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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 aliquantum 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 ablusione, 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 capud 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 aliquantulum 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(ro)ponario  
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~~ 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 iunctorum et aliquantulum curvatorum maxillam leviter percutere.
- 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 percutere 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<br>extensa manu pollicem et indicem coniunge;<br>ceteris digitis ad volam reiectis.   | For the sign for prior<br>with hand extended join thumb and forefinger together<br>with the remaining fingers folded into the hollow of the<br>hand.   |
| 106 | Pro subprior<br>pollicem et medium coniunge.  | For subprior<br>join thumb and middle finger together.   |
| 107 | Pro tercio prior<br>pollicem et medicum coniunge.   | For third prior<br>join thumb and third finger together.   |
| 108 | Pro quatro prior<br>pollicem et minimum coniunge digitum.   | For fourth prior<br>join thumb and little finger together.   |
| 109 | Pro precentore<br>ut supra pro cantu.   | For precentor<br>as above for chant.   |
| 110 | Pro succentore<br>pollice et minimo digito extensis summitates<br>trium digitorum curvatorum prope os applica et<br>parum move dextrorsum et sinistrorsum.            | For succentor<br>with thumb and little finger extended place the tips of<br>the three curved fingers near the mouth and slightly<br>move them right and left.  |
| 111 | Pro archidiacono et diacono<br>premisso signo magistri fac crucem super<br>frontem.   | For archdeacon and dean<br>having first made the sign for master make a cross on<br>the forehead.  |
| 112 | Pro sacrista<br>ut supra pro campana.   | For sacrist<br>as above for bell.  |
| 113 | Pro selerario<br>premisso signo magistri claude pugnum et<br>indicem extende et pone super frontem et hoc<br>signum fit pro bone.                                     | For cellarer<br>having first made the sign for master close the fist,<br>extend the forefinger and place it on the forehead. This<br>sign is also made for goods.                                      |
| 114 | Pro subcellerario<br>fac idem signum set minimum digitum extende.   | For subcellarer<br>make the same sign but extend the little finger.  |
| 115 | Pro coquinario<br>fac signum magistri et olorum ut supra.   | For kitchener<br>make the sign for master and for crockery as above.   |
| 116 | Pro infirmario<br>premisso signo magistri pone manum expansam<br>super pectus quod significat infirmitatem et con-<br>fessionem.                                      | For infirmarer<br>having first made the sign for master place the hand<br>spread over the chest which signifies infirmity and<br>confession.   |
| 117 | Pro camerario<br>premisso signo magistri expande manum et<br>statim digitos ad volam recollige similans mani-<br>cam flocci tenere.                                   | For chamberlain<br>having first made the sign for master spread the hand<br>and at once gather the fingers into the palm pretending<br>to take the sleeve of a frock.                                  |
| 118 | Pro subcamerario<br>idem facias set digitum minimum debes<br>extendere.   | For subchamberlain<br>you do the same but you ought to extend the little<br>finger.  |
| 119 | Pro monacho<br>cum pollice et indice tene capucium cuculle.   | For monk<br>with thumb and forefinger take hold of the hood of the<br>cowl.  |
| 120 | Pro hostilario<br>premisso signo magistri idem fac signum modice<br>trahens capucium versus terram et hoc signum<br>extraneorum.                                      | For hosteler<br>having first made the sign for master make the same<br>sign (as for monk) drawing the cowl slightly towards<br>the ground. This is also the sign for strangers.                        |
| 121 | Pro hospitalario<br>premisso signo magistri fac signum cum pollice<br>super mamillam sinistram.   | For hospitaler<br>having first made the sign for master make a sign with<br>the thumb over the left breast.  |
| 122 | Pro refectorio<br>pollice et minimo digito extensis tres alios digitos<br>recurvos et inclines deorsum versus terram tene;<br>et e contra facias pro subelemosinario. | For refectorer<br>with thumb and little finger extended hold the three<br>other fingers curved and inclined downwards towards<br>the ground. Alternatively you may make (this sign for)<br>subalmoner. |
| 123 | Pro elemosinario<br>premisso signo magistri manum aliquid tulum<br>cavatam expande movendo sursum et deorsum<br>quasi ponderans aliquid in manu tua; et hoc           | For almoner<br>having first made the sign for master spread the hand<br>slightly hollowed, moving it upwards and downwards<br>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 digitem 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 fore-  
finger.
