Initially, what I call “Arnold’s Book” was a manuscript miscellany compiled by Richard Arnold, a London haberdasher who played an active role in the complicated mercantile world of late fifteenth-century England. This sort of miscellany, a kind of “household book,” was hugely common in late-medieval English culture. What is unique is the afterlife of Arnold’s miscellany; despite the popularity of miscellanies, Arnold’s Book was the only English medieval miscellany ever to be printed on a handpress, and texts known from his book remained in print until at least 1608. Above all, Arnold’s Book highlights the perhaps surprising popularity of the law in late-medieval England. Our modern perceptions of popularity seem to be linked firmly to entertainment, Chaucerian “solace.” Yet manuscript and early print evidence challenges any attempt to apply such a modern definition of popularity uncritically to culture of the late-medieval period. It is worth recalling that Chaucer himself was concerned with “sentence” as well as “solace,” and fifteenth-century audiences seem to have been even more interested in the former than the latter. Likewise, I contend that Arnold’s translated legal acquisitions figure largely into the decision to print his manuscript: its English law in English was desired by the literate classes, and the mass reproduction newly offered by print capitalized on the (currently unacknowledged) popularity of this material already well-established in manuscript.

From the 1540s onward there was a boom of English legal printing, but scholars have rarely connected this innovation to earlier printing efforts, much less to the manuscript era. The lacuna in English law may be more apparent than real. The legal materials contained in manuscript household
books have gone without sustained exploration by scholars. Likewise, unofficial legal translations in early print continue to be little known. As I will show, both of these types of sources contain examples of law in English. Arnold’s Book remains a normal example of one particular kind of household book, and in its printing, I argue, it tested the market for vernacular legal works. The interest Arnold’s Book generated in print seems to be a missing link between medieval manuscript culture and the eventual burst of vernacular legal printing.

While sensational, none of the events of Arnold’s life are particularly unprecedented for merchants of his era. Active from the 1470s into the 1490s, Richard Arnold appears in city documents as “haberdasher and citizen of London,” while in royal and international notarial documents he is styled “merchant” or “esquire.” Though never an alderman, Arnold moved among the highest levels of London society. From the 1470s to the 1490s Arnold was involved with the important London Bridge rents and his parish, St. Magnus the Martyr. By the 1490s he had sons old enough to act as his factor in Spain, and to be accused of stealing gold rings. He owned the ship Christopher Arnold, which was taken by pirates traveling between London and Zeeland; with his brother-in-law’s assistance, the Garter King of Arms, John Wrythe (a family later known as Wriothesley), Arnold got the matter brought before the King of the Romans, Maximilian I. He also traveled himself. In 1488 he spoke imprudently enough to a Lombard in Berghen op Zoom that he was incarcerated in Sluys on suspicion of being a spy. Apparently Margaret

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2. Kew, National Archives C 1/52/1. After signature A, Arnold’s Book is foliated in the lower margin; in the first signature I will cite as “Arnold” by signature, and thereafter by folio. I have not examined enough copies of Arnold’s Book to make claims about issues, and will therefore cite the copy available on Early English Books Online as a de facto “standard” copy, and the most accessible to my audience (STC 782). Arnold, fol. 46v is undated, but the London Bridge Wardens mentioned served together only one year, 1472–73. See Reginald Sharpe, ed. Calendar of London Letter-Books: L Edward IV–Henry VII (London, Corporation of the City of London: 1912), fol. 104b. This provides one of the earlier dates apparent in the Book. Arnold, fols. 85r–87r is an example of a document suggesting dates in the 1490s. STC 782. In this booke is conteyne the names of ye baylifs custos mairs and sherefs of the cite of londo[n]. [Adriaen van Berghen: Antwerp, 1503?].

3. Arnold, fol. 88v (Nicholas Arnold); Kew, National Archives C 1/218/31 (Thomas Arnold). That Richard is named in the Chancery case rather than Thomas suggests that Thomas might not yet have reached his legal majority.

of York, Dowager Duchess of Burgundy cleared Arnold’s name, saying about him that “she knew well the said Richard” and that “he was a good and honest merchant.”

