January 18, 1535
There is much talk within the monastery regarding the King’s private affairs to which he has insisted on turning into a public matter. Because our King was refused a proper divorce from our good Queen Catherine of Aragon, he has reverted to attempts at usurping God’s divine power which has been bestowed on our Pope. Just this past summer Richard Leyton arrived and questioned us incessantly regarding our work here, even down to the clothing we wear and food we eat!1 Brother Bernard tells me to not worry and continue my daily work in the library and scriptoriums. So that is what I shall do, although I do fear what this new “Church of England” means for our home and refuge.2 Brother John completed his study of two of our finest illuminated manuscripts, to which he says the binding could use some repair but otherwise they are in a condition with which scholars can use them without fear of too much damage. Tomorrow I shall return them to their proper position on the book wheel within the library.

January 23, 1535
A scholar visited today and was particularly interested in several of our works. I retrieved these items for him and dutifully watched on to ensure they did not leave our presence. Just last month a traveler stopped in to view some of our items, only to abscond with one of our most precious works.3 Brother Thomas was relieved of his duties in the


library and given task in the gardens for his lack of diligence and attentiveness on that particular day. In order to not offend our guest, I busied myself in the room by continuing work on my transcriptions while he continued his studies. My recommendation to chain some of our most valuable works to the table has gone unfulfilled. Brother Bernard still places faith within the Lords of Parliament regarding the future of the Catholic church and our monasteries. I reminded him of the destruction of other houses of God just several years prior. He appears to be unconcerned and adamant that the Blessed Mother Mary will protect our sacred order.

February 16, 1535
My greatest fear has been realized. The Lords of Parliament have passed a most dreadful and blasphemous act, what is being call the “Suppression of Religious Houses Act” and I can only imagine what horrors await us...

March 3, 1535
I am writing from a farmhouse several miles from our sacred monastery... or rather what remains. Today men disturbed our studies and demanded we retreat from our home, leaving all possessions behind. As I ran to the library to ensure they were not pilfering anything of value within it. I knew I could not save all of the books and scrolls within our building, but perhaps I could gather a few to keep from their filthy, heathen hands. As I entered the library I was shocked to find six men throwing our books carelessly into wooden boxes. I demanded to know what their plans were for these books to which they replied, “These belong to King Henry VIII, ruler of the Church of England, to do with as he pleases.” I wept as I watched them throw hundred year old works of art into the boxes. Not only for the destruction of my home but for the destruction of knowledge contained within our ancient library. Centuries of honorable devotion painstakingly poured into those

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4 Chains were used to secure some books to the desk, due to high theft rates of rare and valuable materials. Harris, M. H. (1999). *History of Libraries of the Western World*. Scarecrow Press. 102.

papers by the Brothers before me, only to be taken brutally, all for the sake of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn!