotional pictures. Possibly the illustrated versions satisfied all these requirements.

The shape and size of manuscripts made for the house provide a good example of how handmade books were styled according to their particular use. Missals, breviaries, graduals and antiphonaries are bulky but transportable, and some survive in hard-wearing medieval covers. They were obviously made to be kept at their place of use in the church and, despite Dominican recommendations that they should be stored together when not in use, they must rarely have been removed from it. The celebrant's missal was not necessarily larger and heavier than a nun's breviary. Books which were frequently carried around, on the other hand, are small but never so minute that their text and music cannot be readily made out when held at an appropriate distance by an individual owner for singing, either while walking or seated. The physical make-up of books used for reading was different again. Volumes to be read from a lectern, by one nun before her fellows, are large in both size and script. They are thus appropriate to the distance at which a reader would stand in order to project her voice. These Latin books are all marked above the stressed syllable with small 'ticks', reflecting the importance attached by the house and by the Dominican Order to the proper pronunciation of the word. Books for reading to the whole community — spread to either side of the hall at meals or in chapter — are larger than books apparently read in the workroom where fewer nuns would be gathered. Stress-marks show that the texts in some liturgical manuscripts appear to have been those read by a nun in choir. These are again written clearly in a fairly large script, although the volumes are smaller than those designed purely for lectern use. They were, however, suitable for recital in the smaller occupied space of the choir, for the nuns sat closely banked up in double rows (Plan 2). The extant private devotional books represent a quite different category for they are generally closely written on paper or vellum of poorer quality and invariably sparingly decorated. All date from the fifteenth century and they seem to reflect the nuns' recorded aspirations at this period, which couple their noble birth with a severe humility in all aspects of their religious life, taking as their quoted example the Dominican nun-princess, St. Margaret of Hungary, and their patron, St. Louis.

Not all the books owned by the nuns had to be made for the house, or to follow Dominican use. A small number of non-ferial psalters, for example, originated elsewhere; some were rendered liturgical by adding the necessary antiphons and altering the litany while others were not altered at all. It is significant that the psalter is the most universal of all liturgical books and readily adaptable for Dominican use. Lack of any addition, apart from marks to aid public reading, show that other incoming volumes required no alteration to suit their
function at Poissy; these are non-liturgical and comprise books for refectory reading and devotional compilations for private use by the nuns. Most of the surviving texts for study or consultation that were deposited in the friars' library also fall into this category.

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The integration of observations on the working corpus of manuscripts from Poissy with information available in the surviving records concerning the monastery has allowed a considered appraisal of the kinds of books acquired by the house in the medieval period. It has also permitted an estimation of their place in the history of Parisian book illumination, their function, and their subsequent history including textual and decorative updating, maintenance and, in some cases, disposal. This study, and the corpus itself, should therefore provide a measure against which the book holdings of other nuns' houses can be judged, most especially royal houses in France, Flanders and England, and Dominican monasteries in particular. Notwithstanding this, it is probable that the corpus will increase considerably, for a number of Poissy manuscripts have entered the market in recent years. It can thus be expected to become an even more valuable source for the study of the history of Dominican, French and women's manuscripts.
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