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A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY MONASTIC SIGN LIST FROM BURY ST EDMUNDS ABBEY

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ST BENEDICT (c.480–547) entitled the sixth chapter of his Rule for monastic life *De Taciturnitate* and therein he enjoined that monks should remain silent unless speech was absolutely necessary. Within a century of his death his Rule had become the basis for monasticism in western Christendom and consequently silence became an essential part of monastic life. But while the Rule furnished general guidance on the issue of silence its provisions could be ambiguous and a range of customs gradually developed which specified when and where monks were allowed to break the rule of silence. St Benedict in his regulations for mealtimes (ch. 38) stated 'if however there be any need let the thing be asked for by means of a sign rather than speech'. Drawing, no doubt, on this precedent monks began to employ a sign language.

The ordered tabulation and standardisation of such a language seems to have been part of the reforming work of the Cluniac monks of the late 10th century (Gougaud 1930, 16). From Cluny, where the earliest list of such signs survives, the system spread to nearly all the other religious orders where there was a need to communicate in silence. Today a sign language is still used by the Trappists and by the Cistercians. A member of the latter order has recently updated the 'vocabulary' in a work that contains signs for aeroplane, typewriter and a great many other terms indispensable to modern life (Barakat 1975).

In England the Venerable Bede (673–735) wrote a treatise *De loquela per gestum digitorum, sive de indigitatione* (P.L. 90, 685–698) which is however restricted to the signing of numbers and letters of the alphabet. The earliest list of English verbal signs surviving seems to be in British Library, Cotton Tiberius A, iii, a mid-11th-century manuscript from Christ Church, Canterbury. This contains the Rule of St Benedict in both Latin and Old English followed by 127 *Monasteriales Indicia* in Old English beginning: 'These are the signs which are to be used in the cloister and, with God's help, shall be earnestly observed where according to the instruction of the Rule silence is to be observed' (Kluge 1885, 118). There are also signs for the church, refectory etc. A slightly earlier copy of the R.S.B. but without the signs was once at Bury St Edmunds Abbey though it was not actually written there (Gretsch 1974, 126, 133). Other Old English manuscripts of the R.S.B. survive from Durham, Winchester, Worcester and elsewhere. We may assume that by the 11th century all the greater monastic houses had their own copies of the R.S.B. As was the case at Canterbury, they may also have had a list of signs as part of their customary for the better ordering of their daily activities according to the principles of the Rule itself.

By the time of the Dissolution many other religious houses had customaries, some of which refer to a sign language though few of the actual lists of signs survive. Bury Abbey is exceptional in having two such lists, one containing 141 signs, the other 198. From Ely Cathedral Priory there is a list of 110 signs which is almost identical to lists used by the Victorine Canons in Dublin and Paris, and from the Bridgettine nunnery at Syon near London there is a list of 106 signs in 15th-century English (see these place-names in the list of references). While each list has its idiosyncracies, the majority of signs were by the later Middle Ages virtually identical throughout western Christendom (see Jarecki 1981 to compare those from Cluny, Monte Cassino, Hirsau, Paris and Bury), providing in effect a silent *lingua franca* to augment the use of Latin when silence was ordained. The longest list is that of the 12th-century abbot, William of Hirsau (Germany), which contains 359 words including a great many more varieties of food than are found in any of the others.

Monastic signs consisted mainly of common nouns, adjectives and a few verbs. As the lists became more elaborate, incorporating signs for both religious and secular occupations, the language of silence fell open to abuses which completely overturned its original purpose. The scene at the Syon nuns' dinner table has been described by one modern historian as 'dumb pandemonium' (Power 1922, 287), although their own customary cautioned that the signs were not to be used without some good reason, 'for ofte tyme more hurtethe an evil sygne than an evil worde, and more offence it may be to God' (Aungier 1840, 287). The unnecessary use of signs had already been noticed by the 12th-century historian, Giraldus Cambrensis, who when dining at high table with the Prior of Christ Church criticised both the excessive number of dishes (seventeen!) and the superfluous use of signs: 'Furthermore, if you watch the monks everywhere, especially the prior, they use signs and whispers by the twisting of mouth and hands with gestures and performances both theatrical and comic. You will be amazed at the novelty of these things' (R.S. vol. 21, 4, 39-40). Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of Norwich 1091-1121, who incidentally tried unsuccessfully to deprive Bury Abbey of its exemption from episcopal control (Galbraith 1925), praised one of his own monks for avoiding the dangers of immoderate *locutio per signa*: 'You sit in the cloister and curbing your tongue you keep also your fingers from unprofitable signs' (*Epistola ad Felicem* in Anstruther 1846, 45).

The surviving Bury sign lists both date from about the middle of the 14th century and have much in common. The British Library version, *De Signis Monachorum*, is in the *Liber Albus*, now Harleian MS 1005 (Thompson 1980, 142-45). Its author is unknown and it is composed from several sources, one of which came from Cluny, one possibly was oral transmission and the others are unknown (Jarecki 1981, 67). The list is preceded by a *Tractus sive prologus de silencio et signis* in a different hand and contains three remarks which seem to refer to the sign list which is published here. One reads (f. 195r.): *Iste tractatus melius et plenius habetur in quodam papiro H. de K*; at the beginning of the list (f. 207r.) is written: *Desunt hic nobiles passus quere[?] in papiro H. de Kirk.*; and on the same folio is also written *vide signa melius collecta in papiro quodam in libro de Kirkstede*. These references and the presence of Kirkstede's own pressmark on our manuscript suggest that this is the one referred to in the *Liber Albus*. Kirkstede held various offices at Bury in the third quarter of the 14th century (Thompson 1982, 93, 101), including that of the novice master who was charged with the teaching of the sign language (see note on sign 128).

The Bury sign list which is here transcribed and translated for the first time is part of a customary now in Cambridge University Library which also includes the famous 'Kalendar of Abbot Samson', published by Davis in 1954. It is a good deal longer than the list in the *Liber Albus*, containing in addition: (a) a treatise *De Silencio* of five folio sides, (b) a short *Prologus* addressed to Roger the accountant (*compotistus*; otherwise unknown) which is similar to the prologue in the *Liber Albus* (see Jarecki 1981, 353), and (c) a list of 380 words which are to be signed by combinations of fingers only. This list is an extraordinary collection including various parts of speech and it is now impossible to see how the system worked with so few movements of the fingers. Owing to the limitations of space we are unable to publish this prefatory material.

The Bury sign list in Cambridge is not only longer than the *Liber Albus* version but also contains several signs which are peculiar to Bury and is therefore of special interest to the study of the abbey. They include one for St Edmund (59) and one for the feretrars who guarded his shrine (126). Sign 49 appears to refer directly to the Bury Psalter. The number of priors (105-08) tallies with that known from other sources. The need for a sign for archdeacon (111) was peculiar to the abbey's administrative role in the town. The explanation for these and other signs relevant to Bury will be found in the notes which

follow the text. Aside from its particular relevance to Bury the list as a whole provides glimpses of many details of the daily life of an English Benedictine community of the 14th century.

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THE SIGN LIST: TEXT AND TRANSLATION

(Cambridge University Library, Additional Manuscript 6006, ff. 76v.– 80v. Note: the spelling of the manuscript has been followed literally throughout. All abbreviations have been extended. Words or letters supplied to clarify the sense of a passage have been placed in round brackets.)

LIBER DE SIGNIS MONACHORUM DE FORMATIONE SIGNORUM (f.76v.)

PRO ECCLESIA

- 1 Pro ecclesia
clauso pugno digitorum iuncturis timpus leniter percute; et hoc signum sit pro lapidibus et fortitudine et pro omni re dura sive duricia et hiis set adde benedictionem et tunc significat ecclesiam, capellam et altare.
- 2 Pro oblata
extensa manu indice et pollice coniunctis simila tenere eam.
- 3 Pro pannis altaris
extendens manus digitos unius manus digitis alterius manus percute trahendo modo intus modo foris; quod significat generaliter pannum; set adde signum altaris vel benedictionis et tunc significat pannum altaris.
- 4 Pro casula
simula utraque manu tenere casulam et sic ultra capud iactare.
- 5 Pro alba
signo panni adde ut manu dextra brachium sinistro [*sic*] apprehendendo versus cubitum manum trahas; deinde idem facias manu sinistro [*sic*] in brachio dextero.

THE BOOK OF MONKS' SIGNS CONCERNING THE FORMATION OF SIGNS

FOR THE CHURCH

- For church
having closed the fist lightly tap the temple with the joints of the fingers. Let this sign be for stones and for strength and for everything hard or for hardness and suchlike; but add the sign for blessing and then it signifies church, chapel and altar.
- For oblation
with hand extended pretend to hold it with forefinger and thumb joined together.
- For altar cloths
extending the hands tap the fingers of one hand with the fingers of the other hand drawing them now inwards, now outwards. This signifies cloth generally. But add the sign for altar or blessing and then it signifies altar cloth.
- For chasuble
pretend to take the chasuble with each hand and thus throw (it) over the head.
- For alb
in addition to the sign for cloth you draw the hand towards the elbow with the right hand on the left arm; then do the same with the left hand on the right arm.