Arnold acted as a purveyor for Sir Reginald Bray’s attempts to provender Henry’s army in 1489; Bray was well known for his close associations with the king. I can find no evidence that Arnold lived beyond the early 1490s either in his Book or elsewhere. Indeed, according to Windsor Herald, Charles Wriothesley, Richard Arnold’s heir was his sister Eleanor Arnold, who was dead before 1502. Arguing with Maximilian I, working for Reginald Bray, and being spoken for by Margaret of York all suggest an international merchant at the height of a long career, a career illustrated in his Book.

Much early print was appropriated from the manuscript tradition: Seth Lerer formulates an “idea not merely of an early modem print culture but maybe even of a ’medieval’ print culture—a culture of appropriation that blurs the historical boundaries between manuscripts and early printed books.” Printers set type from manuscript copies of literature frequently, and scholars

5. See Arnold, fols. 88r–89r. The initial offense apparently occurred during the annual Easter Mart, one of the two largest fairs of the year in Berghen op Zoom.
6. See ibid., fol. 44v.
7. Francis Douce claimed Arnold lived into the 1520s to oversee both complete editions of his Book. Douce based his opinion on that of Stowe. Francis Douce, The Customs of London, Otherwise Called Arnold’s Chronicle, 2nd ed. (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1811), pp. v–vi. This notion continues to be repeated, for example in “Arnold, Richard (d. c.1521),” by Peter C. Herman, in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/681 (accessed January 20, 2013). The chronicle as we have it in the earlier edition extends to 1502–3. While this may be Arnold’s own material, I think it is more likely that it was brought up to date with this material before its printing, just as Peter Treveris made sure this chronicle was updated again in the 1520s.
have shown that they did this in the cases of works by Chaucer and Lydgate, among other medieval authors. However, printers employed manuscript copies of popular nonliterary texts as well: notable among these were books of hours and law texts. Arnold’s Book is another example of such a manuscript exemplar moving into print.

Since we are used to thinking of the book of hours as the most popular form of manuscript of the Middle Ages, such books provide a good comparison with legal texts in tracing the development of “medieval print.” Nigel Morgan has traced over 800 extant copies of the manuscript book of hours made for use in England: Mary Erler identifies twenty-nine surviving editions of the Sarum book of hours printed before 1500 alone. In comparison, Donald Skemer has found nearly 500 manuscript copies of statute collections extant from medieval England; if we add copies of other legal texts such as registers of writs (a type of formulary) and law reports, the mass of English law manuscripts must nearly equal that of books of hours. In contrast to bespoke manuscript production, printing was speculative, and the expense of printing an unpopular edition might only be recouped decades later, or not at all. In order to cover the risk of printing anything new or chancy, printers had to maintain strong catalogs of marketable stock, and in the early days of printing such proof could only come from the manuscript tradition. Books of hours and law books began to be printed at the same time and were among the earliest books printed in England. Legal texts were printed as early as the


12. For example, the mammoth La Graunde Abridgement for which “almost a half century elapsed before the full edition of the Abridgement was disposed of and the producers’ capital refunded”: Howard Jay Graham, “‘The Book That ‘Made’ the Common Law: The First Printing of Fitzherbert’s La Graunde Abridgement, 1514–16,” Law Library Journal 51 (1958): 100–116, p. 113.
reign of Richard III, and law printing was standardized by the end of Henry VII’s reign.\textsuperscript{13}

In manuscript, Arnold’s Book represents a little-studied subset of household books particularly invested in law that I will call “civic legal miscellanies.”\textsuperscript{14} Civic legal miscellanies had a long history before the print era, and it is striking to page through Arnold’s Book and other such volumes and find a sort of updated version of the Liber Horn, Liber Albus, and other volumes compiled for the London Guildhall by the early fourteenth-century chamberlain Andrew Horn and early fifteenth-century city clerk John Carpenter. Ralph Hanna places Horn’s compilation efforts within the context of a London community “committed to the production of large legal books for local use.”\textsuperscript{15} Hanna shows how Horn’s materials situated London civic law carefully within both statute law and national history.\textsuperscript{16} Hanna illustrates an apparently widely held belief that “this distinctive local culture possesses unique forms of life that must be preserved—in this case, as an allegedly petrified history, one of inarguable and immutable ‘ancient customs and liberties.’”\textsuperscript{17} However, this pretense at petrification was always in tension with the accretive nature of the texts so preserved. Horn’s collections were complete and compendious, but then so was Carpenter’s collection a hundred years later.

