IN VIA, IN CAMERA, IN CAPELLA: PROFESSIONALIZATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE IDEAL IN ENGLAND, c. 1150-1450

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This project critically examines England's late medieval bureaucratic culture by seeking its origins in political and administrative literature penned in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Late medieval royal government administrators inherited a constellation of anxieties, perceptions, and motivations implicated in the joint processes of documentary production and self-construction. From the earliest days of England's bureaucracy civil servants labored to develop, implement, and maintain record-keeping technologies in a high-pressure atmosphere that inspired them to write beyond their official duties. Such texts, including letters, governance treatises, procedural manuals, and poetry, respond to persistent concerns over financial and social insecurity. They contemplate the nature of knowledge and its potential loss, metonymically reflecting on the boundaries of selfhood and loss of self. This dissertation explores how administrative employees from varied backgrounds—clergyman and lay, wealthy and middling,

schoolman and nobleman—constructed a socially enfranchised bureaucratic culture and identity that cut across traditionally rigid social categories by variously accentuating the indispensability of their spiritual, scribal, legal, and fiscal skill-sets. It questions, in particular, why administrators persistently wrote about the dangers and destructive potential of writing.

The dissertation's title refers to duties that took administrators "on the road, in chambers, and in chapel" to serve England's king. This phrase comes from a letter written around 1182 by clergyman and statesman Peter of Blois, who faced what is called the "clerical dilemma"—he and many of his fellow school graduates wished to deploy their advanced education in the world as administrators and royal advisors, but conservative colleagues insisted that doing so betrayed their clerical oaths. I argue in Chapter One that Peter and contemporaries reimagined the genre of court criticism in order to assert their professional worth, insisting in political writing on the great need for Christian men of wisdom at the royal court. In Chapter Two, I show how in the final quarter of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth, authors of the manual *Dialogue of the Exchequer* and law compendia *Glanvill* and *Bracton* similarly reflected on the conflicted nature of administrative writing and the great need accurately to record and preserve knowledge. The process of crafting novel genres led these authors to undertake an assessment and categorization of both personal and professional knowledge, intertwining them textually. Echoing this sentiment near the end of the Middle Ages, the subject of Chapter 3, Privy Seal scribe Thomas Hoccleve focused his poetic oeuvre on the material and spiritual

risks posed by writing, including madness, social alienation, and poverty. He laments bureaucratic breakdown and asserts that poet-administrators are ideal confederates for the proper maintenance of royal communication networks. Ultimately, I argue, administrative writers stressed the dangers and difficulties of writing because through exaggerated complaints they could insist that their scribal and poetic duties performed burdensome yet critical social, political, and cultural labor including maintaining collegial networks and safeguarding and transmitting collective knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I will not presume to write a thoroughly medieval modesty clause here, but I will quote John of Salisbury and say that “I do not blush to praise those who are the authors of my progress.” This dissertation owes very much to the inspiration, support, and advice of many people in the Rutgers history department and farther afield. I would like to thank my advisor, Jim Masschaele, and the members of my committee, Samantha Kelly, Paola Tartakoff, and Larry Scanlon. Graduate advisors Seth Koven, Belinda Davis, and Alastair Bellany provided vital support in material and immaterial ways. Additionally, the tireless efforts of support staff in the history office cannot be appreciated enough, and I offer special thanks to Dawn Ruskai and Candace Walcott-Shepherd.

It is daunting to undertake a study about the dangers of study and writing, particularly when one’s authors stress the poverty, madness, and misery that the pen brings. I will take a more hopeful and optimistic view of this project, because I have benefitted from the insight and encouragement of so many colleagues and friends. The medieval community at Rutgers has provided interdisciplinary fellowship—and, sometimes, wine receptions. I thank Ana Pairet, Dustin Neighly, Melissa Reynolds, Kristin Pinyan, Mike Hill, Lauren McConnell, Alyssa Coltrain, April Graham, Danielle Allor, and Theresa O’Byrne for their thoughtful conversations. I also thank the group of medievalist at the University of Connecticut who first introduced me to medieval administrative history and many other subjects that continue to challenge and fascinate me: David Benson, Bob

Hasenfratz, Fred Biggs, Kathleen Tonry, Leah Schwebel, Pami Longo, Kisha Tracy, Lindy Brady, and Brandon Hawk. On the other end of the spectrum, this project has benefitted from the feedback of anonymous reviewers as well as conference attendees at the International Congress for Medieval Studies; Inter-university Doctoral Consortium Medieval Conference; Vagantes Medieval Graduate Student Conference; and College English Association Annual Conference. Chapter four contains a version of "By communynge is the beste assay": Gossip and the Speech of Reason in Hoccleve's *Series*," *Mediaevalia*, forthcoming 2018.

As most medievalists discover, however, our community is a small one and our ranks of friends and colleagues are necessarily filled, to our benefit, by members of other fields. For this reason I am and have long been grateful for Katie Lee, Ann Gordon, Abby Reardon, Lauren Swift, and Ken Moss. The very least my family deserves is a recognition here of my overwhelming gratitude at their patience with this perpetual student. As I have learned is customary, John of Salisbury ought to have the last word: "What you read here is some of it good, some of it mediocre, but much of it bad: there is no other way…in which a book is made."

DEDICATION

For C and L

Contents

I reste in skynnes off dede bestis

—John Lydgate, *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*

1
Introduction: The Foundations of Bureaucratic Culture in England

> All places...are very full of frivolities,
> the whole troup of which is hostile to you:
> in the church frivolities reign, and in the royal court,
> in the cloister they reign, and in the pontiff's house
>
> —John of Salisbury, *Entheticus Minor*

> These are forms to get the forms that enable us to order more forms, sir.
>
> —Corporal Radar O'Reilly

It has become a Western cultural commonplace to revel in the unaccommodating absurdity of red tape, from Dickens' Circumlocution Office to *M*A*S*H*'s biting critique of the military-industrial complex. Perhaps in retaliation for this, the study of governmental and administrative history tends toward wholly serious investigations of minutiae, the finer points of documents and procedure. Close to 100 years ago, T. F. Tout was able to claim that the administrative history of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England was "largely unwritten."[1] Since then extensive research on medieval England's developing bureaucratization has elucidated the operation of exchequer, chancery, and various other offices sprung from the royal household and the documents they produced—documents which became the lifeblood of government routines. Yet study of England's government and administration has often been less a matter of cultural history and more a matter of locating civil service within state centralization and the