- 6 Pro stola
indices clauso pugno extendens ab humeris usque ad zonam trahe.
- 7 Pro manipulo
simila in sinistro brachio illud pendere et quasi sub brachio dextra manu illum apprehendere.
- 8 Pro zona
indicem circumfer indici; deinde sub umbilico usque ad latera fac tractum cum indicibus.
- 9 Pro amita
signum benedictionis adde ut oram almici sui tangas cum pollice et indice.
- 10 Pro corporali
premisso signo panni altaris digitum minimum erige.
- 11 Pro calice
tres primos digitos aliquantulum inflecte et sursum sumitates eleva; quod signum fit pro cippo. Econtra facies pro signo fiolarum set signo cippi adde signum benedictionis vel signum auri quod sic fit: pollicem et indicem coniunge et trahe super nasum ceteris digitis ad volam recurvis et tunc significat calicem.
- 12 Pro manutergio
premisso signo panni omnes digitos dextre manus coniunge et per obliquum move. Hoc enim signum facies pro ablutione, pro aqua, pro pluvia et pro humore et hiis.
- 13 Pro vino
pollicis et indicis sumitates iuxta oculum paululum move. Si sit rubeum adde signum ruboris quod ita fit: extremitates quattuor digitorum curvatorum super maxillam trahe; si vero album minimum digitum sinistre manus inter digitos dextre manus include et statim extrahe eos abinvicem; et hoc fit pro omni albedine.
- 14 Pro igne
clauso pugno in sumitate indicis erecti parum suffla. Idem facias pro omni re calida vel calore vel pro vento.
- 15 Pro candela vel cereo
simula manibus candelam vel cereum facere addendo signum ignis.
- 16 Pro cera
frica manus sicut pro candela nichil addens.
- 17 Pro candelabris
pugnum pugno percute quod generaliter signat metallum addendo signum cerri.
- 18 Pro turibulo
adde signum [sic] metalli signum turificandi cum indice et pollice; pollice videlicet medie iuncture indicis coniuncto ceteris quoque digitis ad volam retortis.
- 19 Pro cruce
duobus indicis forma crucem.
- 20 Pro signo cantandi
clauso pugno indicem extende et in ore modicum pone; set adde benedictionem et missam signat.
- For stole
having closed the fist(s) extend the forefingers and draw them from the shoulders to the girdle.
- For maniple
pretend to hang it on the left arm and pretend to take hold of it under the arm with the right hand.
- For girdle
move forefinger around forefinger; then make a pulling motion from under the navel to the sides with the forefingers.
- For amice
in addition to the sign for blessing you touch the border of the amice with thumb and forefinger.
- For corporal
having first made the sign for altar cloth put up the little finger.
- For chalice
bend the first three fingers slightly and raise the tips up which is the sign for cup. Alternatively, you make the sign for cruets. But to the sign for cup add the sign for blessing or for gold which is made thus: join the thumb and forefinger and draw over the nose with the rest of the fingers curved into the palm and then it signifies chalice.
- For hand towel
in addition to the sign for cloth join all the fingers of the right hand and move them obliquely. You make this sign for washing, for water, for rain and for wetness and suchlike.
- For wine
move the tips of thumb and forefinger slightly in front of the eye. If it is red add the sign for red which is made thus: draw the ends of four curved fingers over the cheek; but if white, enclose the little finger of the left hand in the fingers of the right hand and immediately part them; and this shall be for all whiteness.
- For fire
having closed the fist blow gently on the tip of the erect forefinger. You do the same for everything hot, [for] heat or for wind.
- For candle or taper
pretend to make a candle or a taper with the hands adding the sign for fire.
- For wax
rub the hands for a candle adding nothing.
- For candelabra
strike one fist with the other fist which generally signifies metal, adding the sign for wax.
- For thurible
add to the sign for metal the sign for censuring with forefinger and thumb; that is to say, with the thumb joined to the middle joint of the forefinger, and the rest of the fingers bent back into the palm.
- For cross
with the two forefingers form a cross.
- For the sign for singing
having closed the fist extend the forefinger and place it in the mouth a little way; add blessing and it signifies mass.

A MONASTIC SIGN LIST FROM BURY ST EDMUNDS

- 21 Pro libris generaliter
extende manum latere sursum elevato et manum ipsam move sicut folium libri moveri solet.
- 22 Pro missali
adde signum libri benedictionem.
- 23 Pro sacerdote ebdomario
fac signum benedictionis et statim indicem et medium ad volam recollige.
- 24 Pro evangelio et diacono
fac crucem cum pollice super frontem.
- 25 Pro epistola et subdiacono (f.77r.)
fac signum super os.
- 26 Pro acolita qui custodit patinam
indicem pone subtus oculum quod est signum custodis et adde signum auri ut sicut pro calice.
- 27 Pro choro
omnes digitos dextere manus divisos curva et super cor pone et idem signum fac pro corde.
- 28 Pro cantu
clauso pugno indicem extende et aliquantulum recurva; deinde in ore modicum pone.
- 29 Aliter pro cantu
dextram manum expandens sumitates digitorum prope os applica et sic parum move non deorsum vel sursum set dextrorsum et sinistrorsum.
- 30 Et pro cantore
premitte signum magistri quod ita fit: pone manum super mentum latera nasi inter medium et indicem erectos apprehendens aliis digitis ad volam retortis.
- 31 Pro alleluia, sanctus, Agnus, Gloria in excelsis, angelo, avibus, vita et anima
extendens manum tres digitos medios inclines et inflexos move quasi ad volandum.
- 32 Pro graduali in choro
manum lacius contra te expandens digitis non divisos parum move dorso manus terram respiciente et idem facias pro disco vel scutella in refectorio. Econtra facias pro plenitudine et implecione.
- 33 Pro tractu et pro diurnitate et pro omne re longa non crescente
extendens palmam trahe manum super pectus a sinistro humero usque ad dextrum humerum.
- 34 Pro sequencia
omnes digitos dextre manus divisos curva summatibus respicientibus levam.
- 35 Et pro timore
adde ut manus aliquantulum contremiscat.
- 36 Pro campana
clauso pugno simila te pulsare et hoc est signum pulsandi et signum sacriste premissis signis magistri.
- 37 Pro matutinis
signo cantus adde signum noctis sic: pone pugnum sub maxilla caput super eum aliquantulum inclinans et idem signum fit pro dormicione.
- For books generally
extend the hand with side raised upwards and move this hand as the page of a book is moved.
- For missal
add to the sign for book [the sign for] blessing.
- For hebdomary priest
make the sign for blessing and immediately gather together forefinger and middle finger into the hollow of the hand.
- For gospel and deacon
make a cross with the thumb on the forehead.
- For epistle and subdeacon
make the sign on the mouth.
- For the server who looks after the paten
place the forefinger beneath the eye which is the sign for a custodian and add the sign for gold as for chalice.
- For the choir
curve all the spread fingers of the right hand and place them over the heart. Make the same sign for heart.
- For chant
having closed the fist extend the forefinger and bend it a little; then place it a little way in the mouth.
- Alternatively for chant
spreading the right hand, place the tips of the fingers near the mouth and thus move them slightly, not upwards or downwards but right and left.
- And for cantor
first make the sign for master which is made thus: place the hand on the chin taking the side of the nose between the forefinger and middle finger outstretched, with the other fingers twisted into the hollow of the hand.
- For Alleluia, Sanctus, Agnus, Gloria, angel, birds, life and soul
extending the hand move the three middle fingers, inclined and bent as for flying.
- For gradual in the choir
stretching the hand out sideways against you, with fingers together slightly move (it) with the back facing the ground. You do the same for dish or bowl in the refectory. Alternatively you do it for abundance and fulfilment.
- For tract, duration and for everything of a fixed length
extending the hand draw the palm above the chest from the left shoulder to the right shoulder.
- For sequence
curve all the spread fingers of the right hand with the tips pointing towards the left.
- And for veneration
in addition let the hand tremble slightly.
- For bell
having closed the fist pretend to strike yourself and this is the sign for striking and the sign for sacrist, having already made the sign for master.
- For matins
to the sign for singing add the sign for night thus: place the fist beneath the cheek, inclining the head slightly over it. This sign shall also be for sleeping.

- 38 Pro laudibus
ut supra pro alleluia et angelis.
- 39 Pro prima hora
latere dextre manus percute spacium leniter
quod est inter pollicem et indicem.
- 40 Pro tercia
spacium inter indicem et medium eodem modo
percute.
- 41 Pro sexta
spacium inter medium et medicum.
- 42 Pro nona
spacium inter medicum et minimum sive auricu-
larem.
- 43 Pro vespers
similiter percute iuncturam inter manum et bra-
chium ex parte digiti auricularis.
- 44 Pro completorio
eodem ordine percute brachium iuxta cubitum.
- 45 Pro missa magna
ut supra pro sacerdote ebdomario. Et idem facias
pro capitulari missa addens ut digitos ad volam
recolligendo digitum extendas auricularem.
- 46 Pro capitulo correctionis
manum expandens digitorum sumitates super
maxillam pone indicem videlicet iuxta oculum et
auricularem iuxta mentum.
- 47 Pro psalterio
signo libri adde signum regis quod ita fit: [clauso
pugno cum extremitate *deleted*] digitis divisus et
curvatis sumitates eorum super frontem pone.
- 48 Pro collectario
premisso signo libri adde signum orationis quod
ita fit: clauso pugno cum extremitate indicis
erecti et aliquid incurvati tampus tange. Idem
facias pro capite et capitulo adhoras.
- 49 Pro ympnario
adde signum libri sic: extensa manu sumitates
indicis et pollicis coniunge ut circulus appareat
quod est signum ympni; et hoc fit propter
primam letteram ympnarii quod est O.
- 50 Pro textu evangelii
- SINGNA PRO REFECTORIO (page heading; f.77v.)
- adde signum evangelii.
- 51 Pro epistolario
adde signum epistole.
- 52 Pro t(r)oponario
adde signum sequencie.
- 53 Pro processenario
adde signum processionis quod ita fieri debet:
clauso pugno indice fac circulum contra terram.
Idem facias pro omni circumvolucione et circu-
micione et pro claustro.
- 54 Pro letania, calendario et Kyrie
extendens palmam pollicem summitati digiti
- For lauds
as above for alleluia and angels.
- For prime
with the side of the right hand strike gently the space
that is between the thumb and forefinger.
- For terce
strike the space between forefinger and middle finger
in the same way.
- For sext
the space between the middle finger and the third
finger.
- For nones
the space between the third finger and the little finger.
- For vespers
similarly strike the joint between the hand and the arm
on the side of the little finger.
- For compline
in the same manner strike the arm near the elbow.
- For High Mass
as above for hebdomary priest. You do the same for
Mass of the chapter, in addition gathering the fingers
into the palm you extend the little finger.
- For chapter of correction
stretching out the hand place the tips of the fingers on
the cheek, that is to say the forefinger beside the eye
and the little finger beside the chin.
- For psalter
to the sign for book add the sign for king which is made
thus: with fingers spread and curved place their tips on
the brow.
- For collectar
having made the sign for book add the sign for prayer
which is made thus: having closed the fist touch the
temple with the end of the forefinger erect and slightly
curved. You do the same for head and the chapter at
hours.
- For hymnal
add to the sign for book thus: with hand extended join
the tips of the forefinger and thumb so that a circle
appears which is the sign for a hymn. This is made on
account of the first letter of the hymnal which is O.
- For text of the gospel
- SIGNS FOR THE REFECTORY
- add the sign for the gospel.
- For epistolary
add the sign for the epistle.
- For troper
add the sign for the sequence.
- For processional
add the sign for procession which ought to be made
thus: having closed the fist make a circle with the
forefinger towards the ground. You do the same for all
turning around and circular motion and for the
cloister.
- For litany, calendar and Kyrie
extending the palm join the thumb to the tip of the

