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The Development of Legal Culture in Cambridge: William Bateman and the Trinity Hall Library in 1350

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1. William Bateman and the Foundation of Trinity Hall (1350)

At the height of the cultural and institutional vitality of the Middle Ages, European universities emerged as the foremost centres of learning, responsible for the education of future ecclesiastical, legal, and administrative elites. Organised according to a corporate model, they brought together masters and students within *universitates* designed to protect collective rights and to ensure the autonomy of teaching and study.[1]

More than mere sites for the transmission of knowledge, universities functioned as arenas of methodological debate and intellectual exchange. They fostered the formation of shared conceptual frameworks across disciplines—most notably law, theology, and philosophy – within which scholarly inquiry could develop. In this context, the study of law assumed a position of prominence, offering one of the principal means by which a rational and ordered vision of society was formulated and maintained.[2]

Within this early network of European centres of learning, the University of Cambridge occupies a place of particular importance. Founded in the early thirteenth century following the migration of masters and students from Oxford, it swiftly established itself as a focal point of cultural vitality and intellectual innovation.[3]

It was in this intellectually fertile environment that the figure of William Bateman (1298-1355), Bishop of Norwich, came to prominence. A man of considerable learning, educated at Bologna and an accomplished diplomat, Bateman embodied a cultural profile in which religious authority, academic expertise and legal knowledge were closely intertwined.[4]

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[1] H. De Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *Universities in the Middle Age*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992; Jacques Verger, *Les universités au Moyen Âge, Paris*, Presses Universitaire de France, 2013.

[2] M.D. Dubber, M. Godfrey (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of European Legal History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018; A. Winroth, J.C. Wei (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Canon Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022.

[3] A.B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500*, University of California Press, 1988; D.R. Leader, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, I: *The University to 1546*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989; E. Leedham-Green, *A Concise History of the University of Cambridge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

[4] R.M. Haines, 'Bateman [Norwich], William (c. 1298-1355), diplomat, founder of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and Bishop of Norwich', in H.C.G. Matthew, B. Harrison (dir.), *Oxford Dictionary of National biography,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Fully aware of the central role played by legal education at a time when both canon and civil law were indispensable instruments for the governance of the Church and the realm alike, Bateman resolved to found Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 1350. The College was conceived primarily as an institution devoted to the legal training of the clergy.[5]

Its foundation occurred during a period of profound crisis, in the aftermath of the Black Death, which had severely depleted both the clerical ranks and the university teaching body in England. The establishment of the College thus responded to an urgent need to train a new generation of legal specialists capable of contributing to the reorganisation of ecclesiastical and civil institutions.[6]

Bateman seems to have envisaged his foundation as a scholarly community in which study and practice were closely connected. His project reflected the distinctly scholastic conviction that the study of law could not be divorced from theological and moral reflection. In this sense, the foundation of Trinity Hall formed part of the broader process of consolidation of English legal learning and of the developing common law tradition.[7]

Without attempting an exhaustive reconstruction of the medieval history of Trinity Hall—a subject that has already been addressed by substantial scholarship—this study seeks instead to draw attention to certain aspects of the legal culture that permeated the College at the time of its foundation, as reflected in the legal manuscripts donated by William Bateman. These volumes, which constituted the original endowment of the College library and were made available to both students and fellows, stand as valuable witnesses to the founder's cultural ideals and educational vision.

2. Law and Text in the Middle Ages

The study of law at Trinity Hall conformed closely to the methodological framework of medieval university education, which was shaped by the logical and conceptual structures of scholasticism and by the didactic practices of *lectio* and *disputatio*. Legal learning was thus embedded within a broader intellectual system that privileged analytical reasoning, textual authority, and dialectical engagement.