Individuals like Arnold collected selections of these standard Guildhall agglomerations, and added to them formulary-like materials collected from their own business lives, developing civic legal miscellanies personalized for specific owners’ uses. In this way individuals wrote themselves into the civic legal memory that preserved the historical and legal traditions making up London’s cultural history.\textsuperscript{18} As Hanna’s work would lead us to suspect, such miscellanies had already developed by the fourteenth century, and they develop further in the fifteenth century. London, British Library MS Egerton 2885, a compilation by a late fourteenth-century London fishmonger (as had been Horn before him), begins with a short chronicle before moving into London charters such as those copied in the Liber Horn, followed by selected legal materials pertaining to the fish trade itself. Likewise, London, British Library

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\textsuperscript{13} STC 9347, Statuta ap[u]d westmonasteriu[m] edita anno primo Regis Ricardi terciij [London: Machlinia, 1484?].


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 70.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 54.

\textsuperscript{18} Hanna describes the corporate part of this process on p. 59.
MS Additional 38131 includes historical texts, then copies of London charters and other London legal records, then laws pertinent to the fishmongers and merchant tailors of London. London, British Library MS Additional 37791 is similar to both of these fourteenth-century examples, with the exception that it adds material specific to King's Lynn, a town that shared Oxford's charter, that itself shared London's charter. Thus, Additional 37791 demonstrates how London miscellanies might retain their usefulness in locales far from the capital. All of the fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century examples of this form of which I am aware are in Latin and French.

After the early fifteenth century, civic legal miscellanies illustrate a strong preference for legal texts translated into English, a trend notable in many areas of professional English law. The most compendious example of this form of which I am aware is a set of manuscripts now at Trinity College, Cambridge and the British Library. These were ordered by the London draper, alderman, and sometime mayor Sir Thomas Cook and, based on the paper stocks, scribe, and Cook's career, seem to date to the late 1460s or 1470s. Linne Mooney calls the set an “Everyman encyclopedia of knowledge for a member of London's fifteenth-century merchant class” in three volumes. One concentrated on medicine. One was a complete copy of the New Statutes translated into English, and one contained history and London law. Copied by the Hammond Scribe, this expansive civic legal miscellany relates directly to Arnold's

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social milieu, for the Hammond Scribe also worked for John Wrythe, Arnold’s
director-in-law.24

Of the set, Cook’s volume of law and history texts most resembles Arnold’s
Book. Instead of a chronicler, Cook’s set includes short historical texts such
as a brief description of the founding of London and St. Peter’s, Cornhill
together with a legal dictionary of Old English terms. Cook’s book includes
the English charter of London liberties from Richard II’s reign also featured
in Arnold’s Book. As does Arnold’s Book, Cook’s book includes a collection
of the ancient confirmations and grants of London liberties and lists of the
customs due on a range of goods. The Hammond Scribe also assembled a for-
mulary not unlike Arnold’s, though these documents are not usually associ-
ated with Cook’s own life; unlike Arnold’s, Cook’s formulary may have been
copied from an exemplar.25 At the same time, Cook’s volume includes texts
Arnold’s Book does not, such as an English Ordo coronationis, and an English
translation of Nicholas Oresme’s De moneta.26

Copied in the decades immediately following Cook’s volumes, Arnold’s
Book is a model of its kind. Like many of these compilers in the fourteenth
and fifteenth centuries, Arnold prefaces his legal materials with a London
chronicle and moves quickly on to legal materials. Having provided a histori-
cal setting for his miscellany, Arnold follows the chronicle with an undated
English charter of the liberties of London, set forth like abbreviated statutes
or annotated tables of contents by chapter.27 This is followed by legal docu-
ments providing historical context: London’s charter granted by Henry I is
here together with Edward the Confessor’s granting of the Husting court and
William the Conqueror’s confirmation of the rights granted by Edward.28 Each
of these short texts was important to Horn, Carpenter, and other early Lon-
don compilers.29 Unlike most of Arnold’s Book, each of these early texts is in
Latin. Such short texts are followed by Richard II’s confirmation of London’s
liberties dated 1383: this is in English.30

25. For the list of documents, see Linne Mooney, Index of Middle English Prose: Manu-
109–14.
26. In fact, many fifteenth-century household books include at least some of this type
of historico-legal material: see, for example, London, British Library MSS Egerton 1995 and
Harley 2252 (John Collins’s Book); Oxford, Balliol College MS 354 (Richard Hill’s Book). Lists
of texts included in these volumes can be found in David R. Parker, The Commonplace Book in
27. Arnold, fols. 1–3v.
28. Ibid., fols. 3v–4r.
29. See Hanna, London Literature, especially p. 56.
30. Arnold, fols. 4v–15r.
The fact that Arnold had access to exemplars other than the “official” civic record reminds us of the popularity of civic legal miscellanies since Horn’s era. Uniquely, Arnold included William the Conqueror’s confirmation in an Old English version similar to that copied by Horn and kept in the Guildhall, as well as in a genuine Middle English translation unavailable in Horn’s compilations. Furthermore, Cook’s and Arnold’s copies of such documents were often drawn from different exemplars, serving as a further reminder that rather than copy directly from Guildhall documents, both men likely copied from exemplars owned by other guildsmen (or possibly heralds). Arnold’s translation of the Magna Carta and Charter of the Forest remains in no other miscellany of any sort extant today, and can be found in only one other Middle English copy. His acquisition of these texts suggests that Arnold had access to otherwise unattested exemplars. Though national law, these foundational enactments also document early London liberties and therefore still fit into a civic legal miscellany. The variety of exemplars used by Cook and Arnold reminds us that the Guildhall collections themselves were drawn from this same civic manuscript tradition that must originally have been much larger than extant copies suggest.

In Arnold’s Book, these seminal London legal texts are followed by a range of material culled from the official city compilations that was useful on a regular basis for London citizens; it is therefore not surprising to find such material in other civic legal miscellanies as well. Taxes on a wide range of goods are noted, all drawn from the city compila-


33. This is a unique copy of the Old Statutes translated into Middle English, dating to about 1300. See Claire Fennell, *A Middle English Statute-Book Part I. Statuta Antiqua Edited from Oxford, Bodleian MS Rawlinson B 520* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2011), for an edition of this translation. Arnold’s version is not in contemporary English, but is in a later Middle English than that of Rawlinson B. 520. Of note is that both Arnold and the Rawlinson manuscript show the 1297 reissue, rather than the usual 1225 issue.

34. Arnold, fols. 79v–84v.

35. See Riley, *Munimenta*, vol. 1 generally, and for specific examples, Book III, Part I (city taxes and fees on goods), Book III, Part II (oaths).

36. Arnold, fols. 11v–18v (bread), 27v–28r (woolens), 34v (wood).
tions. The tithes of parishes are recorded, as well as the bull by which the
grants were made. There is a sizable list of the oaths taken by various lesser
city officials, from constable to brokers: such oaths can be found in a variety of
miscellanies. Also included is a range of ordinances for various commercial
enterprises in which Arnold was engaged. Such material was normal in this
type of miscellany, since members of the commercial classes would use such
laws to guide their actions on a daily basis.

This mass of material is followed by a collection of documents from
Arnold’s own business dealings that amounts to a formulary. Formularies
collected “forms”: “those instrumental devices, such as standard form writs,
warrants, or wills, which fixed a word order that validated some specific
human actions as lawful.” Even in formularies collected and used by lawyers
and clerks in the government bureaucracy, formularies emphasized actual
examples, rather than fictional instances. We see evidence of this in the
Book, as Arnold collected samples of indentures, sales receipts, safe conducts,
pardons, and arbitration awards, among other material. English legal writing
was almost entirely formulaic, and so personal formularies served not only as
proof of transactions, but also as examples of legal formula. In Arnold’s Book
almost without exception these documents are in English.