- auricularis coniunge et mox illum digitum cum aliis digitis gratatim per pollicem fac resilire.
- 55 Pro signo historiarum pollicem sub aliis digitis include.
- 56 Pro signo alti cantus clauso pugno indicem in altum erige addens signum pro cantu.
- 57 Pro Deo fac signum regis ut supra et indicem contra celum extende.
- 58 Pro Sancta Maria fac signum femine quod ita fit: tribus digitis ad volam recurvis et pollice extenso trahe lateraliter super frontem a tempore usque ad tempus vel a supercilio usque ad supercilium propter velum et adde signum Dei.
- 59 Pro Sancto Edmundo adde signum regis et signum martirii quod ita fit: extremitate digitorum iunctorum et extensorum collum percute quasi secans.
- 60 Pro Sancto Benedicto fac signum benedictionis, magistri et abbatis ut infra.
- 61 Pro martilogio signo libri adde signum martirii.
- PRO REFECTORIO (heading in margin)
- 62 Pro refectorio fac signum pro domo sic: clauso pugno pollicem include sub indice curvo; deinde fac signum ollarum sic: inclina manum deorsum et ita cavam tene sparsis digitis et aliquantulum inflexis.
- 63 Pro commestione pollicem et indicem coniunctos ad os impinge.
- 64 Pro potacione inclinem curvam super os tene.
- 65 Pro cultello adde signo metalli ut latere dextre manus crucem facias per medium palme sinistre quasi secando; vel sic: trahe latus dextre manus per volam sinistre quasi sindens cum cultello.
- 66 Pro vagina cultelli palmam unius manus trahe per [ost *deleted*] aliam quasi qui cultellum mittit in vaginam.
- 67 Pro pane utroque pugno clauso pollices et indices extende et summitates indicis indici et pollicis pollicis coniunge ad modum circuli.
- 68 Pro nova cervisia adde vel premitte signum novi quod ita fit: expande manum et quattuor digitos super frontem leniter trahe deorsum versus nasum.
- 69 Pro vetustate (cervisia) eodem modo fac super tempus.
- little finger and then with the thumb make that finger spring back with the other fingers one by one.
- For the sign for *historia* enclose the thumb under the other fingers.
- For the sign for descant having closed the fist extend the forefinger upwards adding the sign for singing.
- For God make the sign for king as above and extend the forefinger towards heaven.
- For St Mary make the sign for female which is made thus: with three fingers curved back into the hollow of the hand and thumb extended draw (it) sideways over the brow from temple to temple or from eyebrow to eyebrow on account of the veil and add the sign for God.
- For St Edmund add the sign for king and the sign for martyr which is made thus: strike the neck with the end of the fingers joined and extended as if cutting.
- For St Benedict make the sign for blessing, master and abbot as below.
- For martyrology to the sign for book add the sign for martyr.
- FOR THE REFECTORY
- For refectory make the sign for a building thus: having closed the fist enclose the thumb under the curved forefinger, then make the sign for crockery thus: incline the hand downwards and thus hold it hollow with fingers separated and slightly bent.
- For meal touch the thumb and forefinger joined together to the mouth.
- For drink hold the curved forefinger to the mouth.
- For knife in addition to the sign for metal you make a cross with the side of the right hand through the middle of the left palm as if cutting; or thus: draw the side of the right hand through the hollow of the left as if cutting with a knife.
- For knife sheath Draw the palm of one hand past the other as one who puts a knife in a sheath.
- For bread having closed both fists extend the thumbs and forefingers and join together the tips of forefinger to forefinger and thumb to thumb in the manner of a circle.
- For new ale add or make first the sign for newness which is made thus: spread the hand and draw the four fingers gently over the brow downwards to the nose.
- For old (ale) in the same way do this over the temple.

70. Pro vino
ut supra ad missa.
71. Pro signo cippi
ut supra pro calice.
72. Pro disco vel scutella
ut supra pro graduali.
73. Pro salsario
pollice et minimo digito extensis et tribus aliis
digitis versus celum erectis manum permovere
sicut pro disco.
74. Pro cochiario
simula illud in disco ponere et parum elevare.
Idem signum sed magis large fit pro lagenae.
75. Pro fabis
primo pollicis articulo sequentis digiti summi-
tatem suppone modice scalpendo super pollicem.
76. Pro pulmento oleribus confecto
trahe dextrum indicem super sinistrum indicem
[super indicem sinistrum *deleted*] et pollicem
quasi qui insciderit olera coquenda.
77. Pro signo piscium generali
simula cum manu extensa caude piscis in aqua
commocionem.
78. Pro alleco
clauso pugno cum indice extenso tange nasum
supra nares.
79. Pro salmone
premisso signo piscium adde signum ruboris ut
supra pro vino.
80. Pro screith (f.78r.)
premisso signo piscium adde signum duricie ut
supra pro ecclesia.
81. Pro anguillis
volve unum pugnum circa alium bis vel ter.
82. Pro lampreda
premisso signo piscium vel anguillarum simula
cum indice et maxilla punctos quos lampreda
subdos [*sic*] oculos habet; vel sic premisso signo
piscium adde signum oculorum quod ita fit:
cla(u)de pugnum deinde medium et indicem
extentos super oculos pone.
83. Pro sturgione
premisso signo piscium clausum pugnum super
collum pone sub aure dextra.
84. Pro signo trutte
premisso signo piscium adde signum femine ut
supra pro Sancta Maria quia trutta semper
femineo genere pronunciat.
85. Pro signo milii
fac signum vel girum cum digito pro eo quod
ipsum milium ita vertitur in olla cum cocleare.
86. Pro signo ovorum
cum indice in altero indice simula testam ovi
vellicantem.
87. Pro caseo
palmam palme coniunge per obliquum quasi qui
caseum premit.
88. Pro fladone
premisso signo casei et ovorum omnes digitos
- For wine
as above at Mass.
- For the sign for cup
as above for chalice.
- For dish or bowl
as above for the gradual.
- For salt cellar
with thumb and little finger extended and the three
other fingers pointed towards the sky move the hand as
for plate.
- For spoon
pretend to place it on a plate and to raise it slightly.
The same sign but more pronounced shall be for flask.
- For beans
place the tip of the next finger under the first joint of
the thumb, scraping it slightly on the thumb.
- For pottage cooked with vegetables
draw the right forefinger over the left forefinger and
thumb as one who chops up vegetables for cooking.
- For the sign for fish generally
with hand extended simulate the movement of a fish's
tail in water.
- For herring
having closed the fist, with forefinger extended touch
the nose on the nostrils.
- For salmon
having made the sign for fish add the sign for red as
above for wine.
- For dried fish
having made the sign for fish add the sign for hardness
as above for church.
- For eels
turn one fist around the other two or three times.
- For lamprey
having made the sign for fish or eels simulate with
forefinger and cheek the spots which a lamprey has
under the eyes; or this: to the sign for fish add the sign
for eyes which is made thus: close the fist then place
the extended middle and forefinger over the eyes.
- For sturgeon
having made the sign for fish place the closed fist on
the neck beneath the right ear.
- For the sign for trout
having made the sign for fish add the sign for female as
above for St Mary because the trout is always referred
to in the feminine gender.
- For the sign for millet
make a sign or a circle with a finger for this because
millet is thus stirred with a spoon in a pot.
- For the sign for eggs
with one forefinger on the other forefinger pretend to
remove(?) the shell of an egg.
- For cheese
join one palm with the other palm obliquely as one who
presses cheese.
- For cheese cakes
having made the sign for cheese and for eggs bend all

- dextre manus inflecte et ita manu concava in superficie sinistre manus pone.
- 89 Pro signo russellarum
premisso signo panis signa cum pollice et indice minutas involuciones que in eis sunt facte ex ea parte quo sunt complicate et quasi rotundas.
- 90 Pro pomis
omnes digitos cum pollice concludere et idem signum fit pro pugno.
- 91 Pro piris
sumitates omnium digitorum coniunge et parum move voluendo manum simillanas [sic] pirum.
- 92 Pro nucibus maioribus
claudere pugnum et extremitatem indicis extendere et in os ponere et parum dentes [sic] morde.
- 93 Pro nucibus minoribus
idem facias cum digito minimo.
- 94 Pro pinguedine
manum expandens sumitate digitorum iuncturam et aliquantulum curvatorum maxillam leviter percute.
- 95 Pro magnitudine
idem facias set digitis extensis et non curvatis.
- 96 Pro signo olfaciendi
indicem et medium naribus applica.
- 97 Pro salsamentis generaliter
pugnum super pugnum quasi aliquid terendo gira addendo signum specierum quod ita fit: clauso pugno percute bis vel ter sinistram palmam interius cum extremitate dextri indicis.
- 98 Pro sinapio
premisso signo specierum indicem inflectens summatem nasi tange quod est signum sapientie.
- 99 Pro signo zinzibari
signo specierum signum adde caloris ut supra pro igne.
- 100 Pro signo potandi
indicem inflecte et ita labiis adiunge.
- 101 Pro signo lectionis
palme manus sinistre indicem et medium alterius manus extensos impinge et paululum attractos ita fac resilire quasi qui ceram liquefactam super librum labore unguis expungit.
- 102 Pro sale
articulo pollicis suppone curvum indicem et mox fac eum resilire aliis tribus digitis extensis.
- the fingers of the right hand and thus place the concave hand on the back of the left hand.
For the sign for rissoles
having made the sign for bread signify with the thumb and forefinger the tiny folds which are made in them along the edge where they are pressed together and, as it were, rounded.
For apples
enclose all the fingers with the thumb and the same sign is made for fist(ful?).
For pears
join the tips of all the fingers together and slightly move the hand by curving, simulating a pear.
For larger nuts
close the fist, extend the end of the forefinger, place it in the mouth and bite it slightly with the teeth.
For smaller nuts
you do the same with the little finger.
For fat
spreading the hand lightly tap the cheek with the tip of the fingers joined and slightly curved.
For magnitude
you do the same but with fingers extended and not curved.
For the sign for smelling
touch the forefinger and middle finger to the nostrils.
For condiments generally
turn fist over fist as if crushing something, adding the sign for spices which is made thus: having closed the fist tap the left palm on the inside with the end of the right forefinger two or three times.
For mustard
having first made the sign for spices, bending the forefinger touch the tip of the nose which is the sign for wisdom.
For the sign for ginger
to the sign for spices add the sign for heat as above for fire.
For the sign for drinking
bend the forefinger and so bring it to the lips.
For the sign for reading
to the palm of the left hand touch the extended forefinger and middle finger of the other hand and pulling them towards you a little thus make them spring back as one who removes melted wax from a book by means of the nail.
For salt
place the curved forefinger under the joint of the thumb and directly make it spring back with the other three fingers extended.