Through the disciplined application of logic, the scholastic method sought to reconcile theological revelation with legal reasoning, grounding norms and institutions in an order understood to be both rational and divinely ordained. The relationship between law and theology was consequently one of mutual integration. Law, founded upon *ratio* and natural justice, was conceived as an expression of the divine will, while theology provided the axiological and rational framework within which legal norms derived their ultimate

[5] C. Crawley, *Trinity Hall: The History of a Cambridge College, 1350-1975*, 2nd ed. by G. Storey, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
[6] C. Harper-Bill, 'The English Church and English Religion after the Black Death', in M. Ormrod, P.G. Lindley (eds.), *The Black Death in England*, Stamford, Paul Watkins, 1996, pp. 79-123.
[7] D. Ibbetson, N. Jones, N. Ramsay (eds.), *English Legal History and its Sources: Essays in Honour of Sir John Baker*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

legitimacy. Scripture, in this context, functioned not merely as a source of spiritual truth but also as a repository of normative principles. Likewise, juridical norms were interpreted in the light of moral reasoning and with reference to their end in the *common good*.[8]

Teaching practice was structured around the *lectio*, during which the master read and expounded authoritative texts (*auctoritates*), offering a detailed analytical commentary. This process aimed to elucidate the literal sense of the text, to draw out its logical implications, and to demonstrate its coherence with established moral and theological principles. The *disputatio*, which either followed or accompanied the *lectio*, constituted the dialectical core of instruction. Under the guidance of the master, students engaged in the examination of legal questions or hypothetical cases, advancing opposing positions supported by rational argument and textual citation. From this exercise emerged the *quaestiones*: systematically formulated problems analysed through arguments *pro et contra*, culminating in a reasoned resolution that trained students in critical analysis and juridical reasoning.[9]

This method, developed within the Bolognese school, aimed at cultivating a juridical *habitus* rooted in rational argumentation, logical coherence, and interpretative competence – qualities essential to legal practice in both ecclesiastical and secular spheres. The inherently dialectical and collective character of legal study is clearly reflected in the medieval legal manuscripts preserved in the Old Library of Trinity Hall.

Far from constituting a static repository of texts, the manuscript page functioned as a genuine laboratory of knowledge. The central text was frequently surrounded by a dense apparatus of marginal and interlinear glosses, personal annotations, cross-references, abbreviations, and graphic signs, transforming the page into a dialogic and stratified intellectual space.[10]

The page functioned as a medium for the transmission of legal learning, while simultaneously providing the space in which the intellectual community of the medieval university took concrete form.[11] This phenomenon has been aptly described as a "textual

[8] J.C. Wei, 'Theology and the Theological Sources of Canon Law', in A. Winroth, J.C. Wei (eds.), The *Cambridge History of Medieval Canon Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 173-191.

[9] On the many teaching genres in medieval universities, see G.R. Dolezalek, 'Roman Law: Symbiotic Companion and Servant of Canon Law', in A. Winroth, J.C. Wei (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Canon Law*, 2022, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 230-261; D. De Concilio, 'Les sources rhétoriques et dialectiques du droit medieval', in E. Conte, L. Genton (eds.), *Lire lire le droit du Moyen Age*. *Comprendre et utiliser les sources juridiques (XIIe-XVe siècles)*, Palermo, Palumbo, 2025, pp. 297-330.

[10] J. Frońska, 'Writing in the Margin – Drawing in the Margin: Reading Practices of Medieval Jurists', in R. Brown-Grant et al. (eds.), *Inscribing Knowledge in the Medieval Book*, Berlin-Boston, De Gruyter, 2019, pp. 141-159; G. Dolezalek, 'Glosses and the Juridical Genre "Apparatus glossarum" in the Middle Ages', in *Rivista internazionale di diritto comune*, 32, 2021, p. 9-54.

[11] F. Soetermeer, *Livres et juristes au Moyen Âge*, Goldbach, Keip, 1999; S. L'Engle-R. Gibbs, *Illuminating the Law: Legal Manuscripts in Cambridge* Collections, London, Harvey Miller, 2001; V. Colli (ed.), *Juristische Buchproduktion im Mittelalter*, Frankfurt a. M., Klostermann, 2002; S. L'Engle,

community": each manuscript emerged from a plurality of voices—masters, students, scribes, and successive readers—who engaged in a continuous written dialogue and thereby contributed to the collective construction of legal knowledge.[12]

