

BECCLLES SCHOOL IN THE 1430s

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SINCE THE MIDDLE of the twentieth century, historians of medieval schools in England have begun to understand not only their organisation and distribution but what was taught in their classrooms. Several manuscripts have been identified that were written by teachers or pupils in schools between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries, one of which, MS Additional 2830 in Cambridge University Library, can be traced to the grammar school of Beccles in the early 1430s.¹ It first received scholarly attention from Professor S.B. Meech who printed extracts from it in 1935, showing how Latin was taught in an English school and how that teaching also affected the English language in which the teaching was done.² Later, in 1979 Dr David Thomson (now bishop of Huntingdon) gave a detailed account of the manuscript in his *Descriptive Catalogue of Middle English Grammatical Texts*, and subsequently edited another of the items within it.³ This present study seeks to build on the work of Meech and Thomson by exploring how the Beccles manuscript came to be produced and examining what it tells us about teaching and learning in a provincial grammar school in the fifteenth century. The study also provides an edition and translation of some of the exercises in Latin composition which appear in the manuscript. These exercises are of particular interest. They throw light not only on the work of Beccles School but on local history: the life of the master and pupils, the daily affairs of the town, and the news that came there from elsewhere in the years of Henry VI's minority.

England was well supplied with schools in the fifteenth century, and Suffolk was no exception. There were several means of acquiring education: from literate parents, members of the clergy, monasteries or nunneries, and schools of an independent kind taught by professional schoolmasters, usually for fees. A number of Suffolk towns are recorded as possessing such schools, including Beccles, Bury St Edmunds, Eye, Framlingham, Hadleigh, Lavenham, and Ipswich, and there were probably others of which we yet know nothing.⁴ The school at Beccles is first mentioned in about 1200, and lay under the control of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, or more precisely that of the senior monk who held the office of chamberlain in the abbey.⁵ This meant that the school was not simply the private venture of the master who ran it, but enjoyed a measure of public status. The chamberlain appointed the schoolmaster, and gave him a monopoly of teaching in the town to ensure that he received enough pupils to make a living from the fees that he charged them. Bury may have provided the schoolroom and a dwelling house. The only recorded appointment of a schoolmaster in the Middle Ages is that of Master William Leche, who was placed in office by the chamberlain in 1396.⁶ He was a priest and, as we shall see, there are signs that John Drury, schoolmaster of Beccles in the 1430s, shared this status, but there was often no requirement that masters of small town schools like Beccles should be clerics, and many were laymen: some unmarried, some married. The main business of the school of Beccles was to teach Latin grammar, but since Leche's appointment refers to it merely as 'the school', it may have admitted elementary pupils wishing merely to learn to read (compare passage 5, below). Those who attended the school were probably all boys, and certainly so in the grammar class. Most girls, if they learnt to read, did so at home or in small private schools, and rarely progressed far in Latin.

The Beccles manuscript is a volume of 122 folios, made up of six quires which were previously booklets consisting of paper leaves inside wrappers of parchment. A few of the leaves have been lost. The text is neatly written, with some rubricated initials and titles, and

represents a fair copy of a number of tracts rather than the day-to-day notebook of a teacher or pupil. Several notes at the ends of the tracts state that they were copied by one Hardgrave of Beccles, who was evidently the scribe of the whole work, although it later acquired a few annotations in other hands. The works that Hardgrave copied consist almost wholly of short works for teaching Latin. The exceptions are a literary text commonly studied in grammar schools – the Latin poem on penance, *Peniteas cito*⁷ – and a tract on confession by John Drury, schoolmaster of Beccles, in English and Latin versions. The works on Latin deal chiefly with the parts of speech, their properties and morphology, and with vocabulary. One classic text is present, the thirteenth-century poem *Equivoca* ascribed to John of Garland, a treatise on homophones (words of similar spelling but different meanings),⁸ but the rest of the tracts are mainly of late-medieval English provenance.

They include an elementary treatise on the parts of speech called *Dominus que Pars?*, which is found in other English school manuscripts; a short work called *Donatus secundum Priscianum* by a late fourteenth-century Cambridge grammarian, Henry Hamertoun; and two works by John Leland, the leading Oxford schoolmaster and grammarian of the early fifteenth century. One of these is his *Comparacio*, an elementary prose work in English and Latin on the comparison of adjectives, and the other a more advanced tract in Latin on composition, *Tractus Iuvenum pro Dogmate Factus*. There are two works by John Drury of Beccles on grammatical rules, professedly based on two common literary texts read in schools: the anonymous *Facetus* and the *Parables* or *Parvum Doctrinale* of Alain de Lille. The treatise *Dominus que Pars?* is also described as ‘following the use of the master of Beccles’, implying modifications to it by Drury or one of his predecessors. Finally, and of special concern in this article, there are several leaves containing school exercises in Latin and English, written in Beccles School in the early 1430s. Altogether, the compass of the manuscript is typical of English schooling in the fifteenth century, but it was not a complete resource for the teaching or learning of Latin. It would have needed supplementation from longer grammatical works, such as the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villa Dei, and from the literary texts read in schools, such as *The Distichs of Cato* and *Facetus*.⁹

Why did Hardgrave produce the manuscript? Did he do so for himself, for Drury the contemporary schoolmaster of Beccles, or for some other person? The grammatical and religious treatises may be envisaged as being useful to Drury, who might have asked Hardgrave to copy them out for him, but the school exercises do not fit with this pattern since they are neither of high quality nor do they represent a scheme for teaching boys how to compose Latin. The same objections apply to Hardgrave having compiled his work for a third party. Rather, the presence of the exercises and the frequent mentions of Hardgrave’s name at the ends of the texts suggest that the volume was primarily meant for his personal use. The generally careful script and the choice of texts imply that he was in his mid or late teens at the time, and that he had a serious and long-term interest in Latin grammar. One explanation for the making of the book might be that he intended to become a schoolmaster and was encouraged by Drury in this respect, receiving permission to copy texts in the master’s possession. The manuscript contains enough materials to have served as a valuable handbook for someone setting out to teach in a grammar school although, as has been noted, it would need to be used with other works.

What else do we know about Hardgrave? In one of the exercises he identifies his forename and surname in Latin as *Johannes Bustum Durum*, i.e. ‘John hard grave’.¹⁰ In another place, having mentioned Beccles, he calls himself ‘of the same town’.¹¹ There was a local family with this surname in the 1430s. On 4 October 1438, the administration of the goods of William Hardgrave, ‘formerly of Beccles’, was granted in the consistory court of the diocese of Norwich to his widow Matilda, John Hardgrave of Redenhall (Norfolk), and John Chevyr of

Beccles.¹² This must have been soon after William's death, but his will, if he made one, does not survive. Matilda was still alive on 22 December 1445 when the will of Nicholas Bury of Beccles refers to a payment due to her for a messuage of hers in the town.¹³ The John Hardgrave mentioned in 1438 could well be the son of William and the scribe of the manuscript. If so, he had left the school by this date and moved to Redenhall, some twelve miles south-west of Beccles and just inside Norfolk. He did not apparently follow a career within the Church because the ordination records of the diocese of Norwich, which list men being made subdeacons, deacons and priests, do not contain his name during the 1430s, 40s, or early 50s. Instead, he seems to have remained a literate layman, employed (we might conjecture) as an officer on the estates of a great magnate, in such a magnate's household, or as a teacher in a local school. No school is yet known at Redenhall, but there was a grammar school in the small town of Harleston nearby which lay in Redenhall parish. In 1433 the bishop of Norwich appointed a priest named William Kyng to this school, who was still in office there in 1436.¹⁴ Hardgrave could have been his 'usher' or deputy, or even his successor.

Let us now turn to what the manuscript tells us about Beccles School, beginning with Drury the schoolmaster. The Latin exercises refer several times to 'our master', presumably meaning Drury, and imply that he was unmarried. He is not mentioned as having a wife, and his household is run by a male servant (below, fol. 18r; passage no. 39). A reference to the master being unable to repair his 'parsonage hall', because the timber he wished to use was unavailable (below, passage no. 25), suggests that he was a cleric with a benefice, and the fact that the manuscript contains his tract on confession points in the same direction. The only John Drury to appear in the Norwich diocesan records in the early fifteenth century was a priest from Croxton, Norfolk, who was admitted as vicar of Watton on 16 April 1400, and exchanged that benefice for Shimpling, both in the same county, on 29 August 1401.¹⁵ This Drury did not stay at Shimpling longer than 7 August 1408, when a new incumbent, John Cok, was admitted there, but the record of Cok's admission does not state whether his predecessor had died or resigned.¹⁶ Another John Drury, clerk, is mentioned in a conveyance of 1448 concerning a close of land in Worlingworth, Suffolk; this is a period in which the clergy of the parish are not recorded in the bishops' registers.¹⁷ Either of these men may be identical with the schoolmaster of Beccles but there is as yet no certainty in the matter.