SIGNA PRO CLAUSTRO

(f.78v.)

SIGNS FOR THE CLOISTER

- 103 Pro claustro
claudere pugnum et indice fac circulum contra terram.
- 104 Pro signo abbatis
medium et indicem extendere et summatibus eorum tempus tange.
- For cloister
close the fist and with the forefinger make a circle towards the ground.
For the sign for abbot
extend the middle and forefinger and touch the temple with their tips.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 105 | Pro signo prioris
extensa manu pollicem et indicem coniunge;
ceteris digitis ad volam reiectis. | | For the sign for prior
with hand extended join thumb and forefinger together
with the remaining fingers folded into the hollow of the
hand. |
| 106 | Pro subprior
pollicem et medium coniunge. | | For subprior
join thumb and middle finger together. |
| 107 | Pro tercio prior
pollicem et medicum coniunge. | | For third prior
join thumb and third finger together. |
| 108 | Pro quatro prior
pollicem et minimum coniunge digitum. | | For fourth prior
join thumb and little finger together. |
| 109 | Pro precentore
ut supra pro cantu. | | For precentor
as above for chant. |
| 110 | Pro succentore
pollice et minimo digito extensis summitates
trium digitorum curvatorum prope os applica et
parum move dextrorsum et sinistrorsum. | | For succentor
with thumb and little finger extended place the tips of
the three curved fingers near the mouth and slightly
move them right and left. |
| 111 | Pro archidiacono et diacono
premisso signo magistri fac crucem super
frontem. | | For archdeacon and dean
having first made the sign for master make a cross on
the forehead. |
| 112 | Pro sacrista
ut supra pro campana. | | For sacrist
as above for bell. |
| 113 | Pro selerario
premisso signo magistri claude pugnum et
indicem extende et pone super frontem et hoc
signum fit pro bone. | | For cellarer
having first made the sign for master close the fist,
extend the forefinger and place it on the forehead. This
sign is also made for goods. |
| 114 | Pro subselerario
fac idem signum set minimum digitum extende. | | For subcellarer
make the same sign but extend the little finger. |
| 115 | Pro coquinario
fac signum magistri et olorum ut supra. | | For kitchener
make the sign for master and for crockery as above. |
| 116 | Pro infirmario
premisso signo magistri pone manum expansam
super pectus quod significat infirmitatem et con-
fessionem. | | For infirmarer
having first made the sign for master place the hand
spread over the chest which signifies infirmity and
confession. |
| 117 | Pro camerario
premisso signo magistri expande manum et
statim digitos ad volam recollige similans mani-
cam flocci tenere. | | For chamberlain
having first made the sign for master spread the hand
and at once gather the fingers into the palm pretending
to take the sleeve of a frock. |
| 118 | Pro subcamerario
idem facias set digitum minimum debes
extendere. | | For subchamberlain
you do the same but you ought to extend the little
finger. |
| 119 | Pro monacho
cum pollice et indice tene capucium cuculle. | | For monk
with thumb and forefinger take hold of the hood of the
cowl. |
| 120 | Pro hostilario
premisso signo magistri idem fac signum modice
trahens capucium versus terram et hoc signum
extraneorum. | | For hosteler
having first made the sign for master make the same
sign (as for monk) drawing the cowl slightly towards
the ground. This is also the sign for strangers. |
| 121 | Pro hospitalario
premisso signo magistri fac signum cum pollice
super mamillam sinistram. | | For hospitaler
having first made the sign for master make a sign with
the thumb over the left breast. |
| 122 | Pro refectorio
pollice et minimo digito extensis tres alios digitos
recurvos et inclines deorsum versus terram tene;
et e contra facias pro subelemosinario. | | For refectorer
with thumb and little finger extended hold the three
other fingers curved and inclined downwards towards
the ground. Alternatively you may make (this sign for)
subalmoner. |
| 123 | Pro elemosinario
premisso signo magistri manum aliquid tulum
cavatam expande movendo sursum et deorsum
quasi ponderans aliquid in manu tua; et hoc | | For almoner
having first made the sign for master spread the hand
slightly hollowed, moving it upwards and downwards
as if weighing something in your hand. This sign shall |

- signum fit pro elemosina pro paupertate et debilitate et ponderositate.
- 124 Pro horologio
 adde signo magistri signum ignis ut supra pro igne.
- 125 Pro vestiario
 premissio signo magistri vestem qua indutus es contra pectus cum indice et pollice apprehende et parum excute; et hoc fit generaliter pro omne veste et vestimento.
- 126 Pro feretrariis
 add(e) signo magistri signum Sancti Edmundi ut supra.
- 127 Pro capellanis abbatis vel prioris
 adde signum benedictionis quod est signum sacerdotis signum abbatis vel prioris.
- 128 Pro custode noviciorum
 indicem pone subtus oculum quod et signum est videre, custodire et cavere et adde pro novicio signum pro novo ut supra pro nova cervisia.
- 129 Pro puero
 minimum digitum labiis impinge pro eo quod ita sugit infans.
- 130 Pro ligno
 sinistram manum extendens percute dextram quasi qui lignum securi lata secat.
- 131 Pro signo tabularum (f.79r.)
 adde signo cere signum ligni ut supra vel sic: manus ambas conpica deinde simul evolve addendo signum cere.
- 132 Pro signo scribendi
 primis tribus digitis simila scribere.
- 133 Pro graphio
 cum pugno percute pugnum addendo signum scribendi vel sic: premissio signo scribendi adde signum ligni.
- 134 Pro percameno
 summitate pollicis et indicis apprehende cutem sinistre manus exterius et hoc signum fit pro pelle et pro sotularibus set adde pro percameno signum scribendi.
- 135 Pro signo specierum
 percute bis vel ter sinistram palmam interius extremitate indicis dextri.
- 136 Pro mortuo
 trahe indicem in gutture a sinistro in dextrum.
- 137 Pro signo voluntatis
 summitates pollicis et indicis in lateribus gutturis pone sub mento et mox extrahendo sumitates coniunge.
- 138 Pro signo licencie
 extensa palma coram facie summitates digitorum directe versus celum eleva.
- 139 Pro pecunia vel diviciis
 sumitatem pollicis super ultimam iuncturam indicis pone et mox pollicem sursum per indicem recurvantem fac resilire.
- 140 Pro historiis
 claude pollicem infra pugnum.
- also be for alms, for poverty and infirmity and weightiness.
 For clock keeper
 add to the sign for master the sign for fire as above for fire.
 For keeper of the vestry
 having first made the sign for master take hold of the garment which you are wearing around the chest with the forefinger and thumb and slightly shake it. This is also done generally for all cloth and clothing.
 For the feretrars
 add to the sign for master the sign for St Edmund as above.
 For chaplains of the abbot or prior
 add the sign for blessing which is the sign for priest (and) the sign for abbot or prior.
 For novice master
 place the forefinger beneath the eye which is also the sign for to see, to guard and to watch and add for novice the sign for new as above for new ale.
 For boy
 touch the little finger to the lips for this because an infant sucks thus.
 For wood
 extending the left hand strike the right as one who cuts wood with a hatchet.
 For the sign for writing tablets
 add to the sign for wax the sign for wood as above; or thus: join both hands together and then turn them simultaneously, adding the sign for wax.
 For the sign for writing
 with the first three fingers pretend to write.
 For stylus
 strike fist with fist adding the sign for writing; or thus: having first made the sign for writing add the sign for wood.
 For parchment
 with the tip of the thumb and forefinger take hold of the skin of the left hand on the outside. This sign is also made for leather and for shoes but add for parchment the sign for writing.
 For the sign for spices
 tap two or three times the left palm on the inside with the end of the right forefinger.
 For dead
 draw the forefinger across the throat from left to right.
 For the sign for wish
 place the tips of the thumb and forefinger on the sides of the throat beneath the chin and then, withdrawing them, join the tips together.
 For the sign for licence
 with palm extended before the face raise the tips of the fingers straight towards the sky.
 For money or riches
 place the tip of the thumb upon the last joint of the forefinger and then make the thumb spring back upwards through the curved back forefinger.
 For stories
 close the thumb inside the fist.