The analysis of medieval legal texts therefore requires what Pierre Chastang has termed an "archaeology of the text": a systematic attention to materiality understood as direct evidence of academic practice. The layout of the page, corrections, illuminated initials, glosses, and even traces of use—ink stains, erasures, and graphic markings – bear witness to a living and constantly evolving legal thought.[13] One need only recall the well-known marginal annotations in the form of *maniculae* (small hands drawn to indicate passages of particular significance), alongside moral invocations, Latin mottos, or graphic symbols designed to guide reading and facilitate memorisation. Each of these interventions, however slight, constituted an act of interpretation and participation in the textual tradition, rendering it impossible to identify a single, definitive, or 'true' author of the text.[14] From this perspective, the study of law at Trinity Hall formed an integral part of a collective and intergenerational enterprise whose primary aim was the transmission of knowledge.

The medieval manuscripts now preserved in the College's Old Library bear eloquent witness to this mode of scholarly practice: read, annotated, and commented upon by successive generations of students and fellows, they embody a continuity of teaching and learning that transformed the text into a bridge between different periods and intellectual communities. This sustained process of reading, rewriting, and interpretation gave rise to a shared legal tradition in which textual authority was held in productive tension with the interpretative agency of the reader.

Legal study thus acquired a dual significance. On the one hand, it provided rigorous technical training for future jurists, equipping them with both theoretical foundations and practical skills. On the other, it contributed to the formation of an academic community—often international in composition—grounded in dialogue, debate, and the critical

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'Medieval Canon Law Manuscripts and Early Printed Books', in A. Winroth, J. C. Wei (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Canon Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022, p. 299-321.

[12] B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Languages and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983; R.F. Green, 'Textual Production and Textual Communities', in L. Scanlon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100-1500'*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 25-36; P. Bertrand, 'Textual community reloaded : redéfinir les communautés textuelles', in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Âge*, 136/1, 2024, pp. 127-134.

[13] P. Chastang, *L'archéologie du texte médiéval. Autour de travaux récents sur l'écrit au Moyen Âge*, in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 2-63, 2008, pp. 245-269.

[14] S. Menzinger, 'The Past, the Others, Himself: The Open Dialogue of a Medieval Legal Author with his Text', in S. Boodts, P. De Leemans, S. Schorn (eds.), *Sicut dicit. Editing Ancient and Medieval Commentaries on Authoritative Texts,* Brepols, Turnhout, 2020, pp. 273-299. See also F. Soetermeer, 'Between Codicology and Legal History: Pecia Manuscripts of Legal Texts', in *Manuscripta* 49.2, 2005, pp. 247-267.

elaboration of knowledge.[15] It was within this cultural framework that Trinity Hall functioned as a distinctive centre of late medieval English legal culture. Here, the written word, oral disputation, and collective reflection converged to shape the intellectual identity of the European jurist.

3. William Bateman at the Crossroads between *Ius Commune* and Common Law and Text in the Middle Ages

Bateman's activity as founder and patron was driven by a deliberate effort to transplant to Cambridge the methods, logical structures, and systematic approach characteristic of Roman-canon law as cultivated in contemporary European universities, while adapting them to the specific needs of the English Church, the institutions of the realm, and the emerging common law tradition.

It is now well established that the teaching of Roman-canon law within the English university context was neither marginal nor purely theoretical.[16] On the contrary, it functioned as a privileged channel of cultural mediation between continental Europe and England, contributing to the formation of a body of jurists whose training enabled them to operate flexibly across legal systems and to apply principles of civil and canon law within English legal practice.[17]

[15] P. Kibre, *The Nations in the Medieval Universities*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1948. See also R.J. Mitchell, *English Law Students at Bologna in the Fifteenth Century*, in *English History Review*, 51, 1936, pp. 270-286.

[16] L.E. Boyle, 'The Curriculum of the Faculty of Canon Law at Oxford in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century', in L.E. Boyle (ed.), *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200-1400,* London, Variorum, 1981 [1964], XIV, pp. 133-162; F. de Zulueta, P. Stein, *The Teaching of Roman Law in England around 1200*, London, Selden Society, 1990. See also G. Giordanengo, *L'enseignement du droit romain au Moyen Âge: une unité européenne*, in B. Ribémont (ed.), *De la chrétienté à l'Europe*, Orléans, Paradigme, 1995, pp. 75-103.