We can say more about Drury as a schoolmaster. If his reference to the bishop of Norwich being chosen as the king's confessor (below, fol. 10r) refers to William Alnwick, who held the two posts by 1424, his tenure of the school stretched between at least that date and 1435. He taught grammatical texts of a standard kind in a manner like that of teachers elsewhere, even in larger towns and at more famous schools. He was himself an author, capable of writing the two grammatical expositions and the tract on confession already mentioned, and apparently of editing the standard text *Dominus que Pars?* He seems to have been in touch with scholarly work at both the English universities. Two of the tracts copied out by Hardgrave were works by John Leland of Oxford, 'the flower of grammarians' as the manuscript describes him, who died only in 1428, so Drury was fairly well up-to-date with recent grammatical literature.¹⁸ Cambridge, as we have seen, is represented by the tract of one of its late fourteenth-century grammarians, Henry Hamertoun, and a sentence among the Latin exercises in Hardgrave's manuscript states that 'the master', presumably Drury, 'disputed at Cambridge last year with the most subtle artsmen of the whole clerical community' (below, no. 37). If true, this suggests that Drury had personal contact with the nearer university to Beccles.

The manuscript contains numerous sentences or longer passages in Latin of a kind known at their day as *latinitates* in Latin and 'latins' in English. They appear here, as in other schoolbooks, in two formats. First there are sentences in treatises on Latin, which are presented as examples to be analysed. These occur in Drury's two works on grammatical rules,

and are referred to in this article by their folio number (fol. x).¹⁹ Secondly there are free-standing exercises that might have been composed by a schoolmaster for classroom teaching, or produced by a pupil as his own work. These are identified, in what follows, by their sequence number (no. x). Over eighty of these exercises occur in the manuscript, arranged together in four sections corresponding to terms in the academic year. First come twenty-three 'small latins' from Christmas term 1434, i.e. the term beginning at 25 December of that year and ending at Lady Day (25 March) 1435. Each is confined to a line or two, and appears in an English version followed by a Latin translation. They are described as 'not according to the form to be rendered'. In fact some are correct and straightforward but in most cases, although the Latin is correct, the English version that precedes it is not, through following the word order of the Latin rather than its grammatical structure. This produces ludicrous results like 'I saw thee drunk while thou wert sober' (no. 3). Such sentences were presumably teaching materials, meant to show pupils that Latin must be understood not through its word order, as is the case with English, but through the grammatical relationships between the individual words. They also suggest that some of the work of Beccles School involved getting pupils to translate Latin passages into English, the kind of work in which such mistakes might arise.

The second free-standing section is entitled 'latins of Christmas term', no year being given but presumably also 1434–35. There are twenty-four of these, the first eleven consisting of longer English sentences followed by Latin translations, and the remainder of Latin sentences alone. Two of the English sentences (nos. 27–28) resemble those of the 'small latins' by being in Latin word order, but the rest are correctly translated. The third section includes eleven sentences in Latin alone from Easter term 'of the aforesaid year', most of which are similar in length to those of Section 2. This term, although called Easter, probably began at Lady Day (25 March 1435). In this section there is a sentence referring to noblemen going to parliament in London on 17 May, but there was no meeting of this assembly in 1435 until 10 October. Parliament last met in May (on the 12th) in 1432, so this sentence is either older than 1435 or a recall of a past event. Finally, there are thirty sentences in Latin alone ascribed to a Michaelmas term without a year date. Two of these are also inappropriate chronologically, since they contain allusions to Easter and May, which are unlikely to have been written in the autumn (nos. 63, 77). One wonders if some of these sentences also originated in a previous season. The Michaelmas passages are also different in character, since although they include four passages of three or four lines like those of the two previous sections, they are otherwise confined to a line or two. All in all, the latins are not consistent and do not contain any obvious progression; they appear to be a collection of items made by Hardgrave from his own work or from that of other people.

Taken together, the sentences in the treatises and those that are free-standing reflect an interest in Latin vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. In the first respect they contain a number of unusual words, and once or twice provide lists of them: kinds of metal (no. 40) and freshwater fishes (no. 54). In terms of grammar and syntax, they attempt to make pupils understand and compose Latin other than in the straightforward way with a subject, verb, and object. Thus constructions are found using the ablative (nos. 36–42) or genitive cases (nos. 50–52), without a verb. Alternative ways of turning English into Latin are often outlined, as in no. 45, where the word 'disposition' can be rendered as *ingenii*, *ingenio*, or *ingenia*. To this extent the sentences show schools ambitious to master Latin in all its possibilities, but the Latin rarely comes across as exceptionally neat and well balanced. True, there are some mistakes of transcription in the manuscript, and odd words may have been omitted by accident. But even allowing for this, the prose has a tendency to ramble as if the writer was thinking as he went along and adding one clause to another. Sometimes indeed one feels that an initial idea has been prolonged solely to reach a certain length, as if there was a convention

that four or five lines of work had to be produced, so that the literary quality of the pieces suffers as a consequence. In a few cases, the sense of a passage is hard to recover. Such features are not peculiar to the Beccles latins, but are found in other grammatical collections which reflect similar efforts by pupils to grapple with Latin composition.²⁰

The topics of the latins also resemble those of other schools. They include two broad categories: descriptive references to everyday life and wise observations intended to teach virtue.²¹ Whether the topics were set by the master or chosen by the pupils is not clear. The material spans the interest of both parties, and hardly ever identifies itself as belonging to one or the other. They are certainly not wholly original to Hardgrave or even to Beccles School, however, because the sentence beginning 'I saw a nakyd man' (no. 2) occurs in a similar form in a collection of school exercises from Bristol, also made in about 1430.²² It is used in both places to demonstrate the same point, the importance of word agreement rather than word order, and was perhaps a classic illustration of this matter. We should not assume, of course, that all the statements in the latins are literally true. This applies to remarks such as that the mayor of Norwich is the writer's intimate friend (fol. 10v), that the writer intends to send a horse to the bishop of Lincoln in London (fol. 25v), or that he is planning a journey to Pontefract (fol. 26r), and the same may be true of the assertion that 'My father is very expert in various kinds of work and well learned in various languages' (no. 74). But many of the sentences seem likely descriptions of fact with which we may reconstruct the life and work of the school, the affairs of its town, and events and ideas of the day.

Let us begin with the school. The schoolroom is described as 'a little place and a strait', i.e. narrow (no. 34), and may have been inadequate for its pupils since we are told that 'the school being full of scholars, it is necessary for those writing to sit in the open air' (fol. 12v). The schoolmaster charged fees known as 'schoolage' (fol. 4v), probably at the rate of 2s a year for day-boys,²³ and he would have needed at least fifty or sixty paying pupils to make a living, and preferably more. There were certainly enough to require the assistance of a second teacher, known as the usher (fols 3r, 16r, no. 34), whose name (Latin *hostiarius*) came from his seat by the school door where he supervised entries and exits. The master seems to have been away from time to time, sometimes as long as a week, visiting Norwich or other places, in which case the usher deputised for him (fols 7r, 15v, 17v, 18v). Once an older boy is mentioned as also helping to question the pupils (no. 34); he was perhaps the 'substitute' who helped the usher in the master's absence (fol. 17v). A mention of a *ferulator*, someone carrying a ferule (a ruler-like object pierced with a hole and used for smacking the hand), sounds like another reference to a senior boy operating as a prefect or monitor (no. 58).²⁴

There are reasons therefore to regard the school (and its counterparts in similar towns) as large, not small, in numbers. A little can be learnt about its working practices. The school year was divided into three terms: Michaelmas, Christmas, and Easter (all mentioned in the manuscript), probably followed by a long break from midsummer or soon afterwards until Michaelmas. Scholars who lived at a distance and boarded in Beccles may have spent most of this period at school. Alexander de la Pole, who studied at Ipswich in 1416–17, stayed there from September till July, after which he went back to his family home at Wingfield.²⁵ The terms did not consist wholly of six-day working weeks, however, since major holy days were holidays on which even the speaking of Latin could be waived (fol. 11v). These included the Rogation Days in the early summer when boys joined in the processions that took place round the parish (no. 52). Once the master is imagined telling the boys to go out and play in the garden (fol. 24v), and references to wrestling (fol. 15v) and wandering in the woods in May (nos 48, 63) suggest that they had some free time. On other occasions the master allows a pupil to go home (fol. 14v) or is approached by two boys who wish to have a special day off, known as a 'remedy' (fol. 19v).