[1] T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber, and the Small Seals* (1920-33; repr., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1937), 1:1.

vagaries of kingship, couching bureaucracy within a bigger picture of English royalty and government. Institutional histories revolve around the personalities of and relationships between kings and magnates, using administration as a tool to understand kings, their favorites, and political intrigue.[2] D. A. Carpenter complains, for example, that the chancery's relative immobilization around the turn of the fourteenth century caused its textual production to "cease to reveal the personal will and character of the king."[3] But what of the "will and character" of the agents of textual production, the scribes and administrators themselves? What can we learn about those men who penned the multiplying documents, who, though laboring in departments sloughed off in turn from the king's chamber, remained at the heart of royal governance?

In the episode of *M*A*S*H* in which Radar, the outfit's tireless clerk, utters the above epigraph, viewers watch the camp's commanding officer mindlessly signing any forms that get near him, a habitual submission reminiscent of the replication of documents growing in force in twelfth-century European governments.[4] Along with providing administrative jobs for Europe's intellectual elite, the proliferation of writing furnished many frustrations for documents'

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[2] Historians have tied archival intensification to the paranoia of King John, for instance; and the chancellor's independent budgeting and operation of the chancery, to the barons' plotting to move the machinery of administration further out of the king's reach. Nicholas Vincent, "Why 1199? Bureaucracy and Enrolment under John and his Contemporaries," in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Adrian Jobson (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2004), 43; T. F. Tout, "The Household of the Chancery and Its Disintegration," in *Essays in History Presented to Reginald Lane Poole*, ed. H. W. C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), 48.

[3] David A. Carpenter, "The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century," in Jobson, *English Government*, 49-69. Likewise, Vincent, writing about the difficulties in pinpointing the timing and reasons behind the watershed of enrollment, explicitly makes his a history of kingship rather than administration when he concludes with a reminder to historians of how to temper their zest for quantification: "there was much more to medieval kingship than just the making of rolls" ("Why 1199?" 48).

[4] Radar O'Reilly, MASH 1.23 "Cease-Fire"

earnest producers, but also a means of voicing these frustrations. Radar O'Reilly's statement about paperwork is an indication of the inefficiency and wastefulness of a bulky bureaucratic system, but it also evokes the prescience a successful servant of this bureaucratic machine must have in order to function and advance. The excerpt above from a political poem by John of Salisbury is the tip of a medieval iceberg, a large corpus of texts written by and about government structures and the men who staff them or move in the court orbit as advisors, *familiares*, diplomats, or ecclesiastical dignitaries. Medieval bureaucrats reacted to the growing importance—and outrageousness—of red tape in multiform ways. Some produced literature across many genres that sought to define their own personal role in governance while also characterizing bureaucracy or its component parts as a distinct socio-occupational sphere. As England's bureaucratization advanced between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries different sorts of civil servants engaged in textual production, yet the stresses they reacted to, the anxieties and worldviews they betray, and their literary strategies share important similarities. Courtiers and officials originated from various backgrounds, but generally those who wrote were not intrinsically powerful through noble blood or familiarity with the monarch. Their texts advertise and defend special skills and competencies which promote their facility as royal advisors or assistants, while insisting that their somewhat peripheral position makes them an ideal communicative interface between king, government and governed.

This project asks a seemingly straightforward set of questions: what did

administrators write about their job experience? What were their motives for writing such texts as governance manuals, histories, verse satire, letter collections, sermons, and philosophic treatises? How does the meta-commentary present in their non-official writing reveal the authors' perceptions of the proper social role of bureaucrats and scribes—or even construct such a role? Surprisingly pervasive in administrators' appraisals of life at or near the royal court is the theme of long suffering, namely the hardships and privations of scribal labor. Here is a connection over time, between the early staffers of the nascent twelfth-century administration and the functionaries of the better-developed late medieval institutions. The life of medieval administrators was hard, a fact that they wouldn't let their contemporaries forget. Peter of Blois, a twelfth-century canon, archdeacon, and civil servant, coined the term *miseriae curialium,* complaining that courtiers labored only to receive "plumbeus," "crudus" bread and "corruptum," "vapidum" wine in return.[5] He admitted that "the courtier's life is the death of the soul" and refers to the more courtly phase of his career as his "lost days," when it was "madness" to spend time composing non-spiritual texts.[6] Later in the century Richard fitz Nigel repeatedly stresses that exchequer tasks are "labor infinitus atque…maximus" due to the need for care and

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[5] Peter of Blois wrote this about the court around 1182 in Letter 14, printed in Lena Wahlgren, ed. *The Letter Collections of Peter of Blois: Studies in the Manuscript Collection* (Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1993), 149. John Cotts discusses this excerpt in "Peter of Blois and the Problem of the 'Court' in the Late Twelfth Century," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XXVII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 2004*, ed. John Gillingham (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2005), 81.

[6] Letters 14 and 76, quoted in Peter Dronke, "Peter of Blois and Poetry at the Court of Henry II," *Mediaeval Studies* 38 (1976): 194-5, 197. The term *miseriae curialium* appears in Peter's letter 48B. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1985), 58.

attention.[7] Echoing this sentiment almost 250 years later, Privy Seal scribe Thomas Hoccleve wrote that "many men...weenen that wrytynge / No trauaille is; they holde it but a game: /...It is wel gretter labour than it seemeth."[8] Scribes must concentrate without joyful distractions, and earn hunchbacks and eyestrains for their labor. They also risked mental illness, and in another poem the author-narrator faces into a mirror and is appalled at what he sees. In “My Complaint” of around 1420, one of a handful of petitionary works bemoaning his misspent youth and unpaid wages, Hoccleve parallels Peter’s themes of uncertainty and self-doubt. He describes the fallout of a brief period of madness suffered years before: he must practice sane expressions before the mirror to convince alienated friends he is lucid and able to carry on with his work. Like Peter, Thomas feels pressured by peers to stop writing and working for the royal government.