- 141 Pro signo rimandi
clauso pugno extensum indicem leviter morde.
For the sign for enquiring
having closed the fist lightly bite the extended forefinger.
- 142 Pro signo negacionis
summitates indicis et medii pollicis subpone et
mox illos duos digitos a pollice fac resilire.
For the sign for denial
place the tips of the forefinger and middle finger
beneath the thumb and then make those two fingers
spring back from the thumb.
- 143 Pro signo affirmacionis
clauso pugno indicem extende et sic pugnum
contra terram verte.
For the sign for affirmation
having closed the fist extend the forefinger and thus
turn the fist towards the ground.
- 144 Pro signo hesterne diei
clauso pugno indicem extende et pugnum
sursum verte.
For the sign for yesterday
having closed the fist extend the forefinger and turn
the fist upwards.
- 145 Pro signo presentis diei
clauso pugno indicem erectum iuxta timpus pone
deinde contra terram impelle.
For the sign for today
having closed the fist place the erect forefinger beside
the temple and then point it towards the ground.
- 146 Pro signo presentis hore
clauso pugno summitatem indicis contra terram
impelle.
For the sign for the present hour
having closed the fist point the tip of the forefinger
towards the ground.
- 147 Pro signo sufficiencie
clauso pugno pollicem extende.
For the sign for sufficiency
having closed the fist extend the thumb.
- 148 Pro signo abscisionis capillorum
indicem et medium pone super frontem divisos
similans ibi capillos abscidere.
For the sign for hair cutting
place the forefinger and middle finger divided upon the
forehead pretending to cut the hair there.
- 149 Pro rastura
indicem extentum trahe super maxillam similans
radere.
For shaving
draw the extended forefinger over the cheek pretend-
ing to shave.
- 150 Pro signo canis
clauso pugno aurem cum indice extento percutere.
For the sign for dog
having closed the fist strike the ear with forefinger
extended.
- 151 Pro signo iniqui et dolosi
clauso pugno indicis extremitate nasum scalpe
hoc tum signum raro et caute debet fieri in forte
pro canibus, bestiis vel avibus et hiis.
For the sign for bad or deceitful
having closed the fist scratch the nose with the end of
the forefinger. This sign indeed ought to be made
rarely and cautiously perhaps for dogs, beasts or birds
and suchlike.
- 152 Pro clerico
clauso pugno indicem extendens fac circulum
super maxillam cum extremitate indicis.
For clerk
having closed the fist, extending the forefinger make a
circle on the cheek with the end of the forefinger.
- 153 Pro laico
extende manum et pone latus eius super maxil-
lam trahendo deorsum modice.
For layman
extend the hand and place its side on the cheek
drawing it downwards slightly.
- 154 Pro signo prudencie vel bone calliditatis
clauso pugno indice simila perforare nasum ex
latere.
For the sign for prudence or shrewdness
having closed the fist pretend to pierce the nose from
the side with the forefinger.
- 155 Pro festinacione
manum expande et palma versus celum versa
huc atque illuc acrius move.
For haste
spread the hand; turn the palm towards the sky and
move it to and fro rather quickly.
- 156 Pro signo multorum et pro signo regnandi
omnes digitos deivos extende deinde om(n)es
pluribus vicibus simul collige.
For the sign for many and for the sign for reigning
extend all the fingers spread out, then bring them all
together in many different ways.
- 157 Pro signo mocionis vel turbacionis vel
strepitus
omnes digitos deivos contra terram tenens
parum move.
For the sign for movement or crowding or noise
holding all the fingers divided towards the ground
move (them) slightly.
- 158 Pro signo socii, adiutorii vel simul
faciendi aliquid (f.79v.)
duos indices lateraliter simul percutere ceteris
digitis ad volam recurvis quod si occupatus fueris
indicem sinistro humero coniunge.
For the sign for friend, helper or doing something
together
strike the two forefingers together sideways with the
rest of the fingers curved back into the hollow of the
hand and if you have been employed you place your
forefinger on your left elbow.

A MONASTIC SIGN LIST FROM BURY ST EDMUNDS

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|--|--|
| <p>159 Pro timore
ut supra pro sequencie.</p> <p>160 Pro homine
indicem inflecte et ita lateraliter et leviter super
mentum trahe.</p> <p>161 Pro signo senis
ut supra pro servisia.</p> <p>162 Pro equo
cum pollice et indice tene capillos anteriores
super frontem.</p> <p>163 Pro signo loquendi
cum extremitate indicis labia terge.</p> <p>164 Pro signo hilaritatis
manum expansam contra os tene et parum move.</p> <p>165 Pro signo audiendi vel ascultandi
indicem tene extentum contra aurem.</p> <p>166 Pro signo nesciendi
cum indice erecto labia terge.</p> <p>167 Pro signo sapiencia
ut supra pro sinapio.</p> <p>168 Pro iniuria
clauso pugno indicem parum sursum elevando
tene recurvum.</p> <p>169 Pro signo minuendi
cum pollice et medio digito percute in brachio
quasi qui minuit.</p> <p>170 Pro signo boni
pone pollicem sub mento.</p> <p>171 Pro signo complacencis
pone pollicem in maxilla et alios digitos in alia
maxilla et fac eos in mento blande collabi. Idem
signum fac pro pulcritudine incipiendo tum ad
oculos et signum magis dilatando.</p> <p>172 Pro signo mali
digitis contra faciem sparsis simula unguem avis
aliquid lacerando attrahentis.</p> <p>173 Pro signo pacis et osculi
interiorem partem manus expanse ori appone et
econtra fac pro signo doni vel oblacionis vel
offerorii.</p> <p>174 Pro signo tacendi
ut supra pro signo pacis.</p> <p>175 Pro signo silencii
clausum pugnum ori appone.</p> <p>176 Pro barba
mentum tene cum dextra.</p> | <p>For fear
as above for sequence.</p> <p>For man
bend the forefinger and thus draw it sideways and
lightly over the chin.</p> <p>For the sign for old man
as above for (old) ale.</p> <p>For horse
with thumb and forefinger take hold of the fringe of the
hair on the forehead.</p> <p>For the sign for speaking
stroke the lips with the end of the forefinger.</p> <p>For the sign for cheerfulness
hold the hand spread against the mouth and move it
slightly.</p> <p>For the sign for hearing or listening
hold the extended forefinger against the ear.</p> <p>For the sign of not knowing
stroke the lips with the forefinger erect.</p> <p>For the sign for wisdom
as above for mustard.</p> <p>For injury
having closed the fist raise the forefinger upwards
slightly and hold it curved.</p> <p>For the sign for blood letting
strike on the arm with thumb and middle finger as one
who lets blood.</p> <p>For the sign for good
place the thumb beneath the chin.</p> <p>For the sign for pleasure
place the thumb on one cheek and the other fingers on
the other cheek and make them gently slide onto the
chin. Make the same sign for beauty by beginning at
the eyes making the sign more pronounced.</p> <p>For the sign for bad
with fingers spread against the face imitate the claw of
a grasping bird tearing at something.</p> <p>For the sign for peace and for kiss
place the inside of the spread hand to the mouth.
Alternatively make (it) for the sign for gift or oblation
or offertory.</p> <p>For the sign for keeping silence
as above for the sign for peace.</p> <p>For the sign for silence
place the closed fist on the mouth.</p> <p>For the sign for beard
hold the chin with the right (hand).</p> |
| <p>SINGNA PRO DORMITORIO</p> <p>177 Pro dormitorio
premisso signo domus fac signum dormicionis ut
supra pro matutinis et pro refectorio.</p> <p>178 Pro vestibus generaliter
ut supra pro vestiario.</p> <p>179 Pro femoralibus
simila ut manum in femore de deorsum trahas
quasi qui se femoralibus vestit.</p> <p>180 Pro signo stamini</p> | <p>(f.80r.) SIGNS FOR THE DORMITORY</p> <p>For dormitory
having made the sign for a building make the sign for
sleeping as above for matins and for refectory.</p> <p>For clothes generally
as above for keeper of the vestry.</p> <p>For drawers
pretend that you are drawing your hand on your thigh
from below as one who puts on his drawers.</p> <p>For the sign for woollen shirt</p> |

- simila manicam eius extrahere infra manicam tunice cum pollice et indice.
- 181 Pro pellicia
digitos manus expande et super pectus ponens summitates leviter iunge extrahens sive colligens quasi aliquid de pectore.
- 182 Pro tunica
adde signum vestium ut manicam tunice curvata manu apprehendas.
- 183 Pro zona
ut supra ad missam.
- 184 Pro cultello
ut supra in refectorio.
- 185 Pro caligis
signo panni adde ut trahas ambas manus sursum per tibiam.
- 186 Pro-sotularibus
adde signo percamene sive pellis signum nigredinis hoc modo clauso pugno scalpe cum indice super pectus.
- 187 Pro cuculla
cum pollice et indice cuculle capicium tange.
- 188 Pro almicio
pollice et indice oram almicii tange.
- 189 Pro furrura
ut supra pro pellicia.
- 190 Pro signo flocci
manicam eius manu tene ut supra pro camerario.
- 191 Pro signo coopertorii
manum in brachio de deorsum trahe in sursum quasi qui coopertorium vult mittere super se.
- 192 Pro signo capitalis id est pulvinaris
leva manum et summitates trium digitorum inflexas quasi ad volandum move; postea pone manum expansum sub maxilla sicut dormiens solet facere.
- 193 Pro corrigia
digitum circumfer digito.
- 194 Pro loculo
ut supra pro vagina in refectorio.
- 195 Pro pectine
quattuor digitos curvatos super capillos ultra aurem quasi te pectitans.
- 196 Pro signo acus
signo metalli adde s(ignum) ut similes suere pannum.
- 197 Pro signo fili
indicem indici circumfer et hoc signum fit pro corda et corrigia et zona et hiis ut supra tactum.
- 198 Pro domo necessariorum
premisso signo domus adde signum mingendi sic: vestem qua indutus es contra unguinem cum indice et pollice apprehende et parum excute et cetera.
- pretend to draw out its sleeve from inside the sleeve of the tunic with thumb and forefinger.
- For pelisse
spread the fingers of the hand and placing them on the chest lightly join the tips as if pulling out or plucking something from the chest.
- For tunic
add the sign for clothes as you take hold of the sleeve of the tunic with hand curved.
- For girdle
as above at Mass.
- For knife
as above in the refectory.
- For stockings
in addition to the sign for cloth you draw both hands upwards along the shin.
- For shoes
add to the sign for parchment or leather the sign for blackness in this way: having closed the fist you scratch on the chest with the forefinger.
- For cowl
touch the hood of the cowl with thumb and forefinger.
- For fur hood
touch the border of the hood with thumb and forefinger.
- For fur lining
as above for pelisse.
- For the sign for frock
take hold of its sleeve with the hand as above for the chamberlain.
- For the sign for coverlet
draw the hand along the arm from bottom to top as one who wishes to place a coverlet over himself.
- For the sign for pillow, that is cushion
raise the hand and move the bent tips of three fingers as if to fly; afterwards place the expanded hand under the cheek as one does sleeping.
- For strap
move one finger round another finger.
- For pouch
as above for knife sheath in the refectory.
- For comb
(draw) four curved fingers over the hair past the ear as if combing yourself.
- For the sign for needle
in addition to the sign for metal add a sign so that you pretend to sew cloth.
- For the sign for thread
move one forefinger round the other forefinger. This sign is made for cord and strap and girdle and suchlike as mentioned above.
- For reredorter
having made the sign for a building add the sign for passing water thus: with forefinger and thumb take hold of and shake slightly the garment which you are wearing against the groin and so on.