The pupils sat in school to learn grammar (no. 34), presumably on forms although in one case a younger boy is mentioned sitting on the ground (no. 66). Books are referred to. One pupil has a primer, which is explained as containing the mattins of the Virgin Mary, in other words the simple Latin services or 'hours' in her honour (no. 5). Primers were widely used to practise reading and pronouncing Latin words by those who had learnt the alphabet. Another sentence refers to reading a book and shutting it (no. 73), and a third to a scholar who has a piece of paper in his book (no. 23). The only grammatical author to be mentioned is Donatus (no. 70), the late-classical author whose elementary Latin treatise, the *Ars Minor*, was widely used in modified and rewritten forms by the fifteenth century and, by the 1430s, was also available in a version by John Leland in English.²⁶ There is also a reference to learning a Latin declension (no. 65). A principal method of teaching consisted of the master 'apposing' or questioning a pupil, which is mentioned several times (nos. 8, 11, 34, 65, 76). Debates might also take place between two or more pupils (fol. 12v; no. 76). Some schoolboys are characterised as dull or lazy, wasting the money spent on their education by their 'friends', a term encompassing family or patrons (nos. 53, 61, 80). The master's punishment for slackness and unruliness was a beating (fols 4r, 16r; nos. 4, 19, 32, 82), probably applied upon bared buttocks with a bunch of birch twigs, a process described as resulting in 'a good stirred arse' (no. 4). The ferule was a milder punishment (although the hole it contained was meant to raise a blister on the hand), and may have been used for lesser offences. Boys sometimes avoided school discipline by playing truant (fols 4r, 12v).

The school appears to have adjoined the master's house, which contained a garden in which vegetables and flowers were grown (nos. 24, 39, 56). The master owned a horse, so there was presumably a stable as well (fols 8r, 17v). The usher, on the other hand, is envisaged lodging with a kinsman (fol. 14v). The master employed a manciple who seems to have been a general manservant. He dug in the garden, served at table (no. 39), and took the washing to a laundress (fol. 18r). If we may ascribe to Hardgrave the statements about 'me, his [the master's] servant' (no. 24) and about meeting 'my father's man in the street' (no. 46), it would appear that he himself lived in the house and did servant's duties while learning to master grammar, like the apprentice of a merchant or craftsman. The master took in other pupils to board, whose payments would have made a valuable addition to his income. This practice is revealed by mentions of *commensales* (household members) in the schoolmaster's house who are expected to speak Latin (fol. 11v) and by a description of the master waiting for his scholars to come home for a meal (no. 48). Boarding with a schoolmaster was a common practice and Alexander de la Pole did so at Ipswich in the 1410s, although the master in that instance had a wife.²⁷

Food and meals, whether taken in the schoolmaster's house or at home, form a frequent subject of interest in the exercises. There are numerous references to meals, using the word *iantaculum* which originally meant 'breakfast' but sometimes seems to stand for other meals (fols 3v, 4v, 11v, 21v, 22v; nos. 18, 20, 39, 46, 65, 73).²⁸ Meals signify more than food; they mark the passage of the day and act as a break from lessons. Breakfast itself seems to consist only of bread, sometimes with butter, and a drink, probably ale (fol. 3v; no. 20). Food likely to have been eaten at the larger meals of dinner and supper includes herrings, mentioned four times (fol. 22v; nos. 46, 60, 64), not surprisingly in a town linked to the sea, and onions and leeks as vegetables (nos. 39, 46). A boy eating an apple can make another's mouth water (no. 79). Food was more seasonal than it is today. The restricted diet of Lent is a matter of comment, as is the knowledge that the nobility can afford luxurious foods in that season, such as figs, raisins, dates, nuts and almond milk, which are beyond the experience of ordinary people (nos. 42, 64). In summer, when farm animals are producing milk, the scholars look forward to buying cream from milkmaids (no. 63).

Little is said about the boys' social history: the families they came from, the rank or wealth that they possessed or the careers envisaged for them. They were aware of differences of wealth, since one sentence has a boy repeating the old taunt of 'my father is bigger than yours' in this respect (fol. 9r). Some like Hardgrave were evidently native to Beccles, and the mention of the master allowing a pupil to 'go home' may indicate a day-boy unless 'home' meant the house where he lodged (fol. 14r). There must have been many schoolboys from the immediate neighbourhood, since it was far cheaper to be educated locally than to board away from home. Two boys are recorded coming to Beccles School from Mettingham College, five miles west, in the early fifteenth century.²⁹ The presence of boys in the master's house also suggests pupils who lived at a considerable distance and needed to board. One sentence seems to relate to such a pupil, since the fact that he has had an accident involves the need to write a letter about this, presumably to his parents (no. 59). Correspondence between schoolmasters and parents, or directly between parents and children, was probably common because we possess model collections of such letters devised by Oxford schoolmasters round about 1400 for teaching epistolary skills to their pupils.³⁰ The future careers of the scholars of Beccles School are likely to have varied. Some might inherit their parents' property and status as gentry, yeomen or burgesses, while others would take up lay careers as administrators, lawyers, or writing clerks, and yet others become clerics of one kind or another. Career destinations were probably often left open while boys were at school, because family plans could easily be disarranged by the deaths of a boy's older siblings or those of his parents. Would-be clergy, for example, often deferred committing themselves to lifelong celibacy, for which the minimum age was seventeen, until they approached the age of twenty-four at which they could be ordained priests.³¹ In the Beccles material, one boy's elder brother is imagined learning logic at Cambridge (fol. 16v), and two passages envisage boys becoming clergy (fol. 23r; no 55). In the latter case one is to be a secular or parish priest and the other a friar. We might here note that the will of Richard Cambrygg of Beccles in 1447 mentions that his son William was a friar of the Order of St Augustine.³²

The latins give honour to St Peter and mention his church in Beccles (fol. 14r; nos. 47, 55). This building is known to have stood at the west end of the older of the two market places in the town, on the north side of the church of St Michael. It is likely that St Peter's was the original parish church, replaced in this respect by St Michael's in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth it was still in use – the exercises refer to its leaded roof, tiled floor and bells – but no longer served as the chief church of the town. References to it in wills after 1400 sometimes call it a church and sometimes a chapel. St Michael's is not mentioned by that name in the latins, although it may be 'the parish church' at which marriage banns are called (no. 38) and perhaps the venue of a sermon that attracts local burgesses (fol. 9v). Why the exercises refer to St Peter's is not clear. It seems to have had no staff of its own, since local wills refer merely to the rector, parish chaplain and parish clerks of Beccles. Perhaps Drury, if he were a priest, was allowed to minister in it, saying mass and prayers for the dead as a means of enhancing his income. Apart from these church references, Beccles is mentioned once with patriotic fervour as the chief town of Suffolk (no. 50), and its fair is singled out as an occasion on which much wine is drunk, causing cooks and innkeepers to make unwarranted profits (no. 62).

The writers of the latins were aware of people and events beyond the town. There are two references to the FitzWalter family: one to its bailiff and another speculating on the marriages of its young daughters (nos. 25, 30). Walter, Lord FitzWalter, a prominent magnate in Norfolk and Suffolk, had died in 1431 leaving an infant daughter Elizabeth, born in 1430, who succeeded to his barony. His widow Elizabeth had two other children, Anne and Joan, by her previous husband, William Massey, and they were not yet married when Walter died, so she had three potentially marriageable daughters in the early 1430s.³³ Further afield, there are

accounts of people going to London: a man expecting to be knighted by the king, lawyers attending the law-courts, and magnates and noblemen on their way to Parliament (nos. 44–45, 51). We hear some echoes of the Hundred Years War. The king of England rules France and is merciful and encouraging to its people (fols 7v, 8v). Twenty-one Englishmen rout twelve thousand Frenchmen (fol. 22v), no doubt wishful thinking! This kind of complacency may belong to the 1420s, but alarm grows during the following decade as English soldiers attempt to deal with popular unrest in Normandy, and unspecified fighting takes place between English and French, in which Our Saviour is besought to grant victory to the English (nos. 41, 88). If we include some passing mentions of Cambridge, Norwich, Oxford and Pontefract (fols 6v, 7r, 16v, 25v, 26r) and a passage reflecting on snow-capped mountains in exotic countries (no. 37), it is evident that the master and pupils of Beccles School knew something about the world beyond their town and followed its news.

