

## **The *J.B. Treatise*: A Self-Instruction Manual for Aspiring Gentlemen of the Fifteenth Century**

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**T**he second half of the fifteenth century was, by any standard, a time of dramatic events and rapid change. The definitive loss of England's Aquitanian heritage (1453), the final paroxysms (in 1483–85) of the decades-long confrontation between the houses of York and Lancaster, and Henry VII's sanctioning of John Cabot to sail to the New World (1497) provide a panoramic backdrop to other events, social and cultural, that were equally far-reaching in their effects, even if they were less conspicuous in their immediate impact. Among the most significant of these, perhaps, was Caxton's introduction of printing to England in 1475–76, and the revolution that this engendered through the dissemination of printed texts in the vernacular. That such works found a ready market can be gauged by the success of Caxton's own printing business, and by the appearance of no fewer than four other commercial English presses by the time that Wynkyn de Worde took over Caxton's operations in 1491.<sup>1</sup> But Caxton and his emulators should not be given too much credit for creating the market they fed; indeed, there is considerable evidence from manuscript sources that a small but eager readership already existed, well disposed to make the most of the books and pamphlets that the first printers committed to press.

An important indicator of this growing class of *literati* can be found in the commonplace books and manuscript miscellanies that burgeoned from the 1450s onwards. Many were produced by professional scribes working

under commission, but increasingly such books were also written out by literate persons – usually men, but occasionally women – as they assembled their own personal collections of texts: one-volume libraries *in parvo*, as they have been called.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of how they were produced, these manuscript miscellanies can tell us a great deal about the interests of their owners, and about the general reading fashions of the period. This in itself is a topic of daunting proportions and one that has yet to be comprehensively surveyed. For present purposes, therefore, we can do no more than observe that the contents of such collections are typically very diverse, including such heterogeneous items as political and religious poems, prophecies in prose and verse, *mirabilia* and *memorabilia*, historical chronicles, histories of the kings of England, homilies, liturgical writings, grammatical texts, poetry, chivalric romances, a *mappa mundi* and – of particular interest to this article – myriad little items of practical information, such as cooking recipes, instructions on how to ‘cure’ wine that has gone off, remedies for ailing livestock, advice on planting and pruning trees, guidance on caring for falcons and hawks, even instructions on planning the dimensions of a man’s shirt.

Among such practical miscellanea is a curious little text that is little known today, but must have been immensely popular in England in the latter half of the fifteenth century, judging by the number of manuscripts in which it survives: twenty-two at last count. In fact, so popular was this work that it became one of the very first texts to be printed by Caxton, even ahead of *The Canterbury Tales* and *Le Morte d’Arthur*. Caxton’s version appeared as filler at the end of a little eighteen-leaf pamphlet, devoted mainly to Lydgate’s animal fable, *The Horse, the Sheep and the Goose*, which he issued twice, in 1476 and again in 1477 (see Scott-Macnab, ‘Caxton’s Printings’). The text in question – the *J.B. Treatise* – appeared again in the first printed English miscellany, the eponymously named *Boke of St. Albans* (1486), which itself proved so popular that it was reprinted in expanded

form by Wynkyn de Worde in 1496, and reissued whole or in part another ten times by 1565.

If the popularity of the *J.B. Treatise* occasioned its wide distribution, regrettably that same popularity did nothing for the stability of the text, or its identity. The very title *J.B. Treatise* loudly proclaims itself as a construct of modern scholarship, ordained by the want of anything better in the original sources. What is more, it is a title that disguises the sheer quantity and diversity of recensions that have come down to us, and the variability of their contents. To describe the situation briefly, what we are dealing with is a very flexible entity, consisting of one or more core items, to which were added other related elements according to the needs or tastes of copyists. Of these many different witnesses, none can be singled out as especially authoritative, nor can they be used in unison to reconstruct a lost archetype. Instead, the diversity of the *J.B. Treatise* needs to be acknowledged as one of its characteristic features: a diversity that may nevertheless be justifiably subsumed under a unitary title.