Once in print this material makes Arnold’s Book the first formulary in
English. Even if Arnold had collected these documents simply to record
them, later audiences could make use of this material for its generic poten-
tial, as Cook did with his secondhand formulary. As document production
of all sorts was taught almost strictly based on following models, formu-
laries were of crucial importance in preparation for medieval professional
life. The events of Arnold’s life recorded in this material are sometimes sen-
sational, and this colorfulness makes the legal forms preserving these life

37. For example see ibid., fols. 34v–35r.
38. Ibid., fols. 18v–25v includes the complete set of documents.
39. Ibid., fols. 33r–34v. See for example London, British Library MSS Additional 37791,
Lansdowne 762; and Gough London 10.
40. Trade laws can be found in London, British Library MSS Additional 38131, Additional
37791, Egerton 2885; Gough London 10, among others.
41. This formulary is followed by the balance of recipes and other, nonlegal materials,
though legal material continues to be interspersed throughout. A number of the people who
figure prominently in documents in Arnold’s Book are connected to him as well in legal documents
preserved in the National Archives.
42. DeLloyd J. Guth, “Introduction: Formulary and Literacy as Keys to Unlocking Late-
Medieval Law,” in Kouky Fianu and DeLloyd Guth, eds., Écrit et Pouvoir dans les chancelleries
43. Ibid., pp. 9–10.
44. For the use of Chancery formularies in teaching, see ibid.
events memorable. Memorability made these legal forms especially useful for the mass audience of the printed editions. With a good formulary one could assess the accuracy of an indenture or sales receipt, and ensure that one replicated legal formula correctly oneself. The formulary Thomas Hoccleve produced for use in the Privy Seal is a testament to the contemporary value of formularies in bureaucratic settings, but the manuscript record shows them to have been an important element in civic legal miscellanies also.45

We cannot know whether all of this material was translated in Arnold’s exemplars, or even in Arnold’s own manuscript copy, but I think it is likely. Some texts are printed in Latin with English translation following (such as the liberties granted by William the Conqueror noted above), suggesting that items were printed as they were found. Some of these texts would have been composed in English by this point of the century. However, some documents would have been drafted originally in French or Latin (and likely Dutch and Spanish), and these would have presented a complication to printing, if each had to be translated at that time.46 This overwhelming Englishness must have been a choice on Arnold’s part, and attests to the increasingly standard use of English. Arnold’s altercation in Berghen op Zoom with a Lombard suggests he would have had some familiarity with other vernaculars or Latin; one wonders in what language he said “if it were not for Englishmen the Lombards would have nothing to eat but salad and cheese.”47 Yet, there is only a bit of Latin in an otherwise English volume. Documents that Arnold would have had to keep with him in their original languages, such as pardons and safe conducts, appear on the page of his Book in English.

Though we cannot know why or how Arnold’s own manuscript came to this fate, Arnold’s Book happened to be the version of this popular form of manuscript miscellany that ended up in print. The impetus for the first printed edition may well have been as political as it was practical. It is well known that London faced forced loans throughout Henry VII’s reign and negotiated for over two years before extracting a confirmation of its charter from him in 1504.48 This would place the beginnings of the city’s formal negotiations in 1502, the posited year of the first printing of Arnold’s Book. This trove of English evidence of London’s liberties, together with the English Magna Carta

46. The formal statement concerning Arnold’s incarceration as a spy and release (fols. 88r–89r) and the document about his son Thomas’s olive oil deal in San Lúcar de Barameda (fol. 88v) are both notarial and would not have been in English originally.
47. Arnold, fols. 88r–v.
and Charter of the Forest found uniquely in Arnold’s Book, may have made its publication very timely indeed.

Indeed, it seems likely that the first edition was printed at the request of members of London’s governing elite. Dated to about 1502 based on the chronicle’s final entry, Arnold’s Book was one of the Antwerp printer Adriaen van Berghen’s earliest editions, and it was one of only a few editions van Berghen printed for the lucrative English market. Financing for editions was often split between the printer and a second or even third party; therefore, it seems likely that the exemplar and most of the funding must have been provided by some of the English Nation then resident in Antwerp, at least one of whom had ties with Richard Arnold. In Antwerp, the city had granted English merchants a franchise and allowed them to settle at a Bullincstraat house just across the Groenplaats from the streets where the printers had their shops. Commerce between the two must have been frequent.