Some other topics of the latins occur often enough to merit comment. One is the passage of the year. Like some other surviving school exercises, those of Beccles are sometimes based on the weather or on seasonal events that were apparently topical when the latins were written. The sentences for Christmas term mention the unhealthiness of marshland in winter, men being drowned playing football on the ice, a spell of severe cold weather, and the coming of Lent (nos. 33, 35–36, 40, 42). Those of Easter term refer to the month of May and the religious festivals which fall in early summer, notably Rogationtide (nos. 9, 50, 52). Illness occurs in other passages about people dying in an epidemic and about a boy who loses most of his hair through a sickness (fols 8r, 10r). A further matter of interest is marriage, which is mentioned in relation to several different people: somebody's cousin, a young man of Beccles, the FitzWalter daughters, a newly-made knight, and the future marriages of young scholars in general (nos. 26, 29–30, 38, 44). This topic, paralleled in other collections of latins, reflected the economic importance of marriage as a quick and substantial way of acquiring wealth (both for bridegroom and bride) in an age when wealth was passed around as well as being created from nothing. Finally, there are a number of wise and moral observations, reflecting the wish of schools to teach virtue as well as knowledge. Scholars are urged to refrain from unrest in school, work hard, and deserve the support they receive from their relatives (nos. 32, 77, 81). They should not think ill of their friends and neighbours, but make themselves well-disposed in their hearts as Easter approaches, and avoid the wiles of lawyers (nos. 45, 53, 61, 67, 75).

The latin exercises, then, reveal the grammar school at Beccles to have been a respectable institution, teaching Latin of an up-to-date kind to an adequate level. Within another fifty years, the re-emphasis of the Renaissance on classical Latin authors was to introduce different standards of style and vocabulary, but in the 1430s latins of the kind transcribed by Hardgrave reflected the educational aspirations of the day. They show that schoolmasters tried to enlist the sympathies of their pupils by allowing them to write on familiar subjects and by the use of humour, as in the ludicrous English translations of the 'little latins'. There is even an obscure poetic couplet that may refer to a dance song (no 9).³⁴ The exercises convey some of the everyday concerns of schools and their pupils about lessons, discipline, food, weather and holidays. They indicate mental horizons in England and France. Indeed it might not be too far-fetched to put the Beccles schoolbook alongside the Paston Letters as a record of people's activities and interests in fifteenth-century East Anglia. True, the schoolbook sentences are far more limited in scope than the letters, but they compensate for this by coming from a school where they shaped and reflected the minds of teenage boys – a section of the population from whom we rarely hear in late-medieval England.

APPENDICES

1. *A Selection of the Latins in fols 1r–26v*

In the edition of this and the following section, modern usage is followed in punctuation and in capitalising proper names. The caret sign / is used to indicate when the text provides alternative ways of rendering Latin. Abbreviations are expanded in italics, editorial additions are in square brackets, and alterations or additions by the original or later scribes in angle brackets. The passages in fols 97r–101v have been given reference numbers, and translations have been supplied to passages in Latin for which there is no English version in the manuscript.

[fol. 1r] *Magister sedet in scola.* [The master sits in the school.]

Magistrum docere bene gramaticam est comodiferum discipulos. [For the master to teach grammar well is profitable to the pupils.]

[fol. 1v] *Magistro legente lecciones discipuli ascultant.* [The pupils attend to the master reading lessons.]

[fol. 2v] *Liber meus est vna rerum quos optime diligo.* [My book is one of the things that I love best.]

[fol. 3r] *Magister et hostiarius laborant fortiter tempore.* [The master and usher work hard all the time.]

[fol. 3v] *Panis et butirum sunt / uel est bonum prandium pro pueris.* [Bread and butter are a good meal for children.]

[fol. 4r] *Socius meus tritannizat propter quod verberabitur.* [My schoolfellow is playing truant because he was beaten.]

[fol. 4v] *Ego vestebar hodie lacticiniis ad iantaculum meum.* [I fed today on dairy food for my meal.]

Sirothece magistri iacent in arca. [The master's gloves lie in a chest.]

Omnes socij nostri soluerunt magistro scolagium. [All our schoolfellows pay the master schoolage [i.e. school fees].]

[fol. 5r] *Socius meus fudit pennam cum artapho meo.* [My schoolfellow made a pen with my knife.]

[fol. 6r] *Papa habet potestatem absoluendi penitentes, nullo casu reservato.* [The pope has the power to absolve those who are penitent, with no case being reserved.]

[fol. 6v] *Vado ad Oxoniam vbi discam gramaticam.* [I am going to Oxford where I shall learn grammar.]

[fol. 7r] *Magister noster est Norwici cum amicis suis.* [Our master is at Norwich with his friends.]

[fol. 7v] *Rex Anglie dominatur Gallorum / uel Gallis quoque quibus / uel quod miseretur tamen et fouet.* [The king of England rules the French as well, to whom he is compassionate and benevolent.]

[fol. 8r] *Socius meus caret multorum crinium / uel crinibus in capite suo qui defluerunt tempore sue infirmitatis.* [My schoolfellow lacks much of the hair of his head, which dropped off at the time of his illness.]

Equo magistri nostri constabat sibi quadraginta solidorum / solidos / uel solidis, quem jam vendidit duarum marcarum, vnum solidum et vno denario. [Our master's horse cost forty shillings, which he has already sold for two marks, one shilling, and one penny.]

[fol. 8v] *Cum nibem ningit et gelu gelat iocundum est sedere per ignem.* [When the cloud snows and the frost freezes, it is merry to sit by the fire.]

Corona regia gubernantis Angliam et Franciam fit ex auro et lapidibus preciosis. [The royal crown of the ruler of England and France is made from gold and precious stones.]

[fol. 9r] *Pater meus est dicior auri / uel auro patre tuo viginti marcis.* [My father is richer in gold than your father by twenty marks.]

[fol. 9v] *Victoria gallorum est pauper dominium cui restat honor sine emolimento.* [The victory of the French [or, at cock-fighting] is a poor dominion, to which belongs honour without profit.]

Dum sacrista pulsat ad sermonem, burgenses vndique conueniunt ad ecclesiam. [While the sacrist rings [the bell] for the sermon, burgesses from everywhere come together to the church.]

[fol. 10r] *Multus populus moritur isto tempore epidemiae.* [Many people die at this time of epidemic.]

Episcopus Norwicensis est electus confessor regis. [The bishop of Norwich is chosen as the king's confessor.]

[fol. 10v] Maior Norwici est meus intimus amicus quem confido. [The mayor of Norwich is my intimate friend whom I trust.]

Thomas de Norwico est diues mercator. [Thomas of Norwich is a rich merchant.]

[fol. 11r] Qvem decunt scolares esse famulum magistri? [Who are fitting but scholars to be the master's household?]

[fol. 11v] Adipatum libencius comeditur in iantaculo quam carnes a comensalibus magistri. [Fat is more gladly eaten than meat at meals by the household members of the master.]

Latinum semper loquitur in hospicio magistrali a commensalibus excepto diebus festiuis. [Latin is always spoken in the master's house by the household members except on festival days.]

[fol. 12r] Scola plena scolaribus necesse est scribentes sedere subdiuo. [The school being full of scholars, it is necessary for those writing to sit in the open air.]

[fol. 12v] Decanis libri nostri opposito ceteris non parceretur. [I am holding disputation with the seniors [who have studied] our book; the rest will not be spared.]

Socio meo tritannizanti obuiebat hodie iuxta pontem. [My schoolfellow playing truant was met today near the bridge.]

[fol. 14r] Petrus est electus caput ecclesie et vocatur Cephas a domino. [Peter was chosen head of the Church and called Cephas by the Lord.]

Magister concessit socio meo licenciam eundi domum. [The master gave my schoolfellow permission to go home.]

[fol. 14v] Dum magister inquit ad domum suam propriam, hostiarius morabitur apud domum auunculi sui. [While the master is in his own house, the usher dwells at the house of his uncle.]

[fol. 15r] Sanctus Thomas Cantuariensis exulauit a rege pro iusticia regni. [St Thomas of Canterbury went into exile from the king for the justice of the kingdom.]

[fol. 15v] Qvem oportet nisi hostiarium astare scolaribus in absentia magistri ne dispendium paciantur ab aliquo? [To whom does it belong but the usher to stand in for the scholars in the absence of the master, lest they suffer loss from anyone?]

Fortior nostrum duorum luctabitur in theatro. [The stronger of us two will wrestle on the sports ground.]

[fol. 16r] Duorum puerorum rabiancium in scola alterum verberabit magister et alterum hostiarius. [Of the two boys rioting in the school, the master will beat one and the usher the other.]

[fol. 16v] Frater meus est discens dialectice Cantabrigie et ego gramatice Bellicliui.³⁵ [My brother is learning logic at Cambridge and I grammar at Beccles.]

[fol. 17r] Avus meus viuunt deuotam vitam et cotidie suspirat regnum celorum. [My grandfather lives a devout life and sighs every day for the kingdom of heaven.]