Such variability is the single most obvious reason why the *J.B. Treatise* has, until comparatively recently, failed to be recognized for what it is. Its existence was first suggested by Rachel Hands in her facsimile edition of the hawking and hunting treatises in *The Boke of St. Albans*, but because the *J.B. Treatise* was of subsidiary interest to Hands's work, and therefore not fully elucidated by her, her discovery was either overlooked by scholars or treated with mild scepticism, as by George Keiser (3701). It was therefore not until 2003, when my own survey of all 'J.B.' sources in manuscripts and incunables was published, that the notion of the *J.B. Treatise* was given more credible form.

Before discussing the contents of the *J.B. Treatise*, the origin of so cryptic a title deserves some explanation. Indeed, the title is not quite as artificial as it may first appear, for it derives from three remarkably similar colophons of attribution in three independent witnesses, which read as

follows: ‘Explicit Iulyan Barne’, ‘Explicit I. B.’ and ‘Explicit Dam Iulyans Barnes in her boke of huntynge’.<sup>3</sup> The last of these colophons is well known to bibliographers and antiquarians, who have been fascinated by it for centuries for one reason above all: it names a woman as the author of the earliest printed English hunting treatise (in *The Boke of St. Albans*). Indeed, so intriguing has ‘Dame Juliana Barnes’ (or ‘Berners’) been for scholars that entire biographies have been fabricated for her – in consequence of which, her name appears in many bibliographies, library indexes and even the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Yet the hard truth is that we know nothing about this ‘dame’ beyond the fact that her name and initials appear three times in three independent sources in connection with very similar material. What is more, the colophon in which she is named is clearly appended to the wrong treatise in *The Boke of St. Albans* (i.e. the hunting treatise, rather than its J.B. matter) and the title ‘dam[e]’ has patently been added at the whim of the printer.<sup>4</sup> For all these reasons, it seemed preferable to use the initials ‘J.B.’ in the invented title of our anonymous text, rather than the indeterminate name of a possibly spurious personage.

As to their contents, the different versions of the *J.B. Treatise* contain twenty distinct items or ‘elements’, which may be grouped in three distinct categories, as shown below. These elements do not occur in every version of the Treatise; the most complete recension contains twelve elements, and some versions have only one. Moreover, several elements can have more than one form, thereby contributing further to the diversity of this protean work.

<b>The Contents of the <i>J.B. Treatise</i></b> (conflated from all versions)		
<b>Hunting</b>	<b>Hawking</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Collective nouns	Hierarchy of hawks	Precepts in <i>-ly</i>
Soiling terms	Hawks' diseases and remedies	Four things to dread
Resting terms	Choosing a hawk	Properties of a good horse
Carving terms	Ages of a hawk	Names of wines
Beasts of venery and the chase	A hawk's foot and feathers	
Breeds of dogs	Flying terms	
The hunter		
Properties of a greyhound		
Hunting terms		
'If a hart stands'		

If some of the elements named above seem rather cryptic, regrettably, constraints of space make it impossible to discuss them all in detail. I shall instead examine a few representative examples to give some idea of their general nature.<sup>5</sup>

To begin with one of the most popular items, found in thirteen manuscripts and *The Boke of St. Albans*, the 'Hierarchy of hawks' is ostensibly a type of

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sumptuary list that allocates falcons and hawks to various orders of human society, as follows:

These havkes byyne of þe tovre:

A garfavkone and a tarssselet garfavkone for a kyng.

A favkone ientyll & a tarselet ientyll for a pryns.

A favkone of þe roche for a duke.

A favkone perygryne for an orle.

(National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, MS Brogyntyn II.1, fol. 189<sup>r</sup>)

*These are hawks of the tower [i.e. falcons, which rise to a height and then stoop on their prey]:*