Two decades later, sustained interest in English law and the persistent absence of translations of it in print, despite an obvious market, may account for Arnold’s Book’s second edition, produced in the 1520s by the London printer Peter Treveris. Unlike so many London printers of his day, Treveris took few chances, and his catalog is marked by the presence of predictable sellers such as Latin grammars. If he brought out another edition of Arnold’s


51. Paul Arblaster estimates that at any one time in Antwerp only about a hundred Englishmen reside; the numbers inflated significantly for the two annual fairs, at which he suggests 300 to 600 English might be present. For these statistics and information about the English House, see Paul Arblaster, “Domein de Waghemaker?, Front Elevation of the English House,” in Tyndale’s Testament, ed. Paul Arblaster, Gergely Juhász, and Guido Latré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 80–81.

52. STC 783. In this boke is conteined ye names of the baylyfs custose mayers and sherefs of ye cyte of london [Southwerk: Peter Treveris, 1527?]. Various library catalogs give this date as 1527; however, I think that date is likely too late.

53. Treveris selected a large set of capitals for this edition that mimic the style of fine
Book, then he had reason to think it would sell. Consonant with other entries in Treveris’s catalog, this London edition appears to have sold well, and it attracted the attention of at least one printer, and I think two others.

The texts in Arnold’s Book were evidently desirable in part as well as whole: beginning probably in the mid-1520s, the English printer Robert Wyer mined Arnold’s Book for material. Treveris’s recent edition would have made copies of the whole book widely available, and its contents became tantalizingly simple for such an enterprising printer to harvest. Wyer was a noted pamphlet-printer, active from the 1520s into the 1550s, and Arnold’s Book was a source for him throughout this period. N. F. Blake claimed that Wyer “was not averse to cutting up longer books into smaller editions and changing the titles to make them more attractive and more saleable to a wide range of people.”

Certainly, a miscellany such as Arnold’s provided much material for anyone willing to “[cut] it up,” and Wyer did. By the 1520s it was becoming clear to printers that the law was big business, especially the statutes in English. In 1519 the innovating lawyer and printer John Rastell had translated and printed an abridgment of the old statutes. By 1530 this alphabetized abridgment had run through several editions in just over ten years, and it ultimately sold through eight editions in thirty years. Although Rastell’s abridgment popular a hundred years earlier. While I have not found this set elsewhere, another set of initials he used in STC 783 that mimic the type of Dutch-style ink initials used in manuscripts turns up also in STC 13440. Other initials Treveris uses in STC 783 can also be found in other volumes with his colophon or printer’s mark.

55. “The nombre of perish chirches” (fols. 52r–v) and “The copye of acarete cumpasyng the circuet of the wolde” (fols. 52v–54v) from Arnold’s Book appear in STC 9984, 9984.5, and the second in STC 17297. Also in the late 1520s, Wyer excerpted Arnold’s text on grafting fruit trees; this was a combination of two popular horticultural texts, by Geoffrey “of Franconia” and Nicholas Bollard. Heather Collier, “Richard Hill—A London Compiler,” ed. Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson, The Court and Cultural Diversity (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Brewer, 1995), 319–29, pp. 326–27; and W. L. Braekman, “Bollard’s Middle English Book of Planting and Grafting and Its Background,” Studia Neophilologica 57 (1985): 19–39. The edition I attribute to Wyer here is attributed provisionally to Wynkyn de Worde by the STC (STC 5953); however, Wyer made use of some of de Worde’s materials, and the type and initial woodcuts appear to be the same as those used in an undoubted Wyer imprint of around 1530 (more likely 1527), STC 20480. This text was printed again in the 1560s by Robert Copland (STC 5954), and came to be attached to Thomas Hill’s popular gardening treatise whereby it remained in print until 1608: STC 13492, 13494, 13495, 13496, and 13497. STC 20480 and 9984 bear the royal arms with pomegranate device discussed below.
56. STC 9515.5, 9518 (John Rastell); STC 9521 (William Rastell); STC 9519, 9521a.5, 9522 (Redman); STC 9523 (Petyt and Middleton); STC 9525–26 (Sears, Gaultier, and Powell). Cowley notes that STC 9521 is in types only used by William Rastell; however, as Redman printed the Abridgment both before and after William, and as we know that William printed another law book for Redman in 1531, I think it safe to claim that he was printing for Redman here as well. John
ment became a veritable hit, a complete translation of the medieval statutes was not immediately forthcoming.