These two men served an English bureaucracy that had transformed over the course of the centuries, and entered into it from different backgrounds. Peter was a school-educated cleric hopeful for a bishopric, who wrote treatises on the questionable appropriateness of clergy’s presence at a secular court or work within secular (or even ecclesiastical) administration. He served William II of Sicily, Henry II of England, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and several Archbishops of Canterbury as tutor, scribe, legal advocate and diplomat. Hoccleve took minor

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[7] Richard Fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario*, ed. and trans. Emilie Amt (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 52. Further citations to this text will refer to page numbers of the English portion of this facing-page translation.

[8] Hoccleve complains in many places about the dangers of scribal work, which damages the eyes, spine, and mind, but the line quoted above comes from his 1412 *Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1999), lines 988-1029.

orders which he later gave up in order to marry, accepting that he had little potential for church promotion or benefice. He spent his entire career serving in one office, the Privy Seal, rising only to the role of a supervisor. Yet he and his bureaucratic forebears wrote remarkably similar literature about the nature of courtiers, courts, and secular government, which they describe as teeming with gossip, false flattery, and scandal-mongering. If court was a cesspool of sin and iniquity, why did clergy passionately wish to serve there? If the enervating labor of composition was so detrimental and inflicted regret on scribal employees—especially those who could have devoted their energies to spiritual pursuits—why did administrators increase their burden by producing extra-official documents? One simple answer to the question is that in an age of low literacy, bureaucrats were often the best-educated men and thus bore the responsibility for textual production and knowledge transmission. Yet bureaucrats claimed to be under tremendous pressure *not* to write, due to religious obligations like Peter or a sort of schizophrenic paranoia of alienation like Hoccleve, and they ironically yet purposefully took up this subject in their writing.

I explore how the act of writing and the contents of textual productions comprise and elucidate "bureaucratic culture," a culture shared by royal civil servants, ecclesiastical administrators and other learned men in their orbit, and constituted by a membership identity distinct from other possible markers such as "clerk," "courtier" or "new man." Bureaucratic culture in England has largely been the purview of historians of the later Middle Ages, and tends to be synchronic, reconstructing the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century intellectual and

political surroundings of writers with little attention to what came before. Thomas Hoccleve is an important figure in this research and for the history of administration in general, and since Tout's seminal study historians and literary critics have long recognized the value of Hoccleve's self-revelations.[9] Ethan Knapp, an influential commentator on Hoccleve, views bureaucratic culture as a relatively new phenomenon in Lancastrian England and Hoccleve "as an early chapter in the genealogy of bureaucratic culture."[10] To Knapp, secularization and a post-Chaucerian vernacular literary context were the two prominent forces shaping bureaucratic culture. Other important features include a heavy reliance on (and ambivalent, contested attitude toward) patronage of wealthy or powerful men; the financial insecurity such patronage can produce; distancing of administrative departments from court; and peer support networks with shared business and other interests that could extend to the Continent.[11] I think that Knapp is correct in noting certain changes to bureaucratic culture during this late medieval phase, but it is misleading to suggest that Hoccleve is the bellwether of something quite new in the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

Crucially, Knapp's study connects Hoccleve's official and extra-official writing, linking his poetic labors to his broader social and occupational

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[9] When Tout first discussed Hoccleve as one window into bureaucratic identities, he described the poet as little-known. "The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century: A Lecture Delivered at the John Rylands Library on the 15th December, 1915" (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1916), 27-30. Tout returned to this subject in his "Household of the Chancery" and *Administrative History* vols. 1 and 5. Tout is, for example, Ethan Knapp's jumping-off point for his first study of Hoccleve's self-revelations, "Bureaucratic Identity and Literary Practice in Lancastrian England," *Medieval Perspectives* 9 (1994): 63 (this essay also appears as chapter one in *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001]).
[10] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 5, 186.
[11] Ibid., 2-15.

circumstances. “Bureaucracy and literature are types of textual production that we have come to think of as utterly different,” but recognizing the participation of administrative personnel in the “cultural project of ‘Chaucerian poetry’” offers important clues regarding the motives and meaning of such writing.[12] For other scholars of Middle English literature as well, it is now a fairly well established truth that administrative experience colored civil servants’ worldviews, thought processes, and literary production.[13] Hoccleve’s training and occupation must be taken into consideration for a holistic understanding of his poetry’s content and style. Yet Knapp’s ultimate concern is to better understand the “importance of bureaucratic culture in the formation of the literary field”; to imbricate bureaucratic histories—involving departments detaching from court, transitioning to English, and hiring more lay men—with literary histories.[14] A penetrating study by Sarah Tolmie similarly argues that Hoccleve uses bureaucratic techniques specifically to professionalize the lay vernacular writer.[15] Is it possible to ask not how Hoccleve’s bureaucratic culture indicates what type of poet he wished to be, but

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[12] Ibid., 4.

[13] Early studies like H. C. Schulz, "Thomas Hoccleve: Scribe,” *Speculum* 12 (1937): 71-81 and A. Compton Reeves, "Thomas Hoccleve: Bureaucrat,” *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., 5 (1974): 201-14 gave available evidence of Hoccleve's education and career without connecting this data to what we already knew about Hoccleve as a poet. More recent studies see the impulse to write literature as an outgrowth of bureaucratic training and the workplace environment and stresses. Regarding Hoccleve, Knapp sees the *Formulary* as not just a utilitarian manual to train new Privy Seal scribes, but a literary outgrowth of his need to construct an authoritative persona. Likewise, poems like "La male regle" are modeled on bureaucratic texts, in this case petitions. Knapp, "Bureaucratic Identity and the Construction of the Self in Hoccleve's *Formulary* and *La male regle*,” *Speculum* 74 (1999): 357-76. See also Ann Astell, "Chaucer and the Division of Clerks," in *Chaucer and the Universe of Learning* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 32-60; Jenna Mead, "Chaucer and the Subject of Bureaucracy,” *Exemplaria* 19 (2007): 39-66; Sarah Tolmie, “The Professional: Thomas Hoccleve,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 29 (2007): 341-73.

[14] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 3-5, 15.