*A gerfalcon and a male gerfalcon for a king.*

*A falcon gentle and a male falcon gentle for a prince.*

*A falcon of the rock for a duke.*

*A peregrine falcon for an earl.*

This apportioning of falcons may seem quite plausible until one realises that the terms ‘falcon gentle’ and ‘falcon of the rock’ are both bynames for the peregrine, which means that the same bird is allocated to three different orders under different names. Other parts of the list may be more familiar, especially the phrase ‘A kestrel for a knave’ (i.e. a boy), recycled by Barry Hines as the title of his popular novel, and ‘A goshawk for a yeoman’, which is often cited to ‘prove’ the ignorance of Chaucer’s burlesque knight of the Low Countries, Sir Thopas, who would ‘ride an haukyng for river, With grey goshawk on hond’ (*Canterbury Tales* VII, 737–8). Sir Thopas, it is claimed, must be considered a very foolish knight for equipping himself with a yeoman’s hawk rather than a more ‘aristocratic’ falcon, such as the saker, the bird apportioned by the J.B. Hierarchy to knights.<sup>6</sup>

Another popular element, this time from the hunting group, is the 'Properties of a greyhound', one version of which reads thus:

A Grehounde shulde be heded like a Snake, and necked like a  
Drake,  
Foted like a kat, Tayled like a Rat,  
Syded like a Teme, Chyned like a Beme.

(*The Boke of St. Albans*, sig. f4<sup>v</sup>)<sup>7</sup>

The internal rhymes of these lines are an interesting feature, wholly absent from an alternative version, which sets out a rather different set of comparisons:

A grehunde schulde haue a congres hede, a ladys nek, a liones  
brest, a sowes rib. Y-bakkid like a plowe-beme, y-trussid  
byhynd like an ox bytween the hornes, y-hangid ['possessing a  
sloping back'] like a hare, y-howghid ['hocked'] like a sikill; a  
cattes fote, a rattes tayle: then is the greund good to assayle.  
(Lincoln's Inn Library, London, MS Hale 148, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>)

It may well be asked if these rather gnomic compositions are intended as jokes, and if we turn to the 'Properties of a good horse', such suspicions may intensify. According to the version preserved in *The Boke of St. Albans*,

A goode horse shulde haue xv propretees and condicions: y<sup>t</sup> is  
to wit,  
iij of a man, iij of a woman, iij of a fox, iij of an haare and iij  
of an asse. Of a man, boolde, prowde and hardy.  
Of a woman, fayre brestid, faire of here & esy to lip ['leap']  
vppon.

Off a fox, a faire tayle, short eris with a goode trot.  
Off an hare, a grete eygh, a dry ['neat'] hede and well rennyng.  
Off an asse, a bigge chyne, a flatte lege and goode hou  
['hoof'].

*(The Boke of St. Albans, sig. f5<sup>v</sup>)*

Again, we have a gnomic set of observations of a genre that Ernst Curtius calls the 'numerical apothegm' (510–14), and there can be no doubt about its popularity: there are numerous English variants that set out eighteen, twenty-five and even fifty-four properties for a horse, and there are even French, German and Dutch analogues (see Hands, 'Horse-dealing lore' 234). But certain questions now begin to impress themselves with some urgency, specifically: What epistemological status can be ascribed to such writings? What is their usefulness? For whom might they have been intended? And how might they have been received? Answers to these questions will be suggested below, but first a few more items might usefully be exemplified.

Among the J.B. hunting elements, we find also the 'Names of dogs', which is not only less cryptically allusive than some of the items quoted above, but also different in form, being more obviously a type of list. In fact, in British Library MS Egerton 1995, fol. 63<sup>v</sup>, this item is set out as a single-column list, rather than being written across the page, as in the example following:

Theis be the namys of houndes. First ther is a Grehownd, a Bastard, a Mengrell, a Mastyfe, a Lemor, a Spanyell, Rachys, Kenettys, Teroures, Bocheris houndes, Myddyng dogges, Tryndeltayles and Prikherid curris, and smale ladies popis that beere a way the flees, and dyueris smale sawtis.