Though Wyer reprinted nonlegal as well as legal material from Arnold’s Book, one of these legal texts was reprinted until 1580, arguing for its marketability and popularity. Probably between 1525 and 1527, Richard Bankes, or more likely Wyer for Bankes, printed London ordinances in English for bread and wood that are identical to those in Arnold’s Book.\(^{57}\) While it is not impossible that Wyer used official copies for this material, Wyer’s recent interest in Arnold’s Book suggests that this was his source.\(^{58}\) The pamphlet is little more than these London ordinances with the addition of the Assize of Bread and the “Statute of Winchester” (a popular version of the Assize of Bread).\(^{59}\) The title page asserts that the pamphlet was commissioned by London Aldermen Michael Englysshe and John Rudstone. The lack of addition to Rudstone’s name dates the volume to the 1520s, before Rudstone was knighted, in 1529.\(^{60}\)

The woodcuts in this pamphlet are otherwise unknown in a printed English law book and must have positively influenced its sales. The images of the sack of grain and variously sized and shaped loaves are derived from the manuscript tradition of the Assize of Bread and “Statute of Winchester,” itself unique.\(^{61}\) Entirely new is the series of four woodcuts depicting baking and assaying bread decorating this pamphlet and its subsequent editions. The woodcuts together with the accessible translations appear to have been an exceptionally successful marketing strategy, and this pamphlet remained in

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57. This is about the same time Wyer first printed the geographical and horticultural excerpts of Arnold’s Book.
58. STC 864. Here begynnethe the boke named the assyse of bread what it ought to waye after the pryece of a quarter of wheete ([London]: Richard Bankes [not after 1532]). Plomber reminds us that Wyer printed for Bankes. The likely printing dates can be narrowed to 1524–29. Wyer’s subsequent history printing this pamphlet suggests that he may have printed this first edition too, as does the fact that Bankes had many books after 1528 that bear his name. Henry Plomber, Robert Wyer: A Printer and Bookseller (London: Bibliographical Society, 1897), p. 6. Blake, “Wyer.” Peter W. M. Blayney, The Stationer’s Company before the Charter, 1403–1557 (London: The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspapers, 2003), p. 36.
60. This commission is referenced on the title page. For the date of Rudstone’s knighting, see Beaven, Aldermen, 2:20–47.
61. Statute collections in England were often illuminated, but never illustrated with anything other than a historiation of a king in judgment at regnal openings; for discussion of the iconography developed for the “Statue of Winchester,” see Medieval Hackers.
print until 1580. By certain measures, this was popular law. Even decorated with woodcuts, one cannot imagine this pamphlet to have been viewed as entertaining, yet its extended print history meant that it sold well for nearly a hundred years. Here, we have strong evidence that sixteenth-century and late-medieval audiences viewed “sentence” as being so valuable as to make it mainstream.

About the same time as he first printed the bread laws, Wyer excerpted other parts of Arnold’s Book for another pamphlet containing the Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest alone. We know Wyer took these translations from Arnold’s Book because usually printed copies of the Magna Carta were made from a version released in 1300, where Wyer’s and Arnold’s copies were translated from the 1297 confirmation. This tiny gem displays an eye-catching woodcut title page of the royal arms that dates the printing to between 1525 and 1531 (even more likely between 1525 and 1527). Despite its small size, the volume illustrates classic statute book layout; in a small booklet, it includes the text in translation, followed by a table of the chapter titles as had been customary in statute collections for over a hundred years. This degree of care in layout and the evident high-quality printing renders it a highly readable little volume of the foundational texts of English law. In every sense, in the Magna Carta volume, as in its companion volume of bread laws, Wyer was making law texts available to a wider public untrained in the learned vernacular of law French, but thirsty for access to foundational law.