[15] Tolmie’s “contention is that Hoccleve’s mission was to create the secular poet, himself, as a professional subject and to figure him explicitly into the economy of representation” (“Professional,” 342).

instead how and why he used poetry to craft himself into a certain sort of administrator? Although laicization and vernacularization are hallmarks of a later period of English administration, there is remarkable continuity from the writing of administrators in earlier periods. Questions of spirituality and language use were also at the heart of difficult problems facing the bureaucrats who *did* write the early chapters of the history Hoccleve later contributed to, and so the differences between men like Peter and Hoccleve serve to highlight the greater continuity of the elements of bureaucratic culture.

Diachronic study of administrators over this period reveals the degree to which reading, writing, and self-expression were contested subjects for medieval bureaucrats. Hoccleve is a barometer of his times but strongly reminiscent of administrative writing from preceding periods. It is difficult to assess how much he or his colleagues knew about their literary or administrative predecessors reaching back into the twelfth century, but the steady persistence of shared cultural elements suggests a set of textual tropes meaningful (if not entirely unique to) England's bureaucrats. Recent work on administrators has been attuned to their attempts at self-expression and identity creation, for themselves as individuals as well as for occupational categories.[16] Viewed over time a trend

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[16] For example see Lawrence R. Jannuzzi, "Galbert of Bruges: The Notary as Poet," in *The Middle Ages in Texts and Texture: Reflections on Medieval Sources*, ed. Jason Glenn, 153-64 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011). Jannuzzi argues that notary Galbert of Bruges' fact- and detail-oriented legal training moved him to put into writing his story of the death of Charles the Good, Count of Flanders in 1127, and to use this narrative to "make sense of the disintegration he saw around him at the time" (157). Regarding John of Salisbury's account of Thomas Becket's death, Richard Lounsbury says his "erudition," namely his "reading in the ancient theorists…shape[d] his account." "The Case of the Erudite Eyewitness: Cicero, Lucan, and John of Salisbury," *Allegorica* 11 (1990): 15. C. T. Allmand says it is "typical of the cast of mind of a lawyer or a notary…to record a version of the events through which they had lived." "The Civil

emerges, and Hoccleve appears unmistakably as part of a longstanding brotherhood of bureaucrats who shared similar frustrations or at least claimed to, and who wrote about these challenges within texts that served purposes of occupational instruction alongside identity construction. Writers situate themselves relative to other social groups, such as nobility, royal *familiares*, courtiers, kings, bishops, and scholars, adapting to changes administrative departments experienced as they grew more complex and independent of court and king. This project traces the self-conscious creation and maintenance of bureaucratic culture in England between the mid-twelfth and early fifteenth centuries, undertaken by administrators whose very identity was being contested by and within complex and evolving social hierarchies. It seeks origin points for features of later medieval administrative literature and bureaucratic culture, with the goal of better understanding not only Hoccleve but the bureaucratic condition itself.

The feature which most marks out Hoccleve as idiosyncratic is what Tout called "his habit of talking about himself," which a literary critic has less generously called "constant gossiping about himself."[17] Hoccleve's peculiarity was long judged an "eccentricity," leaving scholars wondering if it was worth

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Lawyers," in *Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England*, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 164. Studies of Walter Map have taken a similar tack. Sian Echard says of his courtly and administrative experience that "It seems reasonable to suppose that such aspirations and such surroundings might lead to invention, experimentation, and self-exploration; and indeed, artistic self-consciousness has been identified as a characteristic of the era." "Map's Metafiction: Author, Narrator and Reader in *De nugis curialium*," *Exemplaria* 8 (1996): 294.

[17] Tout, "English Civil Service," 29; H. S. Bennett, *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 147.

exploring a poet so little representative of his time.[18] Yet a backward glance suggests that self-talk is a hallmark of administrative writing, not solely for self-aggrandizement or an autobiographical impulse, but due in part to a close association felt between the subjective self and documentary production. Hoccleve fears being forgotten by colleagues, which, I will argue, is emblematic of the poet's worries about administrative shortcomings and inefficiencies that leave England's bureaucratic knowledge at risk. In the late twelfth-century exchequer manual *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, comprising a dialogue reminiscent of Hoccleve's in his "Dialogue with a Friend," treasurer Richard fitz Nigel remarks at length about potential loss or mischaracterization of information. Though unnamed, his main character appears a surrogate for himself, an exchequer master with vital knowledge to transmit and opinions on proper creation and protection of official documents. Legal writers over the course of the following century maintain Fitz Nigel's concern for accuracy and permanency, and although the genre of the legal precedent manual does not allow for the same personality Fitz Nigel or Hoccleve display, texts like *Glanvill* and *Bracton* share their dialogic nature. They textualize oral exchanges of the sort in which judicial colleagues engage in law courts, and depict lineages of lawmen constructed through apprenticeship and networks of contemporaries laboring collaboratively to protect and transmit knowledge.

Alongside the dangers and potential benefits of language, another significant bit of gossip Hoccleve reveals regards his feelings about clergy,

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[18] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 9.

particularly that a cleric who "keepith his service / In court; his labour there shal nat moule [grow moldy]; / But to his cure looketh he ful foule."[19] Any surprise at these lines' similarity to a twelfth-century treatise on court criticism might be dispelled by the argument that Hoccleve simply treats tropes common to the text he was writing, a mirror for princes. Yet he freely divulges his decision to marry and his experience as a young clerk waiting for Church promotion. These admissions are far from convention, even if one allows that autobiographical details may be invented to serve a larger rhetorical purpose. Secularity altered the atmosphere of English bureaucracy and broader socio-cultural developments, and it is rare to see the viewpoint of a man who himself made the transformation to layman. Yet Hoccleve's broader circumstance was not new to the fifteenth century regardless, but part of a late development in church-state relations—and one which placed him in a position similar to John of Salisbury or Peter of Blois. They experienced what has been called the "clerical dilemma," a set of anxieties infusing careers of men educated at cathedral schools or universities who desired administrative careers.[20] Throughout his career Peter confronted insecurities surrounding the proper social role of an educated cleric with ambitions for government service—ambitions encouraged by the demand for educated men in nascent European bureaucracies, yet countered by conservative clerical traditions.