*(The Boke of St. Albans, sig. f4<sup>v</sup>)*



*These are the names of hounds. First there is a greyhound, a bastard, a mongrel, a mastiff, a limer [tracking hound], a spaniel, raches [running, scenting hounds], kennets [small hunting dogs], terriers, butcher-hounds [dogs used by butchers to control animals going to slaughter], dunghill dogs, trundle-tails [dogs with curly tails, hence low-bred], prick-eared curs [dogs possessing pointed ears], and small ladies' pups that bear away the fleas, and diverse small sorts.<sup>8</sup>*

Once again, the question arises: For whom would such information have been useful? But let us first look at what is by far the most popular element in the *J.B. Treatise*, one that continues to intrigue many people today, even if they are unaware of its origins: the lists of 'Collective nouns', or 'terms of association' as they are also called. No fewer than seventeen different versions of this element survive in manuscripts, and two independent versions in incunables printed up to 1486: Caxton's two editions of *The Horse, the Sheep and the Goose* (1476–77), and *The Boke of St. Albans* (1486). After that date, the version of this list first issued in *The Boke of St. Albans* is replicated in print numerous times, beginning with Wynkyn de Worde's expanded reprint of 1496, and it can even be found in degenerate form on the internet today.<sup>9</sup>

The J.B. inventories of collective nouns are not the first such lists to be compiled in England, but the first wholly in English. Earlier lists appeared in the thirteenth century as part of Anglo-Norman primers for English children wanting to learn French, but those lists are much shorter and their English phrases are interspersed with French equivalents.<sup>10</sup> This is how a typical J.B. list of collectives commences:

A herd of hertes ['harts': male red deer]  
A herde of cranes  
A herde of bukkys ['bucks': male fallow deer]

A herde of kurloews [‘curlews’]  
A herde of wrennes  
A beuy of ladyes  
A beuy of rooes [‘roe deer’]  
A beuy of quayles  
A nye of faysandis [‘pheasants’]  
A couy of partryches  
A rowt of knyghtes  
A rowt of wolfes  
(British Library, MS Harley 2340, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>)

By comparing all the different copies of these lists, we can deduce that the initial incentive for assembling them must have been to create an inventory of the correct collective nouns for animals and birds that were sporting quarries, which is why they always start with the phrase ‘A herd of harts’, followed by phrases giving the collectives for bucks, roes, quails, pheasants and partridges. Very soon, however, we can see the medieval love of collecting and collating asserting itself, with the result that other creatures are included because of a shared collective. Hence curlews and wrens follow bucks, not because they are of great interest to sportsmen, but because they share the same collective noun with harts, bucks and cranes, i.e. ‘herd’.

The next step is the inclusion of human society, which is why ladies accompany roe-deer and quails (all are a ‘bevy’), and knights accompany wolves (a ‘rout’); further down, goats are grouped with hares (both are a ‘trip’), and women with geese (both are a ‘gaggle’). As these lists evolved, they expanded to include the collectives for a range of other creatures, such as sparrows, oxen, sheep and fish, as well as collectives which show a game of creative imagining being played: for example, *gaggle* is only one of several collective nouns that use onomatopoeia: others include *chirm* or *chirming* (‘twittering’) for goldfinches, and *chiteryng* (‘chattering’) for

starlings. In other cases, it is easy to see some distinctive characteristic being chosen as the basis for a collective noun: for example, 'a building of rooks', 'a sloth of bears', 'a shrewdness (i.e. naughtiness) of apes'.

These lists are of two main types: a short variety of about 45–50 phrases, and a longer one of 106–146 phrases. The short lists are probably the more conservative, whereas the long ones develop the imaginative game as far as they can by including numerous human occupations and orders of society, along with suitably inspired collective nouns. Among these are to be found some of the most charming and ingenious of the whole compilation, including such gems as 'a melody of harpers', 'a laughter of hostellers', 'an observance of hermits', 'a diligence of messengers', 'a sentence of judges', 'a damning of jurors' (suggesting that medieval jurors were more inclined than their modern counterparts to condemn suspected felons). We also find quite startling hints of social comment, often directed against the clergy: 'a lying of pardoners', 'an untruth of summoners', 'a superfluity of nuns', 'an abominable sight of monks' (*sight* = 'show', hence 'multitude'); perhaps Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 had wider popular support than we may suppose!

In general, the longer the list, the more humorous its contents tend to be, yet all versions retain a core set of terms relating to game animals, and the birds and beasts of the English countryside; which prompts a slightly different formulation of the questions posed earlier: Who would have found such material useful or interesting, and why?<sup>11</sup>

It will be apparent by now that the different elements constituting the *J.B. Treatise* are very varied in character, as well as diverse in terms of the information they contain. Of the five elements quoted above, most are humorous in some way or other, and none provides facts that could be considered useful additions to a reader's knowledge. Or do they? Let us reconsider what we have seen so far.

