NOTES

3 *The Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, EETS, os 104 (1909), 8–18.
5 Thanks to Miss Jean Kennedy, County Archivist, Norfolk Record Office, for permission to reproduce the Kirkpatrick transcript.

DAVID MILLS

James Miller: The will of a Chester scribe

The latest cycle-manuscript of the Chester mystery cycle, Harley 2124 (H), of 1607 was the work of three scribes. The last of these, who also revised some of the material by his fellow-scribes, signs himself James Miller. Miller is known to have been rector of St Michael's church, Chester, from 1605 to 1618, the year of his death, and to have been a minor canon of Chester Cathedral, formerly the Abbey of St Werburgh. R.M. Lumiansky and I have characterised him as the first editor of the cycle, capable of intelligent interpretation and reconstruction in his transcription of the somewhat battered and altered exemplar that underlies all Chester's cycle-manuscripts. We also believed that the copying of H may have been inspired by an antiquarian interest.

Miller's will, dated 20 July 1617 and proven on 28 July 1618, is now in the Diocesan Registry held in the Cheshire County Record Office in Chester, and its contents add considerably to our knowledge of the scribe of H. In it he tells us that he was born in Handbridge, that part of the parish of St-Mary-on-the-Hill in Chester which lay outside the walls and beyond the river. He still lived in the family house, with his wife and his daughter Mary, holding it in tenancy, and he mentions his sister Grace and her children who would inherit the property if all his family predeceased them. Possibly a James Miller mentioned in the burial records of St Mary's parish on 1 June, 1604, was some relation.

The will makes four references to books. First it deals with Latin and songbooks: "Item I bequeath to James Willding all my Latine bookes of Divinity or other in Latin withall my songe bookes in Latine...." These service books are valued in the inventory attached to the will at 30s. Second, there are other books of music which are left to his daughter:

... except my sett of Balladers which I giue to my daughter and the sette of ffrench Songes in a Case and what other song booke James Willding shall thinke most [superscript with caret] fitt for her.
Third, there is a library of English books which are also left to his daughter:

But all the rest of my English bookes, Historyes, Chronicles and
Diuinity whatsoeuer I giue vnto my Daughter Mary Charding her
yppon my blessing not to giue them or make them away.

The total value of these legacies to his daughter is given in the inventory as 40s.

Fourth, there are school books, left for his wife to bestow:

And all my Schole bookes I leaue to my Wife to be geuen to such
Godsons of mine as will prove a Scholler or else to such poore
Schollers as my overseers of this my will shall thinke meete.

The inventory merely mentions ‘A few old Schoolebookes’ valued at 2s.

Evidently Miller had gathered a number of books of divinity, music, and history
together with educational material and was concerned for their future ownership since
he very carefully specifies their bestowal. The careful Latinity of H and its margin glosses
lend further depth to this picture of a scholarly Latinist and divine. And the musical
setting for the Gloria in H, found in no other manuscript,⁵ may owe something to Miller’s
concern with music – reflected not only in his song-books but also in the legacy ‘Item
I bequeath to the Queiere men xxs.’ His scholarly concern extended to educating
the young and it seems that a room in his house was set aside for the purpose. The inventory
reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>In the Studie A Spanish deske</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iijs iije</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>one little booke deskes one Chaire one</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bristle brush one low stoole a hand baskett,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelues for bookes, one high stoole, a piece of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wainscott a Childs chaire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>xjs.</td>
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It is worth recalling that the scribe of the 1591 manuscript of the cycle, Edward Gregorie,
styled himself a ‘Scholler’ and may have encountered the cycle in just such a context.⁶

Most interesting of all is Miller’s description of his collection of English books as a
varied miscellany of ‘historyes, chronicles, and divinity whatsoeuer’, as if these
represented a particular taste. We cannot tell if H might have been amongst these; if it
was, it certainly came into Randle Holmes’ possession by 1628 regardless of Miller’s
wishes. But the list confirms our view of the antiquarian and scholarly tastes of those
working on the Chester exemplar and suggests the kind of appeal that the plays may
have had to educated Cestrians as history and divinity.

Miller’s wish was to be buried at the west end of the cathedral in the grave of either
William Fisher or Sir Roger Houghton ‘without Coffin, depe in the earth’. Presumably
this request was granted. His grave is, of course, unmarked. But he lives in his will as
a cleric of practical charity, a devotee of scholarship and education, and a man of anxious
and loving concern for his family.
Evidence of things promised: a progress report on the REED computer editing and typesetting system

In the last issue of the Newsletter I reported that the REED office in Toronto had selected and was installing a computer editing and typesetting system and that the new system promised several significant improvements in our local operations and hence in the efficiency with which volumes could be produced. Now, eight months later, with two volumes in production and this issue of the Newsletter typeset on the new system, it is possible to assess many of the expected improvements and to project with greater accuracy the impact our system will have on REED editors who choose to take full advantage of it. In some ways the system has already begun to develop beyond its original state, and this development together with our experience installing it will be of interest to those directly involved with REED and to others whose research leads to publication.

From selection of equipment to use of it in production took about six months. During this period a room was prepared, special electrical and data lines brought in, furniture built, equipment set up and tested, switches and cables constructed, and so forth. The equipment vendors were helpful to varying degrees, but ultimately the complex task of bringing various pieces of equipment together into a working system fell to the REED staff. Fortunately, we were able to rise to the occasion.

Since the system was designed last August, several changes have underscored the importance of the semi-autonomy of the REED system and led us to make it even less dependent on external services than it was initially meant to be. For one thing, access to University computers has become financially more difficult. For another, it is now inevitable that the ageing and increasingly unreliable mainframe we have been using, a DEC-10 (Model 1090), will be removed from service within the next five years, forcing upon its users a difficult period of transition well in advance of that date. Then, too, we have realized that for the kind of work we do microcomputers are considerably more suitable and powerful than is a time-sharing mainframe accessed through terminals. Our