A generation and more later, administrators like Fitz Nigel or lawmen who

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[19] *Regiment*, lines 1419-21.
[20] See for example John Cotts' monograph on Peter of Blois, *The Clerical Dilemma: Peter of Blois & Literate Culture in the Twelfth Century* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

remained clerks already faced a situation in which they could not claim to carry out spiritual duties or gain authority in this way. Writers like John of Salisbury defended clerical roles at court or in government due to their Christian wisdom, but over time clerical status was an educational opportunity for those who did not desire care of souls, and career-related writing offers evidence of writers contending with this aspect of their identities. By the fifteenth century Hoccleve faced his own version of the clerical dilemma, and his answer was to give up on trying to have it both ways. His poetry shows that this decision and its consequences impacted him spiritually and materially much like Peter and John's own lifelong dilemma did. Clerical status remained significant for civil servants in Hoccleve's day, the issue impacted by dual processes: clergy had become commonplace in administration without the controversy Peter of Blois experienced, yet the secularization that accompanied bureaucratization in England complicated the hold that clerical dynasties had on certain administrative positions. Ecclesiastical luminaries continued to succeed in secular government while royal favorites received bishoprics, but growth called for the employment of many more functionaries of lesser status like Hoccleve whose experience of civil service was different from someone like Peter's, and whose self-identification and -expression projected this experience. The later middle ages witnessed a distrust of clergy in administration, less because of the conventional spiritual objections than because of the greater foothold laymen had achieved. Hoccleve's choice was not about whether to remain in secular service, but whether to retain clerical status. This eventuality was one John of Salisbury

or Peter of Blois did not even ponder, yet it had the same disorientating and disillusioning effect on Hoccleve as did his predecessors' dilemmas.

Historicizing bureaucratic culture can help us understand the major factors at work in Hoccleve's poetry, and the degree to which secularity had a negative impact on him. Twelfth-century clerical writers could take their theological training and spiritual authority largely for granted, and had to defend them against accusations that court or administrative service degraded and corrupted. Hoccleve's problem instead was that his connection to religious authority was tenuous at best. This was one side effect of the movement of administrative departments out of court, a process that underpins the bureaucratic experience. Administrative texts accompanied key developments in this process, and literary critics certainly take note of the alienating impact of the settling of the Privy Seal on Hoccleve's outlook.[21] Yet this process had been underway for a long time, and it will be instructional to evaluate how previous administrative writers experienced transitions similar to Hoccleve's. Furthermore viewing the going out of court as a historical process will help us to better understand the impact it actually had on Hoccleve. The work of A. L. Brown has proven popular with historians and literary critics for the convenient answers he provides regarding late medieval stressors. Distance from royal authority caused anxious bureaucrats to collude with government in order to bolster privilege and patronage. I think that this growing distance very much impacted textual descriptions of administrators and administrative procedures, but not only in

[21] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 4-5.

anxiety-ridden ways. Semi-independence could be a marker of pride for highly-skilled civil servants. Attention to secularization alongside departmental sedentariness can indicate how Hoccleve experienced distance from both ecclesiastical and royal power centers. Clergy became ever more accepted in secular government, yet this required an acceptance of a clerical practitioner without explicit spiritual duties; Hoccleve eventually had to give up even this status. His participation in the tropes of clerical dilemma suggests clerical identity is as important a factor in his poetry as the related going out of court of the Privy Seal, and that his poetry attempted to compensate for declining religious authority.

The number of administrators who wrote non- or extra-official texts is proportionately small to the number of civil servants who worked directly for the English government, or for ecclesiastical or seigneurial administrations with some association with the central sphere. Yet their texts balance temporal specificity with participation in common anxieties and meditations, allowing the broader corpus to shed light on the substance of any text. Administrators did not write entirely conventional texts for basic motives such as career advancement. Hoccleve had unique solutions to problems that had faced his predecessors, and historicizing these problems will allow us to better understand Hoccleve's positions. His writing is concerned with staking his claim in society and the lack of a secure social estate for men in his circumstances. Rooted as his experience is in the environment of Lancastrian rule, his problems are not so different from those faced by administrators in earlier periods of English history. We can see in

the twelfth century a similar concern for identity and estate, for definitions necessary for financial security as well as making the most of one's potential and preparation for a demanding career. In both eras, administrative writers turned to the production and consumption of literature to reconcile the artificially-disparate halves of their identities. They wanted to have it both ways, but found that it was often more practicable to overcome their dilemmas rhetorically. Administrators faced real challenges and conflicting advice, but they always turned to writing rather than away from it to resolve their contested selves and contested authorship.

The remainder of this introduction will provide a brief history of English administration emphasizing the processes of secularization and of departments going out of court, and an overview of the following chapters. First, a word ought to be said about terminology. This project uses the words administrator, bureaucrat, official, and civil servant, somewhat interchangeably, to describe men who performed scribal duties of many sorts. Their skillset included reading and writing, and often numeracy or some legal knowledge about writs and court procedure. Regardless of their shortcomings they remain useful labels in discussions of the ways medieval people characterized themselves socially or occupationally and ways modern historians and literary critics might form our own categories to provide new ways of thinking about medieval experiences. I wish to explore whether and how learned men in England may have perceived a cadre of administratively-proficient functionaries distinct due to related training and employment, even though they also claim membership in such opposing

categories as nobleman or “new man,” lay or clerical, university-educated or apprenticeship-trained. Speaking of bureaucrats and bureaucracy facilitates this aim even though the terms are potentially anachronistic for a historical period in which a divine-right king had ultimate control over government actions.[22]

True bureaucracy may have emerged with industrialization yet this designation is itself open to historical debate. Historians of Tudor government argue that that period witnessed the first emergence of a modern bureaucracy in England because of its institutional independence and “depersonalization,” yet those studying the Lancastrian era claim that all these features of administrative modernization actually appeared earlier with a brief late fifteenth-century suspension under the Yorkist kings.[23] The more neutral term “administrator” suggests scribal duties without the necessity of a fully bureaucratic system. Yet the intimate nature of the English king’s personal rule was already diminishing by the twelfth century when departments like the exchequer and common law courts moved out of the royal household for greater efficiency and capacity. Royal authority still sanctioned individual lawmakers and functionaries, their department procedures, and the law itself, but these arms of royal administration operated semi-independently and in the twelfth century were actively developing mechanisms for replenishing their ranks from pools of trained men without direct royal oversight or decision-making. Though it comes loaded with the tinge of

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[22] Vincent, "Why 1199?" 26.