The Hierarchy of hawks never fails to capture the imagination of modern readers, and has exercised considerable influence over scholars, apparently

because of its similarity to late-medieval sumptuary laws. Yet there is no shortage of evidence, both internal and external, that it cannot be taken at face value. Historical documents, such as the Paston letters, reveal conclusively that hawks and falcons were not restricted to specific classes or occupations in medieval society.<sup>12</sup> And there is a basic issue of inconsistency when the same bird is allocated to different social groups under different names (falcon of the rock, falcon gentle, falcon peregrine). The fact that the entire Hierarchy is neatly divided into long-winged birds (falcons) and those with short-wings (goshawks and sparrowhawks) is equally suspicious.<sup>13</sup> Once alerted to these issues, one can see the hierarchy for what it truly is: an elaborate conceit in which the different classes of human society are set out in descending order, and matched with birds of prey, generally according to the size of each bird. Hence the Hierarchy begins by assigning the largest raptors, such as eagle and vulture, to the emperor, the gerfalcon to a king, peregrine falcon to a prince, duke and earl, and so on, all the way down to the smallest bird of prey – the hobby – which is allotted to a young squire, a young man or, in some versions, an infant.<sup>14</sup>

But to say that the Hierarchy is based on a fiction is not the same as saying that its contents are worthless; it is rather to say that we need to understand their nature, and their worth, in a different way, and that, I would suggest, is to be found in the Hierarchy's structure, which shows how it could serve as an *aide mémoire*. By matching birds to well-known orders of human society, the Hierarchy provides an easy way of remembering the names, relative proportions and main categories of the most important birds of prey. (It may also indicate the relative monetary worth of different birds, but this is a point that needs more research.) And this recognition, in turn, unlocks other elements, such as the 'Properties of a greyhound', the 'Properties of a good horse', and the 'Breeds of dogs': all are essentially *aides mémoire*, employing humour, rhyme or other devices to assist the reader in remembering a number of salient facts about a particular topic.

To deal with the issue of who that reader might typically have been, we need to take account of four important features of the *J.B. Treatise*: first, that the Treatise is essentially a didactic text, albeit of a very idiosyncratic kind. Secondly, its contents are predominantly concerned with hawking and hunting, and hence with the countryside rather than town or city. Thirdly, the Treatise is emphatically *not* a practical text from which one could learn to become a competent hunter or falconer, as one could from works such as Edward of Norwich's *Master of Game* (c. 1413) or *Prince Edward's Book of Hawking* (mid-fifteenth century). Finally, and perhaps most revealingly, the greater part of the information contained in the *J.B. Treatise* is in the form of lists of terms, and this may be the most useful clue as to its audience and purpose.<sup>15</sup>

Close examination of the *J.B. Treatise* suggests that its principal aim was to provide its readers with a vocabulary – a lexicon – together with an understanding of how the words in that lexicon were used, so that those readers might sound knowledgeable when talking about a range of important issues. The overwhelming concern of the Treatise with the *terminology* of hawking and hunting suggests an audience located in rural areas, or at least interested in country matters, and the predominantly lexical nature of its lists suggests an audience unfamiliar with the topics addressed – perhaps even an audience interested only in the language of these sports and not their practical execution.

Of the twenty-two J.B. manuscripts that have so far been identified, only four can be positively identified with personal compilers. They are: John Benet, a cleric who served in two small rural communities until his death in 1474, and who wrote out a version of the *J.B. Treatise* in his commonplace book, now preserved as Trinity College, Dublin, MS 516; Walter Pollard, a schoolmaster at Exeter Grammar School, whose last entry is dated 1483 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawlinson D328); John Wittocksmead, a powerful Wiltshire landowner, who died in 1482 (Yale University Library, New Haven, MS Beinecke 163); and William Gregory,

who was mayor of London in 1451 (British Library, MS Egerton 1995). Other manuscripts can also be connected with important landholding families, though not with any particular individual. But how does this explain the interest of a London mayor, a country vicar, a landed aristocrat and a schoolteacher in the *J.B.* material?