[fol. 17v] Hostiarius cum substituto regunt bene scolam in absentiam magistri. [The usher with the substitute rule the school well in the absence of the master.]

[fol. 18r] Mancipium nostrum defert pannos ad lotricem vt lauento. [Our manciple takes the clothes to the laundress for washing.]

[fol. 18v] Hostiarius et non magister regit scolam ista septimana. [The usher and not the master rules the school this week.]

[fol. 19v] Et Robertus et Walterus desiderat habere remedium. [Both Robert and Walter wish to have a day off school.]

[fol. 21v] 'Mater mea que diligit me bene da mihi iantaculum meum.' ['My mother, you who love me well, give me my breakfast.']

[fol. 22v] Duo rubea alleca sunt lautum iantaculum pauperibus clericis. [Two red herrings are a fine meal for poor clerks.]

Viginti vnus homo uel homines Anglicus / uel -ci fugauit / uel -erunt duodecim milia Gallicorum uel Gallicos de campo in mariscum. [Twenty-one Englishmen put to flight twelve thousand Frenchmen from a field in a marsh.]

[fol. 23r] Intendens presbitari uelle prius esse bonus clericus uelle, nanque fieri presbiterum priusquam clericum est tam pudor quam opprobrium. [He who wishes to become a priest should first wish to be a good clerk, for to be made a priest before [being] a clerk is both a shame and a disgrace.]

[fol. 24v] 'Pueri, exite ostium *et* ludite in orto.' ['Boys, go out of the door and play in the garden.']
 [fol. 25v] Ego mittam equum meum episcopo Lincolniensi Londonijs residenti, ad quem fratrem meum cum predicare destinabo. [I shall send my horse to the bishop of Lincoln, residing in London, to whom I intend to commend my brother.]

[fol. 26r] Ego uel socius meus ibit midius octauus ad Pontemfractum vbi neque vinum neque seruisia est vendenda. [I or my schoolfellow will go in the middle of the eighth day [or octave] to Pontefract where neither wine nor ale is sold.]

2. A Complete Edition of the Latins in fols 97r-101v.

[fol. 97r] Incipiunt parue latinitates de termino Natalis Domini sed non pro forma reddicionis, anno domini 1434. [Here begin the small latins of Christmas term in the year of the Lord 1434, but not in the form for reproducing.]

1a John Alleynys rent furre is a good zeman.

1b *Johannis Aleyn lacerata penula est boni effebi.*

2a I saw a nakyd man gaderin stoonys in hys barm.

2b *Ego vidi nudus hominem colligere lapides in gremium suum.*

3a I saw þe drunkyn whil þu were sobere.

3b *Ego vidi te ebrius dum fuisti sobrius.*

4a Myn ars comyng to scole xal be betyn.

4b *Anus meus venientis ad scolam verberabitur.*

5a Myn primer lyth in myn lapp þat can our ladyis matenys.

5b *Primarium meum iacet in gremio meo qui scio matutinas Sancte Marie.*

6a I am set; were I seruyd!

6b *Sedetur a me; si michi seruiretur!*

7a This man haþ drunkyn hese leggis a-sonder and stagerit as a goos.

7b *Iste homo ebrabit tibus suas in potando.*

8a Childeren opposid arn to a-posyn oþere to ben opposid.

8b *Pueri quibus oppositum est / uel sic: cui aliquis opposuit sunt opposituri, alijs quibus opponetur / uel cui aliquis opponet.*

9a A to, foot, a to. It is soo tow it is not 3it sothyn j-now.

9b *Dividaris, pes, dividaris. Est enim satis tenax et non hucvsque satis coquitur.*

10a I, Herri Rovs, eet a movs smal cattis tayll.

10b *Mei Henrici Rovs comedit muris catus paruam caudam.*

11a Set, if j set be; opposid, if j opposid be; concludid wil j nouth be.

11b *A me qui sedi / uel sic: a me a quo sessum fuit si sedetur / uel sic: si sessum fuerit, michi cui aliquis opposuit / uel sic: cui oppositum fuit opponatur, nolo vt mihi concludatur.*

12a Fela, j knowe þe bynd of þyn bowe wil j-now.

12b *Socie, nosco tensuram arcus tui valde bene.*

<In another hand: 13a My fadir alyfe yis dede.

13b *Pater meus viuentis est mortuus.>*

[fol. 97v]

14 Nota de istis terminis: Intence *et* Remisse; Intende *et* Remitte; Intencius *et* Remissius; Intensus *autem et* Remissus. [Note these terms (paradigms of 'intendo' and 'remitto').]

15a *Myn* bowe hath to meche bend.

15b 'To' ante *nomen* adiectiuum erit nimis ['To' before a noun adjective will be 'nimis']. Arcus meus *habet_tensuram* nimis *intensam*.

16a *Myn* bowe hath to lital bend, for it castith a brood arwe wonder slak.

16b Arcus meus *habet* *tensuram* nimis *remissam / uel* nimis *lentam quia* eiicit *catapultam* nimis *remisse*.

17a This man is weyk *and* hath lital myth, *and* 3one man is <to – *deleted*> big *and* hath to meche myth.

17b *Iste homo est* nimis *lentus et* *habet* *vigorem* nimis *remissum, et* *ille homo est* rigidus *et* *habet* *vigorem* nimis *intensum*.

18a Haddistu nouth a capon at þyn dyner?

18b Habuisti ne caponem ad iantaculum tuum?

19a Haddistu nouth to-day a good stourid ars?

19b Habuisti ne hodie anum *verberatum* bene?

20a I haue drynk j-now at *myn* mete, but j haue to lital breed.

20b Ego habeo satis potus ad iantaculum meum *sed* nimis *parum* panis.

21a I haue drunkyn to-day many dyuers alis.

21b Ego bibi hodie *multam* seruiciam diuersam. Gustus *uel* gust<u – *deleted*>.

<Added: 22 I haue eaten nothing this longe tyme.>

<Added: 23a I haue a lytle paper in my book.

23b Ego habeo *par[u]a cart[a]* in libro meo.>

[fol. 98r]

Incipiunt Latinitates de termino Natalis Domini. [Here begin the latins of Christmas term]

24a Wedis plukkyd out of þe maysteris gardine, it xal be-fallin me his *seruauant* to castyn <out – *deleted*> ouer þe hegh.

24b Aborigines euulsas ex orto *magistri nostri* interest mea / *uel* me famuli sui eicere vltra cepem.

25a Tymbir qwich *our* mayster is to nedin for his *personage* halle *myn* lord Fywateris bayle preposith to sellyn, þre carteful for fiftene schelyngis.

25b Meremium cuius quod / *uel* quo *magister noster* est qui indigebit *pro* aula rectorie sue balius domini mei filij Walteri proponit vendere tribus bigis plenis qui[n]decim solidorum solidos / *uel* solidis.

26a Ho xal weddin *myn* auntis douter but þis tal 3eman þat cam late from be-3onde þe se?

26b Cui nubet filia amite mee nisi isti probo effebo qui venit nuper de vltra mare?

27a Jhon *myn* sistyr my faderis moder maad me a peyr' whyth hoosis of blak schepis wolle.

27b *Johannis* soror mea patris matris mee fecit *mibi* vnum par alba caliga[rum?] de *nigrarum* ouina / *uel* ouium lana.

27c *Mea alba soror fecit mihi vnum par nigrarum caligarum de lana ouina Iohannis patris matris mee.* <This entry is cancelled in red.>

28a My leene souwe þat is so feet þat ȝisterday in scole sat xal been etyn þis day fortenyth at mete.
 28b *Mea macilenti sus strepha uel porca que est ita pinguis qui heri in scola sedebam prandebitur midius quartus decimus.*

29a Scleris, whom it be-fallith weel to syngyn cristemesse songis <if euere þey weddin ȝyng wommen – cancelled> at cristemesse, it xal nedyn to syng credil songis if euere þey weddin ȝyng wommen or ellis it s[hall] irkyn hem here lyff.

29b *Scolaribus / uel scolares quorum / uel quos interest cantare palinodia natalis domini expediet psallere crepundia fescinninas si vnquam nupcerit aliquam iuenculam sinautem tede bit illos vite sue.*

30a Whom xal it befallyn to weddyn myn ladyis douteris but too worthy knythis wheche þe ton may spenden an hundrid pound and þe toþer an hundrid mark?

30b *Quibus intererit nubere domine mee filiarum nisi duobus illustribus militibus quorum alter potest expendere centum libras et alter [centum marcas]?*

[fol. 98v]

31a Lym, soond and water maad mortar, þe qweche is a sotilte vnkowyn to wrytis and alle men of craft except masones, xal be wrouth on oure churche-ȝerd walles.