- 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 tempus 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 prudentie 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<br/>ut supra pro sequencie.</p> <p>160 Pro homine<br/>indicem inflecte et ita lateraliter et leviter super<br/>mentum trahe.</p> <p>161 Pro signo senis<br/>ut supra pro servisia.</p> <p>162 Pro equo<br/>cum pollice et indice tene capillos anteriores<br/>super frontem.</p> <p>163 Pro signo loquendi<br/>cum extremitate indicis labia terge.</p> <p>164 Pro signo hilaritatis<br/>manum expansam contra os tene et parum move.</p> <p>165 Pro signo audiendi vel ascultandi<br/>indicem tene extentum contra aurem.</p> <p>166 Pro signo nesciendi<br/>cum indice erecto labia terge.</p> <p>167 Pro signo sapiencia<br/>ut supra pro sinapio.</p> <p>168 Pro iniuria<br/>clauso pugno indicem parum sursum elevando<br/>tene recurvum.</p> <p>169 Pro signo minuendi<br/>cum pollice et medio digito percutite in brachio<br/>quasi qui minuit.</p> <p>170 Pro signo boni<br/>pone pollicem sub mento.</p> <p>171 Pro signo complacencis<br/>pone pollicem in maxilla et alios digitos in alia<br/>maxilla et fac eos in mento blande collabi. Idem<br/>signum fac pro pulcritudine incipiendo tum ad<br/>oculos et signum magis dilatando.</p> <p>172 Pro signo mali<br/>digitis contra faciem sparsis simula unguem avis<br/>aliquid lacerando attrahentis.</p> <p>173 Pro signo pacis et osculi<br/>interiorem partem manus expanse ori appone et<br/>econtra fac pro signo doni vel oblacionis vel<br/>offerorii.</p> <p>174 Pro signo tacendi<br/>ut supra pro signo pacis.</p> <p>175 Pro signo silencii<br/>clausum pugnum ori appone.</p> <p>176 Pro barba<br/>mentum tene cum dextra.</p> | <p>For fear<br/>as above for sequence.</p> <p>For man<br/>bend the forefinger and thus draw it sideways and<br/>lightly over the chin.</p> <p>For the sign for old man<br/>as above for (old) ale.</p> <p>For horse<br/>with thumb and forefinger take hold of the fringe of the<br/>hair on the forehead.</p> <p>For the sign for speaking<br/>stroke the lips with the end of the forefinger.</p> <p>For the sign for cheerfulness<br/>hold the hand spread against the mouth and move it<br/>slightly.</p> <p>For the sign for hearing or listening<br/>hold the extended forefinger against the ear.</p> <p>For the sign of not knowing<br/>stroke the lips with the forefinger erect.</p> <p>For the sign for wisdom<br/>as above for mustard.</p> <p>For injury<br/>having closed the fist raise the forefinger upwards<br/>slightly and hold it curved.</p> <p>For the sign for blood letting<br/>strike on the arm with thumb and middle finger as one<br/>who lets blood.</p> <p>For the sign for good<br/>place the thumb beneath the chin.</p> <p>For the sign for pleasure<br/>place the thumb on one cheek and the other fingers on<br/>the other cheek and make them gently slide onto the<br/>chin. Make the same sign for beauty by beginning at<br/>the eyes making the sign more pronounced.</p> <p>For the sign for bad<br/>with fingers spread against the face imitate the claw of<br/>a grasping bird tearing at something.</p> <p>For the sign for peace and for kiss<br/>place the inside of the spread hand to the mouth.<br/>Alternatively make (it) for the sign for gift or oblation<br/>or offertory.</p> <p>For the sign for keeping silence<br/>as above for the sign for peace.</p> <p>For the sign for silence<br/>place the closed fist on the mouth.</p> <p>For the sign for beard<br/>hold the chin with the right (hand).</p> |
| <p>SINGNA PRO DORMITORIO</p> <p>177 Pro dormitorio<br/>premisso signo domus fac signum dormicionis ut<br/>supra pro matutinis et pro refectorio.</p> <p>178 Pro vestibus generaliter<br/>ut supra pro vestiario.</p> <p>179 Pro femoralibus<br/>simila ut manum in femore de deorsum trahas<br/>quasi qui se femoralibus vestit.</p> <p>180 Pro signo stamini</p>  | <p>(f.80r.) SIGNS FOR THE DORMITORY</p> <p>For dormitory<br/>having made the sign for a building make the sign for<br/>sleeping as above for matins and for refectory.</p> <p>For clothes generally<br/>as above for keeper of the vestry.</p> <p>For drawers<br/>pretend that you are drawing your hand on your thigh<br/>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.