Most likely, the answer is to be found in the turmoil of the fifteenth century, the greater social mobility that characterised the age, and the changing nature of rural English society. These are complex issues that cannot be treated fully in the present article, but may be briefly adumbrated as belonging to a process that began in the early fourteenth century, when a number of different factors combined to have a ruinous effect on England's agricultural economy. These included long periods of poor weather, severe demands by the exchequer, debasement of the coinage and, most importantly, the large-scale depopulation of rural areas by a series of plagues beginning in 1348. The consequences included a chronic agricultural slump, followed by widespread abandonment of agriculture for pastoralism as the mainstay of the rural economy. Such changes created conditions that were unfavourable to the old feudal structures, from whose demise there emerged a new class of rich peasant farmer, leasing demesne land directly from large landholders. Further social upheavals during the fifteenth century continued to drive a process in which a range of enterprising individuals – from bailiffs and reeves to wealthy urbanites, such as merchants and lawyers – took up rural leases for the first time, built imposing residences, and established powerful dynasties, both locally and nationally (see Baker 187–218, Cantor 19–23).

These new landholders were often self-made men, hungry for social advancement and keen to discover the means for securing it. We can imagine such people being thirsty for information, especially of the sort contained in the books of practical instruction that burgeoned in the fifteenth century, and even more so when that information concerned the countryside and countryside pursuits. In most cases, this is precisely what we find in the miscellanies and commonplace books in which the *J.B. Treatise* occurs –

although, as I have observed, this is not a text that could make anyone a competent falconer or huntsman.

On the other hand, a studious reader of the Treatise would have become familiar with a useful range of hunting and hawking terms, as well as a sense of when and how to use them. He would have discovered amusing little *aides mémoire* on the salient features of a good horse, a greyhound and a hawk. Another list of terms would have supplied him with the correct collective nouns for the major quarries of the chase at a time when knowledge of such matters already distinguished the 'U' from the 'non-U' in society. And not only would he have learned the names of the most significant diseases that could afflict a hawk, he would have had a serviceable list of remedies with which to direct the servants attending his mews.

Information of this sort would have been invaluable to prosperous urbanites new to the countryside, to aspiring landholders of any background, and to upwardly-mobile clergymen eager to be acquainted with the 'gentle' but arcane phraseology of the traditional aristocracy. The milieu in which the *J.B. Treatise* circulated was full of such people, and the available evidence strongly indicates that it was among them that the Treatise achieved its greatest popularity, serving as what we today might call a 'Bluffer's Guide' – a text that doesn't teach one about a subject, but gives one a feel for its language and a sense of how to deploy it. Such a text allows one to sound knowledgeable about a topic without having to go through the hard work of studying it in great detail.

If this seems a little fanciful, consider the following exchange in Ben Jonson's play *Every Man in His Humour* first performed in about 1598. The play opens with Stephen, described as a 'country gull', arriving to visit his cousin Edward, and having the following conversation with his uncle Kno'well:

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- Stephen* Uncle, afore I go in, can you tell me an' he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting? I would fain borrow it.
- Kno'well* Why, I hope you will not a-hawking now, will you?
- Stephen* No wusse; but I'll practice against next year, uncle. I have bought me a hawk, and a hood and bells and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.
- Kno'well* Oh, most ridiculous.
- Stephen* Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle. Why, you know, an' a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages nowadays, I'll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the Greek or the Latin. He is for no gallant's company without 'em . . .  
(I i 32–44, Folio version)

What is particularly noteworthy is Stephen's emphasis on the need for skill in 'hawking and hunting *languages*' (my emphasis), since this is precisely the sort of information contained in concentrated form in the *J.B. Treatise*, and clearly still highly sought after in Jonson's day, little more than a century after the period in which gentlemen throughout England were enthusiastically copying the *J.B. Treatise* into their personal miscellanies for their own instruction and edification.



## NOTES

This article is a revised version of a paper read at the 18th Biennial SASMARS Conference, Stellenbosch, 6–9 September 2006. The full text of the *J.B. Treatise*, together with a fully collated and annotated inventory of its collective nouns, can be found in my editions (2003, 2007).