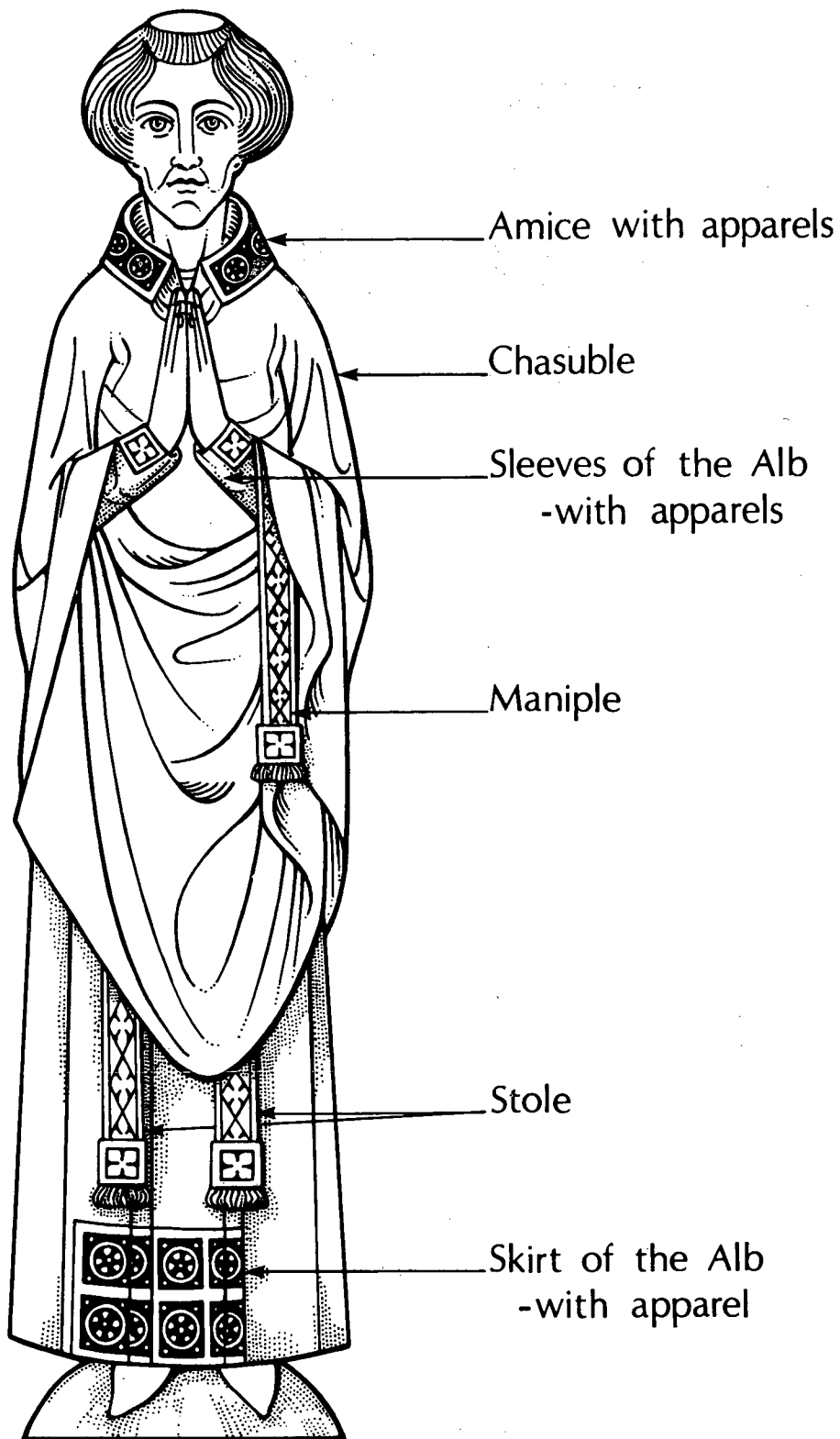


FIG. 42 – A priest in his vestments, c. 1360, based on the brass of Edmund de Brundish. For the sign for amice, see no. 9; chasuble, 4; alb, 5; maniple, 7; and stole, 6.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

- 1 The B.L. sign list has an alternative sign which involves joining the fingers together like rafters.
- 2 The formal offering of the bread and wine to God during Mass. See sign 173 for 'oblation or offertory'.
- 4 Signs 4 to 9 refer to the principal Mass vestments of a priest. In light of the fact that the list gives such detailed attention to the priest's garments it is interesting that signs for other vestments – such as the copes repeatedly mentioned in the Bury Customary (e.g. Gransden 1973, 11, 22, 24) – do not appear. The chasuble, a sleeveless tent-shaped garment with a hole in the centre, was the outermost of a priest's Mass vestments. As the sign indicates, it was placed over the head and rested on the shoulders. Late medieval effigies, brasses and paintings generally show the chasuble covering the arms and reaching to the knees in both back and front (see Fig. 42). However, heavily embroidered chasubles surviving from the later Middle Ages show that such garments were often cut to leave the arms free. This modification allowed the celebrant to elevate the host without hindrance from this weighty vestment (Mayo 1984, 42–43, 55–56, 141–43).
- 5 The sign for cloth is no. 3. The alb was a long-sleeved white linen garment that reached to the feet. Priests celebrating Mass wore it under the chasuble, leaving the sleeves and skirt visible. These exposed portions of the alb were often embellished with decorated panels termed *apparels* (see Fig. 42). Other ranks of clergy also wore the alb during Mass but used other outer vestments appropriate to their rank (Mayo 1984, 58–59, 128).
- 6 A strip of material often highly decorated, draped over the shoulders in various ways to indicate clerical rank. When worn by a priest over an alb it would be placed around the neck with the ends crossed on the breast and secured under the girdle. In the accompanying illustration (Fig. 42) the ends of the stole may be seen extending from beneath the chasuble (Mayo 1984, 171–73).
- 7 A liturgical vestment worn by all clergy above the rank of sub-deacon. It consisted of a narrow strip of material that was hung over the left forearm and fastened beneath (see Fig. 42; Mayo 1984, 157; Davenport 1948, 97).
- 8 A belt or cord worn over the alb at the waist. It could be white or coloured and in the late Middle Ages was often decorated with embroidery or woven designs. Since the alb was normally worn with a girdle the latter was considered a liturgical vestment (Mayo 1984, 154). See also 183, 193 and 197.
- 9 The first vestment put on by a priest vesting himself for the celebration of Mass. It was a linen rectangle placed over the head like a hood, crossed over the breast and secured with long tapes that were tied around the body. After the other vestments had been donned the amice was rolled back to form a collar, leaving the head uncovered. The exposed edges of the amice were often decorated with ornamented '*apparels*' as in the illustration here (Fig. 42; Mayo 1984, 132–33; Davenport 1948, 95).
- 10 A square piece of white linen spread upon the altar for the sacred vessels during Mass.
- 12 For the washing of hands before the consecration at Mass. The B.L. list has a separate sign for 'water, rain, washing' (Jarecki 1981, no. 30).
- 13 The red colour of the wine is signified by the presence of blood in the complexion and the white, by the absence of blood in the squeezed little finger. See also 70.
- 14 For fire see also 99 (ginger) and 124 (clock).
- 15 and 16. These signs suggest that the altar candles at Bury were made by a process akin to that still used in the production of beeswax candles for liturgical use. Molten wax is ladled over a wick suspended above a vat until the desired thickness of wax is achieved. Then, while the wax is still warm and soft the candle is rolled on a table with a board to make it round and uniform. The direction to rub the hands in the sign for wax (16) may indicate that the final shaping was done between the palms of the hands. See Robins 1939, 16–22.
- 18 A censer or vessel suspended by chains in which incense was burned.
- 20 Mass was normally sung not said. See also 28 and 29.
- 22 Book containing the ordinary and proper (i.e., the fixed and the changeable) parts of the service of Mass. The proper parts might also be separated, as here, into the epistle (see 51), gospel (50), gradual (32) etc.
- 23 Monk in priest's orders whose turn it was to officiate at Mass, matins etc. for one week. There were other hebdomaries, e.g., in the refectory and kitchen. The R.S.B. ordained that the monk leaving office was to wash the feet of the one starting, a reference to Christ's commandment in John 13, v.5. A sign for foot-washing is given in other lists including Ely but not Bury.
- 24 The deacon who was a monk in holy orders next in rank below a priest. He made the sign of the cross on the brow before reading from the Gospels. See also 50 and 111.
- 25 A reading from one of the epistles in the New Testament was read by the subdeacon, the third officiating monk at Mass. See also 51.
- 26 The paten was a small plate of precious metal on which the bread was placed for consecration at Mass and which a server held to catch the bread in case it should fall during the administration. The sign for chalice is no. 11.