31b *Calx, sabulum et vnda facta sementum quod est subtilitas icognita carpentarijs et omnibus artificibus exceptis latomis operabitur / uel operabuntur super <moceries – deleted> muros semiterij nostri.*

32a It is nedful scleris to abste yne fro ragyng, hois reklysheed ȝeuit ofty n þe mayster cause to beyten, for it is weel fovnden þat hosumeuere he fynde cvlpabil he payit hem trewely on þe toote.

32b *Necessarium est scolariibus / uel scolares abstinere se rabiacionis / rabiacione / uel a rabiacione quorum negligenc[i]am prebet sepe magistro causam <pugnandi / uel ad pugnandum – deleted> verberandi / uel ad verberandum quia repertum est quod quosunque comperit culpabiles recompensabit illis firmiter super nudo.*

33a To duellen ner merschis and fennys in vynter is nouth heylsom, for of swych maner thyng is engendrid mystis and rokys of whych ofte tymys <oft – deleted> causyd pestelens arn corupt nouth oonly ȝong and childerin b[ut] also old men and weel wynterid.

33b *Manere prope paludes vel labinas in yeme non est sanum quia de huiusmodi generantur sepe nubula et scothomie ex quibus sepe causata pestilencia / uel epidemia corrumpuntur non tantam iuuenes et pueri verumeciam senes et proveci.*

34a Thre childerin sitting in scole to lere gramer, oon þe mayster is to aposyn and an oþer þe vscher and þe thredde oon of þe discipulis wysest of gramer of alle scleris sitting in scole, þe wheche is a litil place and a streytȝ.

34b *Trium puerorum sedencium in scola discere / uel ad discendum gramaticam, vni magister est oppositurus et alt[er]i hostiarius et terci[o] vnu[s] discipulorum sapientissimus gramatice omnium scolarum sedencium in scola, qui / uel que est paruus locus et strictus.*

35 *Hominibus ludentibus ad pilam pedalem super glaciem et mersis [mi]seret opido amicos suos mortis illorum, qui proponunt tenere exequias suas proxima septimana.*

[The men who played at football on the ice and sank through have caused great misery by their deaths to their friends, who propose to hold their funeral rites next week.]

[fol. 99r]

36 <Gelu – *deleted*> Gelante noctu / uel –e durius septuplo quam fecit aliquo tempore istius anno tedebit me et socios meos sedentes in scola frigida, domo gelu seuissimi / uel –e aurarum contingencium in brumale.

[It has frozen at night seven times harder than it has done at any time of this year, wearying me and my companions who sit in the cold school, the cold in the house arising from the very severe nature of the winds that happen in winter.]

37 Magistro doctissimo gramatice omnium gramaticorum istius ville, viginti librarum valore et non ita modico, opponebatur Cantabrigie vltimo anno ab artistis subtilissimis tocius clerimonie.

[The master, the most learned in grammar of all the grammarians of this town, worth £20 and no less, disputed at Cambridge last year with the most subtle artsmen of the whole clerical community.]

38 Bannis certis solempniter in ecclesia parochiali de Bellocliuo tribus diebus festiuis a se distantibus, oportebit hunc iuvenem disponsaturum istam iuvenulam domicellam venuste pulcritudinis / uel venusta ne prouidere festinanter / uel immediate nova indumenta prout moris est et insuper omnia alia nupcijs / uel sponsalijs necessaria.

[Now that certain banns have been solemnly [published] in the parish church of Beccles on three festival days distant from one another, it is fitting for this young man [who is] about to marry this young damsel of charming beauty to provide new clothes speedily or immediately, as the custom is, and furthermore all other things necessary for a nuptial or espousal.]

39 Nostro mancipio fossore in orto magistri nostri et seruito ad iantaculum suum porris sepis et vitellis, Johannes Bustum Durum amans delicias caras epulas et non crudas cepas deprimere / uel ad deprimendum suum <calidem – *deleted*> calidum sanguinem et specialiter / uel solomodo odit <sitem uel – *deleted*> sitim et famem; veniet tardius ad senectutem pro bona dieta sua.

[[Although] our manciple is a digger in our master's garden and has served [him] at his breakfast with leeks, onions and [other] victuals, John Hardgrave loves delicious expensive dishes and not raw onions to cool his hot blood, and especially he dislikes thirst and hunger. May he come more slowly to old age on account of his good diet.]

40 Grandibus gelicidijs fluctuantibus super aquaticum elementum fluentis fere ad fores humanas instar clataclismi / uel diliuij Noe, batillarius meus bonus amicus, expses et non macte adiuuet ipsum deus habens lesuram plenam tabi / uel tabo, habet carinam gelatam in ea onustam auri uel argento, electri uel plumbo, cupri uel ferro, calibis uel stanno, eris uel auricalco, et ordiorum uel frumentis, fabarum uel pisis diuersaturum patriarum frugi mancipi cordi et odiens omne quod est nauci.

[Great pieces of ice are floating on the watery element that is flowing almost to people's doors, like a cataclysm or a Noah's flood; [meanwhile] my good friend the boatman – without hope and not honoured, may God help him, having a wound full of corrupt matter – has a frozen boat loaded with gold or silver, electrum or lead, copper or iron, steel or tin, bronze or brass, and barley or corn, beans or peas, of diverse countries, dear to the heart of the purchaser, and he hates everything that is of no value.]

41 Satrapis regijs vexatis valde corde insurreccione communium de Normannia satellites et homines armorum fecerunt magnas expensas circa sellas frenos / uel –na ephifies et capistros / uel –tra et sunt prompti ad assultandum monia villarum uel ad pugnandum in planis pascuis non obstante quod homines pacifici domi excercentes nundinas mercata et exequias pro animabus ami[f. 99v]corum suorum desiderant inducias et bonas fortunas.

[Because the king's military leaders are greatly troubled in heart by the revolt of the common people of Normandy, retainers and men at arms have incurred great expenses on saddles, bridles, horse-collars and halters, and they are ready to assault the defences of towns or to fight in the open fields, notwithstanding that men of peace at home attending fairs, markets and funeral services for the souls of their friends desire truces and good fortunes.]

42 Quibus epulis vescentur illustres et proceres isto penali tempore quadagesimali, decima parte / uel decime partis anni, nisi ficibus, racemis, dactilis et nucibus de quibus aliquam comeditur lac

amigdoliga[t?]um [*recte amigdalatum?*], *dulcissimum / uel -ium omnium fructuum, et alia lauta a quibus nullum verbum loquitur inter pauperes et comunes.*

[With what banquets are the distinguished and the nobility fed at this penitential time of Lent, the tenth part of the year, unless with figs, raisins, dates and nuts, from which almond milk is eaten by some, the sweetest of all fruits, and other sumptuous things no word of which is spoken among poor and common people.]

43 *Quem interest dominum meum peramare nisi me qui conor / uel nitor cum omnibus subtilitatibus meis ad agendum honorem suum et vtilitatem meam?*

[Whom does it belong to my lord to love except me, who try (or endeavour) with all my subtlety to work for his honour and my advantage?]

44 *Album pellem decentem corpus sapientem animam qui est iturus Londonias insignitum miles de rege, cum venerit domum et vsurus deauratis calcaribus decebit bene roboratum / robore fortem que audacem belli dispensare dominam de proceribus procreatam.*

[A man with a white skin, a handsome body and a wise spirit who is about to go to London to be dubbed a knight by the king, when he comes home wearing gilt shoes will be fit, being strong in vigour and bold in war, to marry a lady of noble birth.]

45 *Legisperitorum aliqui perspicaces ingenij / uel ingenio / uel ingenia largi conscienciam, qui habent magnam voluntatem eundi Londonias ad prosequendam placita et querelas, habent causam non sequendi ab hominibus consciencionis quia deo iudice in die iudicij discussore illi sunt qui timebunt valde pro peccatis suis.*

[Those lawyers who are sharp-sighted by disposition, wide of conscience and have a great desire to go to London to prosecute pleas and suits, should not be followed by conscientious men because when God is the trial judge at the Day of Judgment, the lawyers are those who will fear greatly on account of their sins.]

46 *Sepis acidissimis / uel -iuis omni ciborum homini patris mei obviato in vico cui seruietur cum alecibus rubijs ad iantaculum suum, ille et ego ememus bato pleno huiusmodi.*

[Because onions are the sharpest of all foods, having met in the street the servant of my father who is being served with red herrings at his dinner, he and I are buying a bushel full of them.]

47 *Sancti Petri ecclesia de Bellocliuo electi capitis tocius cristianitatis est confortabile vsui magistrali tecto / uel domate bene cooperte cum plumbilaminis et area bene strata cum tegulis quod omnes homines nescunt operari; qui est qui iuit dictum / uel ad dicendum exequias suas?*

[The Beccles church of St Peter, the chosen leader of all Christendom, is a strong building, roofed or domed in a masterly way, well covered with lead and the floor well paved with tiles, which all men do not know how to work with. Who is it who has gone to say his funeral service?]