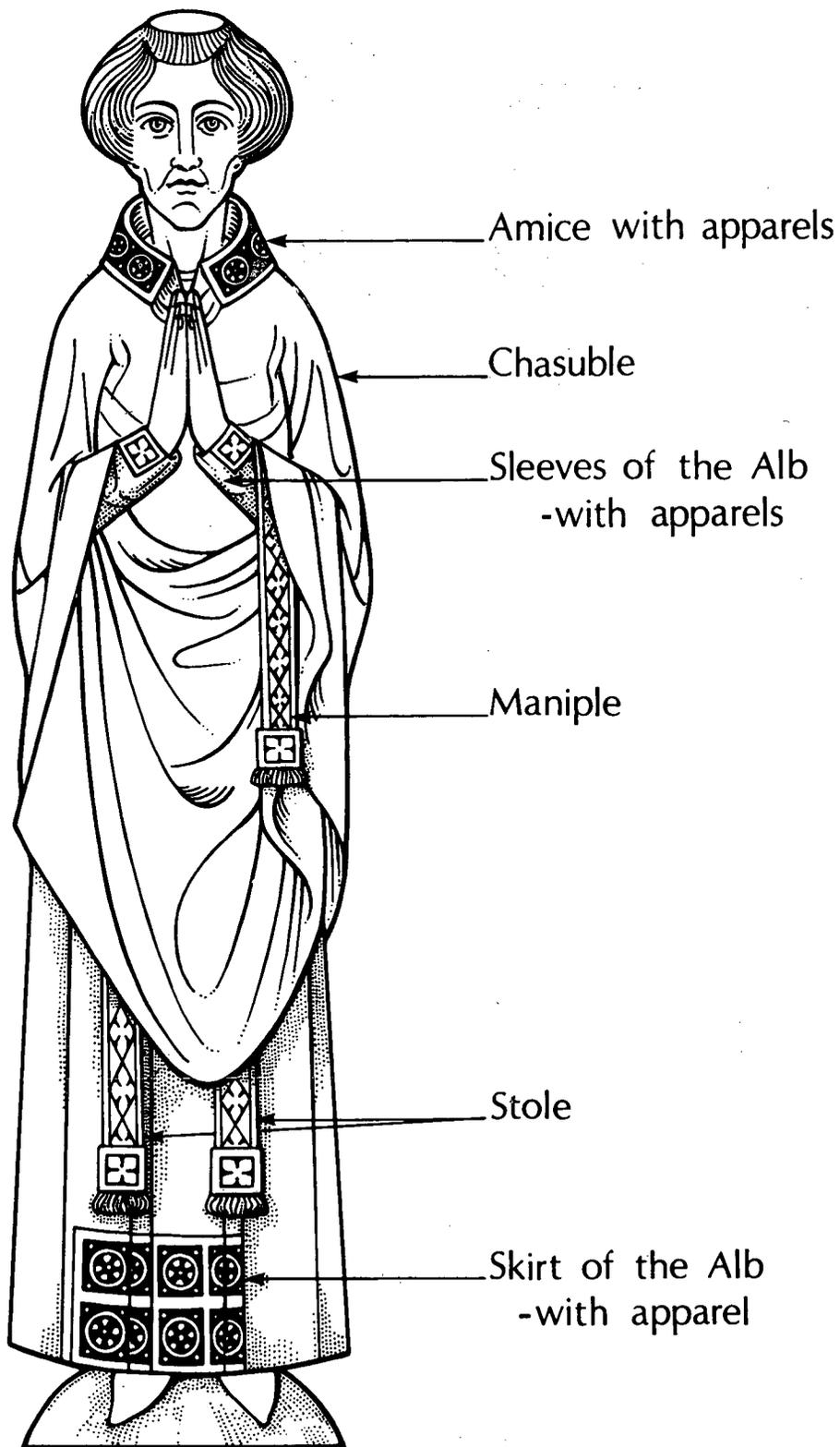


FIG. 42 – A priest in his vestments, c. 1360, based on the brass of Edmund de Brundish. For the sign for amice, see no. 9; chasuble, 4; alb, 5; maniple, 7; and stole, 6.

## 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 pittance 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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