As far as we know, Wyer printed the Magna Carta pamphlet just once; however, I think that together Rastell’s abridgment and Wyer’s law pamphlets making use of Arnold’s Book may have attracted the attention of the notoriously acquisitive law printer Robert Redman. One supposes Wyer would

62. STC 866 (Robert Wyer, 1544?), STC 867 (Wyer, 1546?), STC 868.2 (Wyer, 1553?), STC 868.4 (Wyer, 1555?), STC 868.6 (Colwell/Wyer, ca. 1560), STC 868.8 (Colwell, 1570), STC 869.5 (Jackson, 1580), STC 869 (Jackson, 1580). These woodcuts would have had to be recut during this extended life span; however, I have not been able to examine enough copies to make an argument about the rate at which the woodcuts wore and when they were recut.

63. See note for STC 9270.5 in ESTC.

64. Though originally a woodcut used by John Siberch in Cambridge, it was used subsequently for several years in Antwerp, likely transferred through Siberch’s colleague Peter Kaetz. The last use of the woodcut I have found in Antwerp is a 1525 Dutch Bible printed by Hans van Ruremund, who printed for Kaetz: Hier begint die Bibel int duitsche neerstelick overgheset (Antwerp: Hans van Ruremund, 1525). It would have been impossible to use Catherine’s pomegranate device, as this woodcut does, after 1531 when she was sent away from court, if not after 1527 when the Great Matter was begun. For the relationship between Siberch and Kaetz, see John D. Fudge, Commerce and Print in the Early Reformation (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 162–63. This woodcut appears in STC 20480 and 9984, and so it seems likely that the entire set of first edition pamphlets drawn from Arnold’s Book postdate Ruremund’s Bible and predate the Great Matter.
have reissued the Magna Carta, as he did the bread laws and other popular pamphlets making use of Arnold’s Book, had not Redman hired a translator to produce a complete translation of the old statutes in the early 1530s, which he titled *The Boke of the Magna Carta*.\(^6\) While Redman could hardly copy the diminutive size of Wyer’s pamphlet, he brought out the *Boke* in octavo, ensuring that it would be as handy and affordable as possible.\(^6\) I do not think we should consider this simply a timely coincidence. Redman had been dubbed “Rudeman” for stealing materials from other printers, even assuming their identities.\(^6\) In just one example of this behavior, Redman took over Rastell’s abridgment and printed it for a decade. Needless to say, there was little motivation for Redman’s behavior other than profit.

In Arnold’s Book, we see a superb example of a characteristic medieval textual form, the household book, make the transition into popular print. At the heart of its popularity were its vernacular legal contents. It is precisely the legal materials found in Arnold’s Book that explode in popularity in the 1540s, after Redman’s death. Nearly every legal element present in Arnold’s Book can be found in multiple editions after that date. From the 1530s onward, the old statutes were printed regularly. Only a handful of formularies in English were printed before 1546, but they continued to be printed every few years after that.\(^6\) Decrees for tithes remain from 1546.\(^6\) Laws for London markets were printed as of 1562.\(^7\) It is entirely likely that earlier editions were produced that are no longer extant, but the very number remaining from the 1540s suggests that the market launched during this decade. Arnold’s Book stands at the very beginning of this process, and facilitated the development of this popular publishing trend until the professional law printers like Redman took over.

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\(^6\) STC 9272. *The boke of Magna Carta, with diuers other statutes, whose names appere in the nexte lefe folowyng, translated into Englyshe* (London: Robert Redman, 1534). This was followed by two further editions in less than ten years: STC 9275, 9276.

\(^6\) This contrasts with his imprint of the New Statutes in English, which he published in a large folio, and which sold only two editions in ten years: STC 9286, 9287.

\(^6\) STC 15726, fol. Y8r, where rival Richard Pynson says about Redman: “quam elapsus est e manibus Rob. Redman, sed verius Rudeman, quia inter mille homines rudiorem haud facile invenies.”

\(^6\) See, for example, STC 14124, 3327, and 15587.5 (Carta Feodi). I do not include Fitzherbert’s *Boke of the Justice* due to its professional character.

\(^7\) See, for example, STC 16700.

\(^7\) See, for example, STC 16704.6.