Expliciunt latinitates. [Here end the latins.]

[fol. 100r] *Incipiunt latinitates de termino Pascali domini anno supradicto.* [Here begin the latins of Easter term in the year of the Lord aforesaid.]

48 *Scolarum surgencium mane in Mayo / uel in mense May confortabilissimo / uel -iuo / confortabilissimi / uel -iui omnium temporum tocius anni quod deus et nullus <hom - deleted> terrenus vnificat vsui humano, quia deus et non homo habet potestatem tantum, et Johannes frater meus et Willelmus cognatus meus aliqua sequitur ab alijs socijs ad siluam quo manetur / statur / uel sistitur nimis diu a magistro ieiuo expectante regressum eorum.*

[With scholars rising early in May, or in the month of May, the most comfortable of all times of the whole year, which God and no earthly person unifies for human use, because God and no man has such power, both John my brother and William my relation are followed in some way by others of their fellows to the wood, where they will stay for a very long time while the master goes hungry, awaiting their return.]

49 Faber qui est qui arcebit babatum equinum in clauati heri in angario ipsemet, uel saltem famulus suus, dignus malagracie / uel -gracia pro facto illo et neque vxor neque filia sue deuitabitur a famule dominicis solitorum / uel solitis tenere / uel ad tenendum eum consuetudinarium eorum.

[The smith, who is the person who prevented the horse-shoe from being nailed on yesterday with duress, [is] himself, or at least his servant, worthy of disgrace for the fact, and both his wife and his daughter shall be shunned by the servants on the demesnes of those accustomed to give him their custom.]

50 Arborum et herbarum et omnium arbustorum uiuificancium et florencium isto delectabili mense May iuuentuti cuiuslibet digne ciuitatis et opidi placito cum solacio scolares Bellicliui nobilis burgi nominati capitis Suffolchie solennizant et faciunt solacia diebus festiuis.

[Now that the trees and herbs and all plantations grow and flower in this delightful month of May, greatly pleasing the youth of each worthy city and town with agreeable comfort, the scholars of the noble borough of Beccles, named the chief in Suffolk, celebrate and enjoy solace on festival days.]

51 Ducum, comitum, marchionum, baronum, militum, armigerorum, et vniuersorum procerum equitancium ad parlamentum tenendum Londonijs nobilissime ciuitatis Anglie decimo septimo die Maij, archipresules et episcopi consecrati capita sacerdocij docti sensus et sancti vitas sunt recturi consencias et gubernaturi vitas.

[Dukes, earls, marquesses, barons, knights, esquires and all the nobility are riding to the parliament to be held in London, the most noble city of England, on 17 May, while those who are consecrated as archbishops and bishops, the leaders of the priesthood, learned in judgment and holy of life, are to rule consciences and regulate lives.]

52 Puerorum qui sunt circumdaturi aruambula istis diebus rogacionum quibus al[ius] non plus parcitur vni quam alij <aliquibus – deleted> aliquibus; qui sunt infirmi deus conferat bonam sanitatem.

[Of the boys who are about to go around in the field-walking on these Rogation days, one is not being spared to one more than others to others; as for those who are not well, may God confer good health on them.]

[fol. 100v]

53 Quem tedebit nisi magistrum docciorem duorum suorum fratrum ignaue suorum discipulorum, quorum aliqui optusi ingenia et rudi condiciones dicunt amicis suis, 'parentes qui exhibitis nos ad scolam ne faciatis sumptus vlterius circa nos quia nos sumus illi qui nunquam erimus uel erunt clerici'.

[Who shall be wearied except the master, the more learned of his two brethren, at the slackness of his pupils, of whom some – dull in nature and rude in condition – say to their friends, 'the parents who maintain us at school, may they never incur too great expenses on our behalf, for we are those who shall never become clerks?']

54 Piscatoribus capientibus pisces: lucios <lucis>, dentrices <pikis>, murenas <laumpreys>, luciculos <pikerelis>, menusas <menouris>, rochias <rochis>, percas <perchis>, capitones <melleris thombis> et anguillas <and elis>, ego sum ille qui laceraui / uel –uit plagam suam et si ita dicam sum homo qui nunquam fuit reprobatus quia sum illud quod sum et illud quod deus plasmavit.

[While the fishers are taking fishes – lucas, pikes, lampreys, pickerels, minnows, roaches, perches, millers' thumbs and eels – I am the person who has broken their net, and if I may say so, I am a man who has never been condemned because I am what I am, and that which God made me.]

55 Campanas pulsantibus / uel campanis pulsatis exactissime apud Sanctum Petrum vbi mora / moracio / uel commoracio fit a clericis parochialibus pulsantibus et vbi sepe comeditur et bibitur mane, fratre meo tracto illuc per manicam ad opitulandum / uel ad adiuuandum illos; vtriusque nostrum duorum alter erit sacerdos et alter frater.

[The bells are ringing most accurately at St Peter's where the parish clerks are staying to ring them

and where there is often eating and drinking early in the morning, so I have drawn my brother by the sleeve to help them; of the two of us, one is going to be a priest and the other a friar.]

56 *Magister noster gestiens esse agnitor herbarum vult prius esse factor alphabeti, quia volenti fieri bono cognitori herbarum expedit corrogare illas in abedario, et ideo vigintivnus <clericus uel – deleted> scholaris / uel scolares ficit / uel fecerunt vigintitres planicies in orto magistri nostri pro <trib – deleted> vigintitribus litteris alphabeti vbi docti gramatici possunt viderere viridia, alba et crocia que sunt colores confortabiles.*

[Our master, wishing to become an expert on plants, wishes first to be a maker of an alphabet, because it is expedient to one wishing to become good at understanding plants to call them in alphabetical order, and therefore twenty-one scholars have made twenty-three flat spaces in our master's garden for the twenty-three letters of the alphabet, where learned grammarians may see green, white and yellow which are comfortable colours.]

57 *Miror qualiter aqua limpha uel latex possit statere / uel staturire super cacumina moncium scilicet contingit in <qil – deleted> quilibetd [recte quibuslibet?] patris monstruosis in quibus compariuntur multa monstra tam ab indignis quam ab aduenis illas partes visitantibus.*

[I wonder how pure or liquid water can lie on the peaks of mountains, as happens in those [?] exotic countries, in which many strange things are seen by those who live there and by incomers visiting those parts.]

<Added: 58 *Ego hodie clam surripi et peditentauit in angulum et ibidem latui sicut lepus in campo pro timore ferulatoris.*>

[Today I got up secretly and stepped into a corner and skulked like a hare in a field for fear of the bearer of the ferule.]

[fol. 101r]

Incipiunt latinitates de termino Mich'. [Here begin the latins of Michaelmas term.]

59 *Expedit accidenciam fratris mei scribi et scriptor non habet festinacionem scribendi illa.*

[It is expedient that [a letter should] be written about my brother's accident, but the writer has no haste in writing these things.]

60 *Socie, compara mihi denariatam allecum et quodcunque solueris reddam tibi.*

[Fellow, provide me with a pennyworth of herrings and whatever you pay I will return to you.]

61 *Multam bonam doctrinam audire in scola lectam et modicum reportare non decorat clericum imo dedecorat illum curantibus non magis tamen trutannis qui nunquam intendunt vigere quorum amicos magne expense facte circa eos grauant valde, et idio bone puer attende.*

[To hear much good teaching read in school and to bring away little of it is of no honour to a clerk, indeed it dishonours him to those who are in charge of him, not more however than does truants who never intend to do well, whose great expenses greatly burden their friends, and therefore, good child, take heed.]

62 *Multo bono vino bibito Bellicliui tempore nundinarum et multis friuolis locutis ibidem a quam pluribus cauponum et cocorum occecatorum conciencias in inuis care vendendo victualia intererit deflere deflectus suos existencium proprius morti sue focitan quam estimant.*

[Now that much good wine has been drunk at Beccles at the time of the fairs and many frivolous things spoken there by many people, it belongs to the consciences of devious innkeepers and cooks who are selling victuals dearly that they weep, for they are nearer to their death, perhaps, than they think.]

63 *Gramine viride et floribus turgentibus <florichyng> in Maio, multum lactis exibeta <is zeuyn> a bestijs plus tunc quam alijs temporibus et idio iuuenulis obuiato cum lechitis suis ad mulgendum,*

scolares illis *temporibus* habent *bonam voluntatem* sequendi illas *et* comedendi quaccum <crem>. Quorsum venit magister? Nescio quorsum.