- 27 A play on words, drawing on the similarity between *chorus*, meaning choir and *cor*, heart.
- 28 The finger is bent to represent the curved notation for music, as the Ely sign (no. 12) for antiphony explains: *propter incurvationes notularum neumas*.
- 30 The *cantor* or *precentor* was the monastic official in charge of the choral service in the church, hence the inclusion of his sign here as well as with those of the other officials mentioned below (nos 104–127). He also supervised the monastery's library and as a result often played an important rôle in the intellectual life of the monastery. At Bury part of the responsibility for the abbey's books was taken up by the *armarius*, the keeper of the book press. Henry de Kirkstede, whose pressmark appears on our manuscript, held this latter office some time before 1361 (Knowles 1963, 428–29; Butler 1949, xxvii, 36; Thompson 1980, 140 and 1982, 101). At Ely the signs for *armarius* and *precentor* were the same (no. 81).
- 31 The *Sanctus*, *Agnus* and *Gloria* were all sections of the Mass named after the first word in them. The allusion to flying is explained in the Ely sign for Alleluia which adds 'because it is called the angels' song'. See also 38.
- 32 An antiphon sung between the epistle and gospel. The same word also meant cup or plate and hence also was derived the word 'grail' (see *O.E.D.*). See also 72.
- 33 Verses of scripture sung after the gradual *tractim*, i.e. without a break.
- 34 A prayer sung after the tract and before the gospel on the greater festivals.
- 35 The 'fear of the Lord' was the first of the twelve degrees of humility in ch. 7 of the R.S.B. Veneration here might include bowing or genuflecting. See also 159.
- 36 By the middle of the 13th century the abbey church at Bury had an impressive collection of bells. They were rung not only to summon the monks to prayer but also at various times during services (James 1895, 144–45; Gransden 1973, 44, 46–47, 51–52, 93–94). The sign for sacrist (112) is derived from that for bell because he was responsible for their ringing at the appropriate times. This however was only one of his duties. He was also responsible for the altar service, the vestments and the lighting and decoration of the church. The sacrist at Bury moreover had charge of the fabric of the church and was the official primarily concerned with the administration of the borough of Bury (Lobel 1935, 31–59; Butler 1949, xxvii; Knowles 1963, 430).
- 37 The first service of the monks' day, sung some time between midnight and dawn. For the monastic *horarium* see Knowles 1963, 448–53. For sleeping see also 177 and 192.
- 38 Service at daybreak. Called after Psalms 148–150 which each begin with the word *Laudate* and which were sung then. See also 31.
- 39 Second service of the monks' day.
- 40 Service approximately three hours after daybreak.
- 41 Service held about noon, literally the sixth hour after daybreak. This sign contains the first use of *medicus*, the third finger, a meaning derived from the reputed use of this finger for medicinal leeching.
- 42 Service held mid afternoon, literally the ninth hour after daybreak.
- 43 The sixth service of the daytime, sometimes called evensong.
- 44 The last service of the day, literally 'completion'.
- 45 High Mass, the principal service of worship, was celebrated by a priest assisted by a deacon and a subdeacon. For hebdomary see 23.
- 46 The 'chapter of correction' is no doubt synonymous with the 'chapter of faults', the daily meeting of the monks in the chapter house, when proceedings began with the reading of a chapter from the R.S.B. During the meeting faults were confessed and punishments decreed (Knowles 1963, 430).
- 47 A royal crown presumably because King David wrote the psalms.
- 48 A liturgical book that took its name from the collects or short prayers for Mass and the Divine Office that it contained. Collects often contained other material including the very brief readings for the Office termed *capitula*. 'Chapter at hours' probably denotes one of these readings although it is possible that it refers to the monastic community or 'chapter' when assembled for Divine Office (Hughes 1982, 118–19; Reynolds 1984).
- 49 A reference to *O lux beata trinitas* which is the first of the hymns at the end of the Bury Psalter (S.R.O.B., MS E5/9/608.7, f.293v. See *English Hymnal* no. 164). The sign is peculiar to Bury, the other lists having a sign related to something signifying 'first' in reference to *Primo dierum omnium*, the first hymn in a different hymnal.
- 50 A portion of one of the four gospels appointed to be read during Mass. See 24.
- 51 A portion of one of the letters of the New Testament appointed to be read during Mass. See 25.
- 52 A short verse introduced as an embellishment into the Mass after the sequence (from Latin *tropus*, a figure of speech).
- 53 See also 103.
- 54 The ancient Greek prayer of supplication, *Kyrie eleison*, 'Lord, have mercy', usually with the response, *Christe eleison*. Cf. R.S.B. ch. 9. The calendar contained saints' days and other church festivals.
- 55 *Historiae*, here amidst other liturgical terms (see also 140), probably has the technical meaning of lessons taken from the historical books of the Old Testament or lives of the saints. Hughes (1982, 22) notes that the prominence of such readings at Matins occasionally led to the use of *historia* to refer to that service. The term could also be applied to a responsory following one of the lessons; see e.g. Knowles 1951, 6 and n.3.

- 57 See 47.
- 58 Mary, the mother of Christ, was the most venerated of the Christian saints with eight festivals in the year. At Bury the eastern altar in the crypt was dedicated to her and a new Lady Chapel was constructed in 1275 between the choir and the north transept. See also 84.
- 59 King Edmund was slain while resisting Danish incursions in A.D. 869. His reputed body was brought to Bury in the early 10th century and later was enshrined behind the high altar causing the abbey to become one of the most important pilgrim centres in England. For the sign for king see 47. See also 126.
- 60 Italian monk, c.480–547, known as the father of western monasticism. His Rule (see R.S.B.) for the ordering of monastic life eventually became the basis for practically all future monastic movements. The monks at Bury were Benedictines. See also 11, 30, and 104.
- 61 A list of martyrs of the church with brief accounts of their lives read daily at Prime (39) or in the chapter house (see 46). For book see 21.
- 62 The dining hall or 'frater' occupying the north side of the cloister. It had a high table at the east end and a pulpit. (See also 101, 115 and 122).
- 63 For metal see 17. See also 184.
- 64 The bread was evidently served as individual rolls as can be seen in representations of refectory meals. Syon monastery had separate signs for brown and white while Ely had signs for bread, bread cooked with water, bread commonly called *turta* (made of the finest white flour) and a half-loaf which was served during the seasons of abstinence (Syon list 14; Ely list 16–19).
- 70 See 13 above.
- 71 See 11 above.
- 72 See 32 above.
- 74 *Lagena*, 'a large earthen vessel with a neck and handles, flask, flagon or bottle' (Lewis and Short).
- 77 Note that there are no signs for red meat or fowl although some other lists, e.g. Fleury, have several. The Ely list includes pike.
- 78 Transported in salted barrels, from ports such as Great Yarmouth herring must have smelt by the time they reached Bury – hence the gesture! Jocelin of Brakelond tells us that cartloads of Yarmouth herring passed through Bury on their way to London (Butler 1949, 76). Herring is not given in the B.L. list.
- 79 Not in the B.L. list. Three of the lists in Jarecki add an extra meaning: 'having made the general sign for fish, place the fists with thumbs erect beneath the chin, by which pride is signified, because the proud and rich especially eat this fish'. For red see 13.
- 80 *Screith* is an Old Norse word meaning dried fish (Cleasby, Vigfusson and Creagie 1957, 557). *Piscis durus* is the normal Latin term for dried fish. For hardness see 1.
- 81 Bury Abbey obtained considerable quantities of eels from its Fenland possessions. For example, in Abbot Sampson's time it was entitled to 4,000 eels a year from Southery, Norfolk (Butler 1949, 103).
- 82 The spots to which the sign refers are the 7 small gill openings that all the British species have behind each eye (Wheeler 1969, 28–32).
- 83 The Bury Customary includes sturgeon among the pittances or special dishes to be served on the feast of relics on 16 September in the diocese of Norwich (Gransden 1973, 55; Cheney 1978, 59, n.4).
- 84 For female see 58.
- 85 A poor grass seed related to oats.
- 89 These pastry-like 'treats' are clearly represented in the well-known illustration of a man tempted by the devil (Hartley and Elliot 1931, Pl. 14c).
- 94 Coming in the refectory signs *pinguedo* could also mean 'lard' or 'cooking fat'.
- 97 Mixed seasoning composed of powdered spices. See also 135.
- 98 The intriguing connection between mustard and wisdom is not made in any of the other sign lists which mostly allude to the grinding of the mustard seed. At Fleury 'you hold your nose because it gets you in the nose' (*capit ad nasem*) (Jarecki 1981, 256) and at Syon 'holde thy nose in the uppere parte of thy right fiste and rubbe it'.
- 99 For fire see 14.
- 101 This sign comes here because meals were taken in silence while one of the monks read to the rest (R.S.B. ch. 38). A specially constructed pulpit ascended via stairs constructed within the thickness of the wall was a feature of monastic refectories. One does not survive at Bury but good examples can still be seen in the former refectories at Beaulieu Abbey (now the pulpit of the parish church), Chester Cathedral and Walsingham Priory.
- 103 See 53.
- 105–108 The number of priors tallies with that given in Thompson 1982 and illustrates the grandeur of Bury Abbey in the 14th century. Fleury had a *grandis prior* and 3 others (Jarecki 1981, 267) but in the shorter lists the sign for the prior is the pretend ringing of the small bell with which he signalled the end of a meal. The prior was the abbot's deputy while the lesser priors assisted the prior and could exercise his office in his

- absence. The customary of Eynsham Abbey provides a detailed statement of the duties and prerogatives of the prior, sub-prior and third prior (Gransden 1963a, 149–88).
- 109 See the note for 30.
- 110 The succentor assisted the precentor and could deputize for him (Knowles 1963, 429).
- 111 In the 11th century Bury Abbey along with the town and its suburbs had been exempted from episcopal jurisdiction and placed under the spiritual authority of the abbot. Within this area the sacrist exercised the office of archdeacon, presiding over the ecclesiastical courts as the abbot's representative. In his capacity as archdeacon, the sacrist was assisted by a dean whom documents refer to as *decanus* or *decanus christianitatis*, perhaps the *diaconus* in this sign (Lobel 1935, 5, 41–47; Gransden 1963b, 31, n. 11, 37, 88, 97–99, 101; *D.M.L.*, III *Diaconus* 3). For cross see also 24.
- 112 See the note for 36.
- 113 This important official in charge of the provisions ('goods') is omitted from the B.L. list while he has a different sign in the others, involving the turning of a key in a door. Keys are the emblem of a cellarer in several medieval MSS (see e.g., Hartley 1925, Pl. 9c). At Bury the cellarer, like the sacrist, had an important rôle in the administration of the abbey's properties in and around Bury (Lobel 1935, 18–31).
- 115 His duties and the numerous officials and servants under him are set out in the 15th-century kitchener's customary (Thompson 1980, 147). They included the buyer, prior's cook, larderer, separate fish, meat and vegetable cooks, the infirmary cook etc. For crockery see 62.
- 116 Official in charge of the monks' hospital or 'farmery', which was at Bury, as normal, a self-contained set of buildings with hall, chapel etc., set apart from the rest of the abbey to reduce the risk of disease spreading. The link between infirmity and sin which this sign implies may go back to Christ's teaching: cf Luke V, 24. The sick or infirm were allowed to eat animal meat (R.S.B. ch. 39).
- 117 The chamberlain whose department at Bury was beneath part of the dormitory was in charge of clothing, cobbling, washing and baths. He had a staff of 7 including a tailor, a tanner and a washerman (Whittingham 1951, 183). For frock see 190.
- 119 For cowl see 187. The B.L. list has a sign for nun (*virgo*) preceding this, a combination of the signs for woman and for sweetness (Jarecki 1981, no. 125).
- 120 The official in charge of guests, with a staff of 6 to provide bedding and service at all times (Whittingham 1951, 176).
- 121 *Hospitalarius* is a common term for a monastic hosteler, but here, following as it does the sign for hosteler, it must have a different meaning. In some Bury documents the warden of St Saviour's hospital is referred to as *hospitalarius* and no doubt this is the official to whom this sign pertains (*V.C.H.* II, 135–36; H.M.C. 1895, 128–29).
- 122 The official in charge of the monks' refectory. He supervised the serving of the meals and ensured that the refectory was adequately supplied with linen, furnishings, tableware and other necessities (Knowles 1963, 130; Gransden 1973, 185–88). The reason for the association between refectorer and subalmoner in this sign is unclear.
- 123 The almoner distributed alms and performed other acts of charity. This sign is different from those given in Jarecki and elsewhere which imitate the wearing of the strap and wallet usually carried by beggars. The almonry at Bury was near the Abbey Gate and was burnt in the riots of 1327 (Whittingham 1951, 185).
- 124 Monasteries more than any other institution needed to know the time so that their daily services and other duties could be regulated. Water clocks were invented in antiquity and Bury had one by 1198 when water from it helped to extinguish a fire (Butler 1949, 107). Mechanical clocks were introduced into England in the later 14th century but there is no reference to one at Bury until 1463 at St Mary's Church which was within the abbey precinct (Beeson 1971, 25, 125). It may be significant that a clock is not mentioned in any other sign list even though the sign here suggests the hours were told by the burning of a candle. For the sign for fire see 14. The clock-keeper was one of the four monks who did not have to sleep or dine communally (see below, 126). By 1530 Thetford Cluniac Priory had a clock in the dormitory (Thetford Register, C.U.L. Add. MS 6969, f. 234v.). Sundials were also used by monks to tell the time (Sherlock 1982).
- 126 There were two of these officials who guarded the shrine of St Edmund (see 59) day and night. They, the clock-keeper and the treasurer were excused from sleeping and eating with the rest of the monks (Gransden 1973, 63). For abbot and prior see 104 and 105.
- 128 The novice master would have had to teach the signs to the novices. Prior Henry de Kirkestede (see Introduction) held this office some time before 1361 (Thompson 1982, 101). For guarding see 26 and for newness, 28.
- 131 Waxed boards for writing with a stylus are known from Roman times though few have survived. They were used for making temporary records. Ordericus Vitalis, born at Shrewsbury in 1075, wrote in his *Ecclesiastical History* 'Since the bearer [of the story] was in haste to depart and the winter cold prevented me from holding a pen, I made a full and accurate abbreviation on wax tablets, and now I gladly copy it out on parchment . . .' (Chibnall 1972, 218–19). A 7th-century whale-bone writing tablet now in the British Museum was found at Blythburgh (*V.C.H.* I, 351). For wax see 16, for the stylus, 133 and for parchment, 134.