1. They were the first Oxford press, traditionally associated with Theodoric Rood (1478), the St. Albans press (1479), John Lattou's press in the city of London (1480), and William de Machlinia's press in London (1482).
2. For the expression 'library *in parvo*', see Bennett 165. Two miscellanies thought to have been either written by, or produced for, women are Magdalene College Library, Cambridge, MS Pepys 1047, and the Tollemache 'Book of Secrets' (Helmingham Hall, Suffolk). I use the term 'commonplace book' to refer to a miscellaneous collection assembled by one person over a period of time. The book should therefore be either partly or wholly in the compiler's own hand – unlike a general miscellany, which may be the work of a professional scribe, or team of scribes, working under commission.
3. These colophons occur respectively in Magdalene College Library, Cambridge, MS Pepys 1047, fol. 5<sup>v</sup>; British Library, MS Harley 2340, fol. 51<sup>v</sup>; *The Boke of St. Albans*, sig. f4<sup>r</sup>. The form 'Iulians' (Julians) is unusual and not easily explicable; most likely, the final *s* represents a typographical error for either *e* or *a*, which is why the name has conventionally been rendered 'Juliana'.
4. For more information about these points, see Scott-Macnab, *A Fifteenth-Century Sporting Lexicon* 1–4. Mercifully, the *ODNB*, s.v. 'Juliana Berners', deals decisively with many of the misconceptions that have arisen in connection with this mysterious figure; but this has

- not prevented Wikipedia from repeating many fictions about the dame, and even including an entirely bogus portrait of her.
5. For a full analysis of each element and its different variations, see Scott-Macnab, *A Fifteenth-Century Sporting Lexicon* 66–78.
  6. E.g. Manly 67 and Pearsall 164.
  7. The terms ‘teme’ and ‘beme’ both refer to parts of a wooden plough, and are most likely intended to evoke the distinctive curve of a greyhound’s back. Quotations from *The Boke of St. Albans* are taken from the facsimile edition of Hands (*English Hawking and Hunting in ‘The Boke of St. Albans’* 80–85).
  8. One is reminded of Macbeth’s dismissive reply to the two men commissioned to murder Banquo: ‘Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men; / As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs, / Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept / All by the name of dogs’ (*Macbeth* III i 91–94). It is tempting to think that Shakespeare might have been familiar with the J.B. list of ‘diverse hounds’.
  9. E.g. <<http://www.rinkworks.com/words/collective.shtml>>, consulted 29 October 2006. An abbreviated version, also deriving from *The Boke of St. Albans*, appears in Schott 11.
  10. See, for example, Walter de Bibbesworth, *Le Tretiz* 8: ‘Primes ou cerfs sunt assemblé / Une herde est apelé’ (literally, ‘First, where harts are assembled / A herd it is called’).
  11. Altogether, over 250 separate phrases of collective nouns exist in the different versions of the *J.B. Treatise*; these are collated and annotated for the first time by Scott-Macnab, *A Fifteenth-Century Sporting Lexicon* 224–307.
  12. *Paston Letters* I: 579, 582–83. See also the letters written by Henry II to his chief falconer, in which he discusses the many goshawks in the royal mews (Tanquery 487–503); the goshawk, it should be remembered, is a yeoman’s bird according to the *J.B. Treatise*.

13. The three main categories of raptor set out in the hierarchy are, firstly, the largest birds (eagle, vulture, kite), followed by 'hawks of the tower' (i.e. falcons, or long-winged hawks, such as the gyrfalcon, lanner, peregrine, saker and hobby) and then true hawks (short-winged hawks: goshawk, sparrowhawk).
14. *The Boke of St. Albans* apports the hobby to a young man (sig. d4<sup>r</sup>); British Library, MS Egerton 1995, f. 64<sup>v</sup> recommends it for a young squire; and British Library, MS Royal 17. D. IV, f. 87<sup>r</sup> specifies an infant.
15. The J.B. account of hawks' diseases and remedies may be considered a more expansive type of list, yet even this element is occasionally reduced (as in Lincoln's Inn Library, London, MS Hale 148) to a simple list of ailments.

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