[When the grass [is] green and the flowers blooming in May, much milk is produced by the animals, more than at other times, and therefore scholars who meet young women with their milking pails at these times have a good will to follow them and to eat cream. For what purpose is the master coming? I do not know why.]

64 *Omnium* pissium in mari allec est commissimus pissis ex quod coctum, assatum super exustum *et* pist[at?]um fit bonus cibus infinatibus [*for* infirmitatibus] in tempore quadragesimali, alio edulio deficiente.

[Of all the fish in the sea, the herring is the most eatable of fishes which, being cooked, roasted on coals and baked, makes good food for the sick in the time of Lent when other food is lacking.]

65 *Mibi* opposito *et* declinacione facta, tempus est iantandi.

[Now that I have been questioned and the declension has been done, it is time for dinner.]

66 *Mibi* sapienciori socio meo opponetur deficius fratre meo qui sedet in scolis humi addissens gramaticam.

[It is more difficult for me who am being questioned by my wiser fellow than for my brother who sits in school on the ground learning grammar.]

67 *Melius* esset ieiunanti non ieiunare quam ieiunare cogitare mala de suis proximis uel de suis amicis.

[It is better not to fast during a fast than to fast thinking ill of one's neighbours or of one's friends.]

68 *Susceptum* est *mibi* discere quam a magistro vapulare.

[I have undertaken to learn rather than to be beaten by the master.]

69 *Nunquid* ne fuit iste grates quas ego habeo pro meo labore nunc passum repetere meum male pensatum.

[Surely this was not the thanks that I should have for my labour, now to remember my badly thought out passage [of writing?].]

[fol. 101v]

70 Quos Donatum scire cordialiter oportebit nisi nos quibus in illo libro indies oponetur?

[To whom does it belong to know Donatus by heart but us, who are questioned in that book every day?]

71 *Vtrum* istorum duorum hominum luctatorum estimas preualere? Estimo per possibilitatem quod homo superior optinebit / uel de inferiori homine preualebit.

[Which of these two men wrestling do you think will prevail? I think perhaps that the man on top will obtain it (or will prevail over the man underneath).]

72 *Iste* homo habet bonum expressiuum *et* homo per sua verba facilius perpendere valeatis.

[This man has a good way of expressing himself, and you may value a man more easily by his words.]

73 *Leccionibus* meis lectis *et* libro meo clauso, tempus est iantandi, quia iantare tempestiue confortat cor meum.

[Now that my reading assignments are read and my book is shut, it is time for dinner, and to dine at the right time comforts my heart.]

74 *Pater* meus est bene expertus in diuersis laboribus *et* in diuersis idiomatibus <langagis> bene eruditus.

[My father is very expert in various kinds of work and well learned in various languages.]

75 *Ipse qui habet animum indeuotum <euele wil> ad opus suum in hoc proficere non preualebit.*
[He who has an evil will to his work will not succeed in making progress in it.]

76 *Socie, quare consternaris a meo opponi qui tibi opponam et alijs talibus?*
[Fellow, why are you alarmed at being questioned by me, who will question you and others like you?]

77 *In festo sancte Pasche appropinquante interest nostra scolarium esse amenorum corda.*
[At the approaching feast of holy Easter, it belongs to us as scholars to be well disposed in our hearts.]

78 *Labia mea madescunt quum video socium meum comedentem pomum.*
[My lips water when I see my fellow eating an apple.]

79 *Est magnum signum yemis quum folia arborum marcescunt.*
[It is a great sign of winter when the leaves of the trees become withered.]

80 *Quum clericus prodigalum exhau<rit – deleted>serit, dilapidauerit siue consumpserit pecuniam a suis amicis sibi traditam habetur in risu et dispectu ab omnibus suis consortibus.*
[When a prodigal clerk exhausts, demolishes or consumes the money delivered to him by his friends, he is held in mirth and contempt by all his fellows.]

81 *Si quis vult in etate <sua – deleted> decrepitata congaudere in sua florida iuuentute non definat laborare.*
[If anyone wishes to rejoice in old age, let him not limit his work in his flourishing youth.]

82 *Ego formido magistrum meum qui docet me in tempore discendi silencium obseruare.*
[I fear my master who teaches me to observe silence during the time of learning.]

83 *Ego sum ille qui vocor / uel qui vocatur optimus socius istius comitiue.*
[I am he who is called the best fellow of this county.]

84 *Equus compatris mei prosiliuit v[[]]tra sepem qui est altior me vno pede.*
[My godfather's horse jumped over a hedge that is higher than me by a foot.]

85 *Johannes, ego puto quod tu audiisti aliquos rumores mestificos quia tu sedes ita tristis / uel mestus.*
[John, I think that you have heard some sad news, because you are so sad or gloomy as you sit.]

86a *Tetillo –as, to tekelyn.*

86b *Domine, supplico vobis ne totuletis me quia sum valde tutillicus.*
[Sir, I pray you not to tickle me for I am very ticklish.]

87 *Ego habeo permonem <moule> super talem / uel super calcanium meum quem vellem pendere super tuum labium inferius. < Added in margin: pustula, postulosus, -a, -um.>*
[I have a mole on my heel which I would hang on your lower lip.]

88 *Si contingat Anglicos et Gallicos adinuicem dimicare, benignitas nostri saluatoris ita faueat Anglicis quod in Gallicos valeant preualere.*
[If it happens that the English and the French fight together, may the good will of our Saviour favour the English so that they may prevail against the French.]

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NOTES

- 1 On this subject, see now Thomson 1979; Orme 1989, 73–151; Orme 1995, 86–127.
- 2 Meech 1934, 70–83; *idem* 1935a, 1012–32; *idem* 1935b, 81–125.
- 3 Thomson 1979, 169–78; *idem* 1984, 70–74.
- 4 Orme 2006, 372.
- 5 Cheney 1967, 187; Gransden 1973, 4.
- 6 Page 1907, 337.
- 7 On this work, see Orme 2006, 101.
- 8 On this work, see *ibid.*, 94.
- 9 On Alexander and Cato, see *ibid.*, 90–92, 98.
- 10 CUL, Additional MS 2830, fol. 99r; above, p. 338.
- 11 CUL, MS 2830, fol. 52v; above, p. 330.
- 12 NRO, NCC, will register Doke, fol. 5r.
- 13 SROI, Suffolk Archdeaconry Court wills, IC/AA2/1/25.
- 14 NRO, Norwich Diocesan Registers, DN/Reg. 5/9, fol. 65r; TNA, E 179/45/111; Orme 2006, 356.
- 15 NRO, Norwich Diocesan Registers, DN/Reg. 3/6, fols 257v, 271v.
- 16 *Ibid.*, DN/Reg. 4/7, fol. 20r.
- 17 SROI, FC 94/L1/2/16.
- 18 On Leland, see Emden 1957–59, ii, 1129; Hunt 1964, 163–93; Thomson 1979, 4–12, 40–44; *idem* 1984, xii and *passim*; and *idem*, article in Matthew and Harrison, 2004.
- 19 There are also sentences on fols 27r–40v. This is a treatise by John Leland, possibly adapted by Drury; since the contents are more fanciful and their origin in doubt, they are not considered or reproduced here.
- 20 e.g. Orme 1995, 276–94.
- 21 See for example Orme 1985, 73–121, and *idem* 1995, 261–94.
- 22 Orme 1989, 105.
- 23 Orme 2006, 132.
- 24 On ferules, see Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 95.
- 25 Orme 1984, 45.
- 26 On Donatus and his most popular work, the *Ars Minor*, see Orme 2006, 28–29; Thomson 1979, 11; and *idem* 1984, 1–64.
- 27 Orme 1984, 44; McFarlane 1973, 245.
- 28 The verb *ianto* is also used of other meals than breakfast in Worcester 1969, e.g. 38.
- 29 Ridgard 2009, 23.
- 30 Richardson 1942, 331–450.
- 31 Swanson 1989, 42.
- 32 NRO, NCC, will register Wylbey, fol. 93v.
- 33 Cokayne 1910–59, v, 482–86; Jacob 1938, 469–70.
- 34 ‘A to, foot, a to. It is soo tow it is not 3it sothyn j-now’. In modern English this would be ‘In two, foot, in two. It is so tough it is not cooked enough.’ Could this be a dance song, in which a slow foot is likened to a semi-cooked steak? Or is there dancing while the food cooks?
- 35 The manuscript latinises ‘Beccles’ as *Belluschiuus*, interpreting its meaning as ‘beautiful hill or cliff’, whereas modern scholarship prefers to explain it as ‘pasture by a stream’.

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Abbreviations

CUL	Cambridge University Library
NCC	Norwich Consistory Court
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich
TNA	The National Archives (Kew)