- 133 A pointed implement for writing on the wax tablets in 131. The first part of the sign shows that it could be made of metal (for which see 17). The R.S.B. (ch.33) urged that the abbot should supply his monks with *graphium et tabulas*. In A.D. 878 a monk of Malmesbury Abbey was killed with these implements by the boys he was teaching! (Hughes 1897, 263).
- 135 *Species* can also mean drugs or medicines which is probably the sense here in view of the next sign. See also 97.
- 138 By the 14th century monastic discipline made it necessary for a monk to obtain 'licence' from his superior before engaging in certain activities, e.g. speaking during prescribed times of silence or in places within the monastery where it was prohibited (Gransden 1973, 29, 64, 67, 78). In the sign-list for the Cluniac house of Fleury there are signs for 'all licence for going somewhere' and for 'licence for going to make water' (Jarecki 1981, 274-75).
- 140 Here, isolated from signs pertaining to the liturgy (see 55), *historia* probably carries the familiar meanings of a story or historical narrative.
- 154 The author of the sign-list took care to ensure that his readers would not interpret *calliditas* in its negative sense of 'cunning' by adding the adjective *bona*. The association of *prudencia* and *calliditas* in this sign echoes a passage from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: *Prudentia est calliditas quae ratione quadam potest dilectum habere bonorum et malorum* (Loeb edition, 1954, viii, 162). The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which was attributed to Cicero, was one of the basic rhetorical texts of the Middle Ages. A 12th- or 13th-century catalogue lists it amongst the contents of the Bury library, so the author of this sign manual may have known of it (Dickey 1968, 1; James 1895, 23, and 30).
- 154 and 155 The B.L. list has a sign for height between these two (Jarecki 1981, no. 80).
- 159 For sequence see 34.
- 161 See 69.
- 163 Conversation was normally allowed only in the parlour or *locutorium*, which at Bury lay on the east side of the cloister beneath the dormitory, or in the outer parlour or court situated to the west of the cloister, where monks could converse with visitors (Whittingham 1951, 176, 178). See also 169.
- 167 See 98.
- 169 This important operation was performed at regular intervals, either in a special building, the *aula minorum* (Thompson 1980, 147) or in the infirmary. It was considered beneficial to health and allowed up to 5 times a year. A monk was given three days off duties and allowed to eat meat. In Jocelin of Brakelond's time talking was also allowed (Butler 1949, 14). The regulations *De Minutis Sanguine* are set out in the Bury *Liber Albus* (see Introduction).
- 173 The exchanging of the 'kiss of peace' was an ancient Christian custom. By c.1250 the *pax* had become an object known as the *osculatorium* or *tabula pacis*, which was passed round to be kissed. Few *pax* boards have survived the Reformation but a gilt bronze one of c.1400, engraved with the Crucifixion, the Virgin Mary and St John; is in Moyses's Hall Museum (Alexander and Binski 1987, 240). The correct use of the kiss of peace is discussed in R.S.B. ch.53. For 'oblation' see 2.
- 178 See 124.
- 179 The R.S.B. (ch.55 and 125) specified that brothers sent upon journeys were to be issued with drawers (*femoralia*) which were to be washed and restored to the clothes room on their return. However, the need to adapt the provisions of the R.S.B. to climatic conditions unforeseen by St Benedict and a general concern for decency and chastity combined to make drawers a standard item of monastic clothing by the early 9th century. The Cistercians denounced this general use of *femoralia* as a contravention of the R.S.B. but the Benedictines and Cluniacs continued to wear them. See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, R.S. 90, vol 2, 382-83; de Valous 1970, 1, 243; Gransden 1973, 74.
- 180 A woollen shirt worn, as the sign indicates, as underwear beneath the tunic (see 182). The wearing of linen shirts by monks was forbidden by canon law in the early 13th century and when Pope Alexander IV confirmed the customs of Bury in 1256 he emphasised that shirts were to be made of wool and not linen (de Valous 1970, 244-45; Gransden 1973, 64-65).
- 181 A long garment made from the fleeces of sheep or lamb. It was evidently worn under the tunic for warmth in winter. In 1256 Pope Alexander gave his approval to the use of *pelliceis agninis* (de Valous 1970, 243-44; Gransden 1973, 65). See also 189.
- 182 The R.S.B. (ch. 55 and 125) prescribed that each monk should have two tunics. The tunic was a long garment with loose sleeves worn over the shirt (see 179) and drawers. English Benedictines of the 14th century evidently took immodest liberties with the garment for a provincial chapter in 1363 forbade tunics that were too short, too tight or decorated with slits, pleats or buttons (Pantin 1931, 66-67).
- 183 *Zona* here clearly does not denote a liturgical vestment as in 8 but simply the belt or girdle used by monks to gather their ample habits at the waist.
- 184 See 65.

- 185 Stockings were included among the clothes that St Benedict deemed adequate for a monk (R.S.B. ch. 55 and 125).
- 186 Pope Alexander IV endorsed the wearing of 'black shoes' (*calciamentis nigris*) in his confirmation of the customs of Bury in 1256 (Gransden 1973, 64–65). For parchment see 134.
- 187 Pope Clement V, in the constitution *Ne in agro* published at the Council of Vienne in 1312, defined the cowl as 'a long and ample habit without sleeves' (*cucullae nomine habitum longum et amplum, sed manicas non habentem . . . nos intelligere declaremus*) (Friedberg 1879, 1166–67). As the sign indicates, the cowl had an attached hood and like all the external garments of the Black Monks, was to be black (Pantin 1933, 67, 199).
- 188 The almuce was a fur-lined hood worn in cold weather. Fourteenth-century disciplinary regulations state that it was to be lined with black fur or fleece, but their injunctions against almuces lined with vair or gris suggest that monks not infrequently used these fine furs in their garments (Pantin 1931, 259; 1933, 67).
- 190 According to Pope Clement V the frock was 'a habit which had long and ample sleeves' (*nomine vero flocci habitum qui longas et amplas habet manicas nos intelligere declaremus*) (Friedberg 1879, 1166–67). Like the cowl it was a long black garment with an attached hood. The frock is the habit most traditionally associated with the Black Monks. See, e.g., the illustration at the beginning of Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* (I, 1817, xxvii). For chamberlain see 117.
- 192 See 37.
- 194 At the end of the Ely signs (f.106v.) is a list of the necessities to be provided for by novices, including '1 girdle (*zona*) with a pouch, knife, writing tablets and comb, thread and needle in the pouch'. For sheath see 66.
- 196 In the Ely sign for a needle (no. 62) you pretend to thread a needle.
- 197 See 193 and 183.
- 198 Monastic latrines were normally attached to the end of the dormitory in a building called the reredorter but at Bury they were in a free-standing building just east of the dormitory (Whittingham 1951, 183). Syon is the only other list with this sign: 'Pryvay or reredortour: make the signe of a house and stryke downe thy right hand by thy clothes'. Fleury has a sign for 'permission to go to make water' (Jarecki 1981, 275). For a building see sign 62.

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Abbreviations

- B.L. sign list British Library, MS Harley 1005, ff. 195r.-202r., Bury St Edmunds Abbey signs, published in Jarecki 1981.
- D.M.L. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R.M. Latham et al. London (in progress).
- Dublin sign list Trinity College Dublin MS B. 3. 5. Printed in Henry F. Berry, 'On the Use of Signs in the Ancient Monasteries with Special Reference

- to a Code used by the Victorine Canons at St Thomas's Abbey, Dublin', *J.Roy.Soc.Antiq.Ir.*, xxii (1892), 107-25.
- Ely sign list Lambeth Palace Library MS 448, f. 100, *De Signis* (formerly Ely Cathedral Priory Library).
- H.M.C. 1895 Historical Manuscripts Commission, 14th Report, Appendix, Part VIII.
- O.E.D.* *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- P.L.* *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris.
- R.S. Rolls Series, ed. W. Stubbs, H.M.S.O.
- R.S.B. *The Rule of St Benedict*, ed. Justin McCann. London, 1952.
- S.R.O.B. Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds Branch.
- Syon sign list British Library, MS Arundel 146, printed as 'A table of signs used . . . in the monastery of Syon' in Aungier 1840, 405-09.
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