[17] S. Kuttner, E. Rathbone, *'Anglo-Norman Canonists of the 12th Century',* in *Traditio*, 7, 1951, pp. 278-358 (now in P. Landau, ed., *Gratian and the Schools of Law, 1140-1234*, London-New York, Routledge, 2018 [1983], pp. 163-250). Jurists trained in Roman law – the civilians, divided into advocates and proctors – were active in the ecclesiastical courts and in the Court of Admiralty, see J. Brundage, *The Medieval Origins of Legal Professions. Canonists, Civilians, and the Courts*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2008; T.J. McSweeney, *Priests of the Law: Roman Law and the Making of the Common Law's First Professionals*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019. See also J. Baker, *The Third University of England,* in J. Baker. (ed.), *Collected Papers on English Legal History,* I, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 143-167. On the English canonists and their production, see also J.H. Baker, *Monuments of Endlesse Labours. English Canonists and Their Work, 1300-1900*, London and Rio Grande, The Hambledon Press and The Ecclesiastical Law Society, 1998.

From this perspective, the traditionally asserted 'incommunicability' between common law and *ius commune* appears far less rigid than has often been assumed.[18] English jurists were able to move between these legal traditions, translating the argumentative structures of the *Corpus iuris civilis*, Gratian's *Decretum*, and the papal *Decretals* into the operative categories of English law. It is also worth recalling that William Bateman initiated the practice of reporting the decisions of the Roman Rota, thereby further reinforcing the circulation of continental legal learning.[19]

Familiarity with the *ius commune* enabled English scholars to engage with universal legal categories—such as equity, intention, culpability, and authority—which found application in both forensic practice and ecclesiastical administration.[20] At the same time, continental influence did not result in a direct normative transplantation. Rather, it operated as a form of epistemological enrichment: Roman-canon law supplied models of reasoning, conceptual categories, and classificatory tools that proved invaluable to English jurists and contributed to the development of an autonomous common law system.[21]

The academic activity fostered by Trinity Hall thus played a significant role in the formation of a European legal *koiné*, within which general legal concepts and principles were continually compared, adapted, and hybridised with local laws and practices across late medieval Europe.[22]

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[18] *Ius commune* refers to the transnational legal culture of medieval and early modern Europe based primarily on the study and interpretation of Roman law (contained in the *Corpus iuris civilis*) and canon law (collected in the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*), as developed in medieval universities. Rather than functioning as a single codified legal system, it provided a shared body of legal principles, concepts, and interpretative methods that interacted with and informed local laws and judicial practices across Europe. See: M. Bellomo, *The Common Legal Past of Europe, 1000-1800*, Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1995.

[19] The earliest Rotal reports are those compiled by Thomas Fastolf, one of the English auditors of the Roman Rota, which were drafted in 1336-1337 and subsequently published in 1475, see J.H. Baker, *Dr Thomas Fastolf and the History of Law Reporting,* in *Cambridge Law Journal,* XLV, 1986, pp. 84-96.

[20] G.H. Hudson, *Court Cases and Legal Arguments in England, c. 1066-1166*, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6-10, 2000, pp. 91-115.

[21] D.J. Ibbetson, *Common Law and Ius Commune*, Selden Society, London, 2001; R.H. Helmoholz, V. Piergiovanni (eds.), *Relations between the Ius Commune and English Law*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2009. See also J.W. Cairns, P.J. du Plessis, *The Creation of the "Ius commune": From Casus to Regula*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

[22] A. Gouron, *Études sur la diffusion des doctrines juridiques médiévales*, Londres, Variorum, 1987; E. Conte, L. Mayali (eds.), *A Cultural History of Law in the Middle Ages*, Londres-New York-Oxford, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019; O. Condorelli, F. Roumy, M. Schmoeckel (eds.), *Der Einfluss der Kanonistik auf die europäische Rechtskultur,* 1: *Zivil- und Zivilprozessrecht*; 2: *Öffentliches Rechti*; 3: *Straf- und Strafprozessrecht*; 4: *Prozessrecht* (Y. Mausen, O. Condorelli, F. Roumy, M, Schmoeckel, eds.); 5: *Das Recht der Wirtschaft*; 6: *Völkerrecht, Vienne-Cologne-Weimar, Böhlau*, 2009-2020.