[23] For a brief overview of these debates, Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 7-8, and 2n4. Knapp’s own study of post-Chaucerian vernacular literature accepts that the writing offices’ establishment away from court “mark their emergence from the shadows of personal regal government into the full-blown modernity of an independent civil service” (4-5).

critical economic and political theories targeting capitalist bureaucratic complexes, the term "bureaucracy" offers a practical set of skills and occupational goals advantageous in a study of medieval modernization. Twelfth-century school graduates, as one example of administrative functionaries, did not experience the burgeoning of documentary production or bureaucratic technology in the exact same ways as would a civil servant living through industrialization; but if the term seems out of place in a medieval study, I believe this will serve as a useful reminder of how the administrative estate may have felt out of place in the evolving socio-political environments of central and late medieval England—and that this was in fact one motive for producing administrative texts.

Even with the more neutral term "administrator" there remains the complication that many men who carried out administrative duties did not hold official titles.[24] This was more the case at the start of our period, the twelfth century, than the later middle ages, when the need for dedicated positions with discrete duties had been recognized. The nature of a household government was such that kings had access to a bulk of men with varied skillsets and inclinations who could be put to tasks sporadically as need arose. Judith Green favors the term "king's servants," which incorporates "all those employed in royal

[24] Roger of Salisbury for example, Henry I's chief minister, briefly bore the title of chancellor but also served as de-factor chief justiciar without officially carrying such a title. W. L. Warren, *The Governance of Norman and Angevin England, 1086-1272* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 80-1; C. Warren Hollister and John Baldwin, "The Rise of Administrative Kingship: Henry I and Philip Augustus," *American Historical Review* 83 (1978): 876. See also Judith A. Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 134. William Maltravers is another example of an advisor and *familiaris* of Henry who seems to have had much influence and a role in financial administration, but no office or administrative title (134-5).

administration," such as those in household, financial, and judicial offices as well as local offices like sheriff and forester.[25] Yet this is a broadly encompassing category, less useful for a study of the revolving group of men who found themselves skirting the perimeter between the king's household and the semi-independent central or ecclesiastical administration. Some personnel certainly did move from seigneurial or county positions into central administration, and such a career experience is worthy of its own studies, but these men are not represented in the group who wrote literature about royal administration. The term "courtier" is widely used in research literature but problematic. To Kate Forhan, "The twelfth-century courtier was also what we would call a 'bureaucrat,' often an administrator or magistrate. He was an educated man and a cleric, with some training in philosophy, logic, and rhetoric as well as theology and law."[26] Yet other scholars use the term as a broad category also encompassing lay officials or those at court without any administrative roles, or clergy who did not necessarily have school education.

If we turn to medieval texts themselves as a guide to terminology, our options become even less clear. A large problem here is that the men who wrote administrative literature were often clergy, and so while they undertook both ecclesiastical and secular duties, the lay/clerical divide required terminological distinctions that can blur understandings of the roles they played. *Curiales* is a popular term to describe either courtiers in general or specifically administrators,

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[25] Green, *England under Henry I*, 134.
[26] Kate Langdon Forhan, "A Twelfth-Century Bureaucrat and the Life of the Mind: The Political Thought of John of Salisbury," in *Proceedings of the 10th Annual PMR Conference*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1986), 66.

because it has the advantage of being a word medieval people themselves used.[27] Yet it is also not always clear what medieval writers meant by *curialis*, and the word tends to be derogatory.[28] *Curialis* is variously used by modern historians to refer to courtiers dependent on the Crown for their livelihood whether lay or clerical; to ecclesiastical administrators; to clergy serving in royal government or as courtiers; or to clergy serving for solely spiritual purposes in the royal curia.[29] Ralph Turner initially wrote that he prefers *curiales* in order to emphasize the growing importance of those bureaucrats who are close to the king and "compet[e] for patronage...and status."[30] He used it to distinguish between the sphere immediately surrounding the itinerant king, as opposed to local officials or those settled in the Westminster departments.[31] This distinction pools men with different occupations, including noblemen with advisory-only roles, while it excludes those administrators who did not typically travel with the court, so this term can be misleading especially regarding the later middle ages. Drawn into the issue further by a negative review by John Gillingham, Turner

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[27] Ralph Turner, “Toward a Definition of the *Curialis*: Educated Court Cleric, Courtier, Administrator, or "New Man"? *Medieval Prosopography* 15 (1994): 4.
[28] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 13-15, 29-30, 33. *Curialis* could simply mean courtier, but by the time Orderic Vitalis wrote in the early twelfth century the word was “pejorative” (4). In Peter Damian’s 1072 *Contra clericos aulicos* the word appears as a noun criticizing royal servants-turned-bishops (5).
[29] For example John Baldwin uses *curiales* to refer to a king’s curial clergy in *Masters, Princes and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 1:175-7; Jaeger means by *curiales* “the educated men in court service as advisors, tutors, servants, and chaplains of the king,” who could be lay or clergy (*Origins of Courtliness*, 4, 15); and Hollister and Baldwin use the term to mean “men whose [charter] attestations demonstrate frequent participation at court,” including those who have moved into positions such as justices, sheriffs exchequer officials who are only occasionally present with the king—in this way they can determine royal control over officials sent into the localities (”Administrative Kingship,” 887).
[30] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 13-15, 29-30, 33.
[31] Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust: Administrative Service and Upward Mobility in Angevin England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 14.

studied the term *curialis* in greater depth and settled on a meaning that still emphasizes "new man" socio-economic status; a place in the royal household; baronial distrust of upstart administrators counseling the king; and an attitude of obsequious ambition.[32] Turner now excludes baronial *familiares* from the *curiales* category because they are not "seekers after careers in the king's service" in the way upwardly-mobile "new men" typically were.[33] This assumption about the motives of administrative courtiers is problematic, but more useful is Turner's use of the phrase "civil servant"—without remarking upon the word choice—in a statement about the difficulty of determining whether administrators who travelled or fixed in Westminster could be considered *curiales*.[34]

