







On the facing page, there are a series of Latin sayings which are then repeated.<sup>6</sup> The name Johannes Bryne is nestled under the repetition and above the scribbles. The 'Ego sum bonus puer' line is then repeated a couple of times before the letters of the alphabet are written. Lines from 'ego sum' appear on several other folios, especially those at the end.

Another constant throughout the beginning and ending folios is the line *Iste liber constat Johannes Byrne*.

New College Library, Oxford, MS 160, f. 2r [detail]

Under the inscription for the book is one partial line from the list of sayings (*Si mea penna valet melior*) and the English saying 'many hondys make lette worke'.

The final added text of note is the prayer on fol. 4v. that calls upon the wounds of Christ. It begins *In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Per virtutem Dei sint medicina mei Jhesu pia crux et passio Christi Vulnera quinque sint medicina mei* and proceeds to call upon not only Mary but also Katherine and Cecilia. These texts which have been added give the book a unique flavour of a youth trying to learn his penmanship and note down familiar sayings and prayers.

The overall effect of this book of hours suggests that it is a student volume, used perhaps as a textbook. Several observations lead to this conclusion. The material on the opening and closing folios, and especially the frequent repetition of *Ego sum bonus puer*, certainly raises the suspicion that the volume was created for student use as does the repetition of material. Once the Office of the

meals or prayers for going to church and to be said at certain times in church. All of these things are found at the beginning of many primers, for example, in New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M.487, a fifteenth-century English book of hours. As Wieck contends, children, like Chaucer's little child, learned basic literacy from books of hours.<sup>7</sup> John Bryne was perhaps a youth who would seem to have used the pages at the beginning and end of his manuscript to further his study of the basics and to focus on his penmanship.

Students learned to chant the psalms as part of the memorization of this important portion of virtually all medieval liturgy. As I have shown in my article on education of young girls in medieval England, children learned to chant the psalms and sing simple responses as part of their education.<sup>8</sup> The ability to read and to sing are frequently listed in tandem, as they were apparently often learned in tandem. Chaucer's memorable portrait of the 'litel clergeon' describes the curriculum of the medieval schoolhouse as offering precisely the sort of education that would enable a scholar to sing as well as read. The scholar learned 'to seyn, to syngen and to rede',<sup>9</sup> from a prymer, the middle English term for the book of hours, as an integral part of their studies.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that John Bryne attended a monastic school and learned to chant the Office of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead. Or was he being taught at home by a private tutor? These intriguing questions will not be answered conclusively, but in the diversity of uses for *horae*, this 'good boy' had music in his manuscript.

There is an intriguing reference to a Johannes Bryne in the records of the church in E. Odstock, Wilton where he is listed as becoming the priest in 1510 after the death of Rogeri Servynton and being succeeded after his death in 1525 by Thomas Benet.<sup>11</sup> This would not be an impossible timeline for MS 160 if Johannes Byrne owned it as a student in the mid to late fifteenth century in preparation for the priesthood and still served as a priest until 1525.

Books of hours came in all shapes and sizes. They were used not only by lay people but also by nuns, monks, and priests. Jesse Mann and I have argued elsewhere for the identification of a different book of hours as one that was created for a priest.<sup>12</sup> The relatively large script, the presence of musical notation with cues, the carefully added interpolations of the Ave Maria, and the extensive penmanship exercises at the beginning and end point to the possibility that New College MS 160 was intended for the use of a scholar who would one day become a priest.

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<sup>7</sup> Roger S. Wieck, 'The Book of Hours', in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (Kalamazoo, MI, 2001), pp. 476–77. Wieck specifically discusses this manuscript from the Morgan Library and includes in Figure 1 fol. 1r from the manuscript. See further Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT, 2003), chapter 7.

<sup>8</sup> Anne Bagnall Yardley, 'The Musical Education of Young Girls in Medieval English Nunneries', in *Young Choristers 650 1700*, ed. Susan Boynt 6(r)-3(ganB)-5(-)-26Ergq0 0 0 1 529.8 186.98 Tm0 g0 G 0.00876 Tc[(7.)] TJET@0.0000 0 612 792 reW\*ñBT/F3 9.96 T