4. The Manuscripts of the Old Library: The Repertorium Biblicum and the Tabula Martiniana

Bateman thus introduced to Cambridge an educational model grounded in analytical method and in the systematic consultation of authoritative texts. To equip students with the requisite instruments for their intellectual formation, the foundation of the College was accompanied by the creation of a library endowment, defined explicitly by the founder himself and conceived as an integral component of the broader educational project.
It must be noted, however, that the volumes donated by William Bateman at the time of the College's establishment have, over the centuries, suffered a near-total dispersal. This loss resulted from multiple factors: the inevitable material deterioration of medieval codices; the institutional developments that reshaped the college; and wider historical events that disrupted and severely diminished the bibliographic heritage of the University of Cambridge as a whole.

The earliest bibliographical sources, such as Thomas James' *Ecloga Oxonio-Cantabrigiensis*, Edward Bernard's *Catalogi Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae* (1697), Gustav Friedrich Haenel's repertoires (1830) and the relatively later catalogue of Trinity Hall manuscripts compiled by Montague Rhodes James (1907) do not enable a reconstruction of the original collection's profile. These sources do not permit a secure distinction between the manuscripts donated by Bateman and those incorporated into the library through subsequent acquisitions.[23]

Of the substantial book endowment originally provided, only two surviving witnesses can now be traced back to Bateman's donation at the time of the College's foundation: Trinity Hall, MS 8 (containing the *Repertorium Biblicum*) and Trinity Hall, MS 15 (containing the *Tabula Martiniana*).[24] Considering Bateman's legal training, together with the established aims and methods of university teaching in the period, the original library endowment may be understood as an intellectual infrastructure designed to support both the teaching activity and the wider scholarly life of the College.

The selection of texts that emerges indirectly from the catalogues, and from comparison with the endowments of other Cambridge colleges, suggests with a reasonable degree of confidence that Bateman's donation was motivated by a pragmatic intention: to furnish students with the working tools necessary to progress from theoretical analysis to

[23] T. James, *Ecloga Oxonio-Cantabrigiensis*, London, Bishop and Norton, 1600; E. Bernard, *Catalogi Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae*, Oxford, 1697; G.F. Haenel, *Catalogi librorum manuscriptorum*, Leipzig, I.C. Hinrichs, 1830; M.R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in Trinity Hall*, *Cambridge*, Cambridge University Press, 1907. James's catalogue also includes the substantial number of medieval manuscripts acquired by the library in the centuries following its foundation. For manuscripts not listed in the printed catalogues, see the Trinity Hall Library website: https://www.trinhall.cam.ac.uk/about/library/old-library/manuscripts/medieval-and-sixteenth-century-manuscripts/.

[24] M.R. James, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in Trinity Hall*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1907, pp. 9-10 and 33.

interpretative practice. The collection was therefore conceived as a coherent and functional whole, composed primarily of works of canon and civil law, supplemented by collections of local customs, theological writings, and practical reference materials. In this way, the function of the Trinity Hall library came to occupy that precise space of mediation, translation, and dialogue between different legal traditions.

The two surviving manuscripts thus possess exceptional documentary and symbolic value, for they represent not only the last tangible remnants of the original library but also a rare window onto the educational and juridical-theological vision that inspired Bateman in the foundation of his college.

Trinity Hall MS 8, containing the *Repertorium biblicum*, constitutes a testimony to fourteenth-century scholastic culture.[25] Produced around the same period as the foundation of the College, and almost certainly compiled with the explicit purpose of being made available to Trinity Hall students, it takes the form of an alphabetical repertory of biblical themes, designed to facilitate the retrieval of relevant passages of Sacred Scripture through keywords and conceptual entries. Such repertories, widely disseminated across medieval university centres, bear eloquent witness to the systematic and classificatory habits of thought characteristic of late medieval scholasticism—a culture inclined to organise knowledge into logical categories conducive both to argumentation and to the methodological foundations of legal reasoning.

Given the profound interrelation between law and theology in the Middle Ages, the inclusion of a biblical repertory in the College's original library served not merely devotional or spiritual purposes but responded to a concrete didactic and methodological need: to furnish students with an instrument of consultation and a resource for the construction of legal argument. The value of the *Repertorium* thus extends well beyond its theological content. Its alphabetical structure and headword-based organisation enabled Scripture to function as a conceptual archive from which juridical discourse could be shaped and articulated.

The second manuscript, Trinity Hall MS 15, preserves the *Tabula Martiniana* by the Bohemian bishop and jurist *Martinus Polonus* (†1278), a work widely circulated in the later Middle Ages. Also datable to the fourteenth century, the manuscript contains one of the most widespread alphabetical legal concordances, designed as a tool for consulting Gratian's *Decretum* and the *Decretales* of Gregory IX (*Liber Extra*).[26]

On folio 139v the heraldic device of William Bateman—an ermine crescent surmounted by a Maltese cross—remains clearly visible, confirming that the volume formed part of the original endowment established by the founder (figure 1).[27]

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[25] A digitised version is accessible on the Cambridge University Digital Library website: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TRINITYHALL-00008/11.

[26] The text is available in digitised form at the following link: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/mirador/MS-TRINITYHALL-00015/1.

[27] See: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/mirador/MS-TRINITYHALL-00015/1.

As with the *Repertorium*, the purpose of the *Tabula Martiniana* was fundamentally practical: it offered students and teachers rapid access to the most recurrent legal questions and case types, enabling them to locate the relevant normative references with ease and to move quickly between abstract principles and concrete examples. The organisational logic of the *Tabula Martiniana* also anticipates the classificatory mentality evident in the *Year Books* and in the registers of the English courts, and, to some extent, foreshadows the structure of modern analytical indexes.[28]



Figure 1: Bateman's heraldic device, Trinity Hall MS 15, fol. 139v

Taken together, the two manuscripts—both belonging to the sphere of canon law—offer a glimpse of the dual axis around which the formation of the medieval jurist revolved: the *lex divina*, which furnished the ethical and theological foundations, and the *lex humana*, which translated those principles into applicable norms and procedures.[29] They exemplify the original vocation of Trinity Hall, established for the training of clerics specialised in law, and reveal Bateman's intention to educate scholars capable of moving confidently between divine and human norms, between biblical exegesis and legal interpretation.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the evidence relating to William Bateman's foundation allows us to discern the intellectual ambitions that lay behind the establishment of Trinity Hall in 1350. Conceived in response to both an institutional crisis and a broader cultural need, the College

[28] J.H. Baker (ed.), *Judicial Records, Law Reports and the Growth of Case Law,* Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1989.
[29] L. Mayali, *'Introduction. De la raison à la foi: l'entrée du droit en religion',* in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 228/2011, pp. 475-482.

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embodied a vision of legal education grounded in the scholastic methods of the medieval university and directed toward the practical training of jurists able to serve both Church and realm. The manuscripts associated with Bateman's original endowment, though only fragmentarily preserved, illuminate the cultural framework within which this project unfolded: a culture of study structured around authoritative texts, systematic classification, and the close interaction between theological and juridical reasoning.

They also disclose an epistemological project fully consonant with the legal culture of the later Middle Ages—one aimed at integrating the principal domains of medieval learning and equipping students with forms of knowledge directed not merely toward theoretical understanding but toward practical juridical application.

Within this framework, Trinity Hall emerges as a site of mediation between different legal traditions, where the conceptual tools of the *ius commune* could be assimilated and adapted within the evolving context of English legal practice. Bateman's foundation thus contributed to the wider circulation of legal knowledge across medieval Europe while fostering the development of a specifically English juridical culture, demonstrating the central role of books, teaching, and scholarly community in shaping the legal thought of the later Middle Ages.

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