While modern bureaucracy might finds its origins in medieval administration, medieval bureaucracy is materially different from its modern counterpart. Valuable lessons about the the straightjacket of red tape from Radar O'Reilly, Dickens, or the surrealistic dead-ends reached by Kafka's "K" might reflect how England's early bureaucrats felt experiencing the invention and accretion of documentary solutions to regnal problems. But there is a risk of attributing too much of the modern to the middle ages, like for instance the association of bureaucracy to a machine. Earlier twentieth-century historians who pioneered work on nascent English administrations commonly referred to them as machine-like, notes Paul Milliman, even though "no one in the twelfth century

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[32] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis.*" Ultimately, *curialis* is "a subset of the larger category…of *familiaris regis*" (32). John Gillingham reviewed Turner's *Men Raised* in *Medieval Prosopography* 12 (1991): 129-31.
[33] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 29.
[34] Ibid., 30-1.

employed this mechanistic imagery." In fact the more common medieval metaphor was an organic one, like John of Salisbury's analogy of the branches of society and government as a human body.[35] Perhaps this gaffe stemmed from historians' concern with processes over people, institutions over subjectivities. This project will explore how administrative literature viewed documentary practices as becoming mechanical yet remaining personal, or at least requiring human knowledge and abilities to develop and function. Medieval administration was still very much a matter of human interaction rather than disinterested and mechanical performance of duties. Yet at the same time, even as an organic apparatus the medieval government demanded precision and prolificacy from employees. As such it motivated them to pen treatises compulsively putting tasks and information into order. This occupational pressure was also an existential one, as we see these writers worrying about a loss of knowledge that constitutes a loss of self.

Milliman quotes Reinhard Bendix's definition of bureaucracy's modern manifestation as "a body of officials whose performance of duty is professionalized and has consequently become independent of their sentiments and opinions." [36] This is certainly not true of medieval England, as this dissertation will show, because "sentiments and opinions" were still very much

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[35] Paul Milliman, "Ludus Scaccarii: Games and Governance in Twelfth-Century England," in *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, ed. Daniel E. O'Sullivan (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 64-5. As a few examples of modern historians using the "machinery" descriptor, see Richard Southern, "King Henry I," in *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 210, 228; Green, *England under Henry I*, 218; Turner, *Men Raised*, 6, 11, 19; Nick Barratt, "Finance on a Shoestring: The Exchequer in the Thirteenth Century," in Jobson, *English Government*, 85.

[36] Milliman, "Games and Governance," 65n11.

the concern of administrative personnel instrumental in the construction of early bureaucratic processes. Medieval civil servants were close to the objects and subjects of their forms and documents, and used official and unofficial output for self-expression and identity formation. I do not think that its differences from modern bureaucracy, though, preclude the application of the term to its medieval cousin. Administrative history cannot be divided cleanly into bureaucratic and pre-bureaucratic stages, and so it is more valuable to discover the nature of bureaucracy at different times and places. Medieval administrators were trying to figure out for themselves who they were and why, and the labels I use to refer to them are intended to facilitate these probes rather than impose definitions from without.

English Administrative History

When Tout wrote in 1920 that administrative history was largely unwritten, constitutional and political history had attracted more attention, and he wanted to correct what he saw as an imbalance in the work of two historians who had done much towards explicating the exchequer and chancery: William Stubbs and F. W. Maitland. He saw the need for greater contextualization of these offices and an understanding of their procedures and daily routines.[37] In the intervening years administrative history has achieved popularity as part of the institutional histories of kingship, justice, and the Church. Much of this work uses Tout as a starting point, tracing the rise of government bureaus, the types of documents they

[37] Tout, *Administrative History*, 1:2-7.

produced (and the growing authority of documents in general), and the tangled relationships between these bureaus and the king and his court.[38] We now know a considerable deal about why the English royal government started producing and archiving documents; how the chancery, exchequer, and royal household facilitated taxation and justice; and who held administrative offices and what their career trajectories were. Separating Peter of Blois and Thomas Hoccleve was a series of related changes—some historians go so far as to say revolutions—in the English government that witnessed an increasing reliance on the written word and record-keeping.[39] Governments across Europe began producing, preserving and utilizing records on a grander scale in the twelfth century. Some trends in record-keeping were common among France, the Papal Curia, and the Holy Roman Empire, but England stands out for special attention in a history of bureaucrats.

Bureaucratization in England proceeded more quickly than elsewhere in Europe in part because post-Conquest kings held large territories on both sides of the Channel, which posed great administrative difficulties.[40] In the twelfth

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[38] H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal of England* (London: H. M. S. O., 1926); Bertie Wilkinson, *The Chancery under Edward III* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1929) and *The Constitutional History of Medieval England, 1216-1399*, 3 vols. (London: Longmans, 1948-58); V. H. Galbraith, *Studies in the Public Records* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1948); Francis West, *The Justiciarship in England 1066-1232* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966); Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Bryce Dale Lyon, *A Constitutional and Legal History of Medieval England*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1980); Alan Harding, *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 36-59; Malcolm Richardson, *The Medieval Chancery under Henry V,* List and Index Society, Special Ser., 30 (Kew: List and Index Society, 1999).

[39] R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

[40] Vincent, "Why 1199?" 20; Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 869, 873. The growth of common law in England also required bureaucracy to operate and oversee court

century royal, county, seigneurial, and ecclesiastical governments alike came to use written documents more and more, as a means of communication and revenue collection.[41] Many English kings gained reputations as administrative reformers, though further work has sometimes shown that various procedures and principles emerged later and took longer to develop than was earlier supposed. It used to be thought that the first few Norman monarchs "not merely appropriated the governmental system of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors but ran it more efficiently," though since W. L. Warren voiced reservations about the "myth of Norman administrative efficiency" historians have revised their theories on how much government developed under the Norman kings and their advisors.[42] William the Conqueror and William Rufus oversaw the borrowing and adaptation of Anglo-Saxon practices such as the writ form and some judicial, financial and clerical infrastructure, prototypes for the exchequer and chancery.[43] These offices developed, alongside the *curia regis*, as the three primary divisions of an increasingly centralized royal government. Henry I was another reformer king whose contributions seem actually to have been limited; the exchequer and judicial system (including local and itinerant justices, and the first pipe roll) appear during his reign, but took on recognizable form only later in the twelfth

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systems, and early law professionals were often men who gained experience as administrators (Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 169).

[41] Clanchy, *Written Record*, 44-74.

[42] W. L. Warren, "The Myth of Norman Administrative Efficiency," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 34 (1984): 113. One of his theses is that seeming "innovations in administrative practices are…at least in part a response to problems which the Normans themselves had inadvertently created, and an attempt not so much to improve upon the Anglo-Saxon system as to…stop it collapsing" (115-16).

[43] Moore, *First European Revolution*, 4-6; Vincent, "Why 1199?" 19; Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 869. Green, *England under Henry I*, 42, 155.

century.[44]

Warren posits that Anglo-Norman novelties—including law books and administrative manuals—indicate Anglo-Saxon “middle managers” dying off and the ruling caste “having to learn to cope for themselves.”[45] Nevertheless Warren characterizes government under Henry I as “organised through administrative institutions” rather than the Anglo-Saxon “social mechanisms.”[46] Post-Conquest advancements resulted from attempts to stave off collapse, but steadily led the Anglo-Norman and Angevin kings toward administrative kingship. For example, the exchequer was a solution to taxation challenges which allowed officials to investigate and levy the holdings of individuals: “once royal government learned that it was possible to deal with individuals instead of simply with communities it had overcome one of the greatest inhibitions in the development of government.”[47] ”Administrative" kingship was new to Angevin England mostly in the degree to which the king relied on officials to carry out day-to-day tasks. Governance still stemmed from the will of the king, but now moved increasingly through an infrastructure of appointed officials who worked in the name of the Crown.[48] The first generations of administrators were renaissance men, often

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[44] One thing Henry I did succeed at was raising money through feudal structures as an alternative to geld: “the Anglo-Saxon royal governorship was replaced by a thorough-going feudal monarchy of the most ruthlessly exploitative king” (Warren, “Norman Administrative Efficiency,” 130-31). To Southern, “Henry I was not a creator of institutions; he contributed nothing to the theory of kingship or to the philosophy of government. He created men. It was his contribution to English government and society to insert into the social fabric men with a direct interest in the success of royal government,” or in other words “new men” (“King Henry I,” 212).
[45] Warren, “Norman Administrative Efficiency,” 118-19.
[46] Ibid.,132.
[47] Warren, “Norman Administrative Efficiency,” 131. An even more direct motivator for development of the early taxation infrastructure was raising Matilda’s dowry (Green, *England under Henry I*, 41).
[48] Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship."

holding multiple positions in the financial and judicial fields, moving between court and the localities (as well as between England and Normandy), and advising the king. Some twelfth-century royal administrators balanced duties as sheriffs, shire and eyre justices, and exchequer agents.[49] The central government "was marked by an ever-increasing concentration of authority in the hands of an elite group of *curiales* who gave the system its cohesion;….by 1130 they ran nearly everything."[50]

Yet government at this point was still an endeavor of the royal household. Some household roles had greater or lesser impact on royal government, and although dedicated finance and secretarial duties were emerging, sometimes the earliest officials were *de facto* holding no title. Letter-writing duties fell to the priests of the king's curia, and from the earliest days the Anglo-Norman kings had a chancellor who bore the royal seal and supervised the chaplains.[51] The nature of household service was such that clerks ostensibly hired for religious functions assisted in other areas requiring literate labor, such as diplomacy or supply record-keeping.[52] A recognizable exchequer process was in place by 1110, overseen by all-purpose minister and bishop Roger of Salisbury, who had

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[49] Ibid., 887, 889. Hubert Walter—Chief Justiciar, Lord Chancellor, Archbishop of Canterbury—is a prime example of this. Charles R. Young, *Hubert Walter: Lord of Canterbury and Lord of England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968).
[50] Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 887, 889. In France, to contrast, the chancery never separated from the royal household (Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 69).
[51] Green, *England under Henry I*, 27. In fact William the Conquerer seems to have employed Edward the Confessor's chancellor, Regenbald, and many of the late king's chaplains. S. D. Keynes, "Regenbald the Chancellor (sic)," in *Anglo-Norman Studies X: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1987*, ed. R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1998), 217.
[52] Green, *England under Henry I*, 28-9.

previously served as chancellor and also had judicial duties.[53] By the time of the first surviving pipe roll in 1130, the financial and judicial business of the exchequer were vigorous—and at Henry I's death these institutions had helped accrue sizable wealth.[54] The finance arm may have employed clerks from the royal chapel, while staff of the chamber sometimes had duties both with the itinerant household and Winchester treasury. The office of treasurer appeared in the 1120s, possibly designed to house Roger's nephew Nigel of Salisbury.[55] Because the king lay at the heart of governance, important persons vied for even small household roles, and personalities determined who had influence on the king and therefore the administration of his kingdom.[56] Government growth had profound impact on social roles and mobility, establishing shifting duties and responsibilities for lay noblemen, clergy, school masters, and even a group of "new men" with lesser origins.[57] Service at court was a promising route to Church promotion and might catapult the king's favorites into the highest ranks of society.

Most literate men whom English kings had at their disposal were churchmen, and thus many of the earliest officials who oversaw the

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[53] Ibid., 5, 30, 41. Roger formally bore the title of chancellor from 1100-1102 before he was promoted to a bishopric, but from that point he was considered to be de facto chief justiciar, someone who ran things when king was overseas but also was a general supervisor for all aspects of administration (28, 38, 48).
[54] Ibid., 6, 51.
[55] Ibid., 30-4. In fact other household officials like the chancellor and chamberlains attended exchequer sessions (43). As Green notes, historians have interpreted this situation in two ways: Stubbs argued that the exchequer at this stage was not a body but a meeting of men who otherwise traveled with the king; Richardson and Sayles believed the exchequer counts as a distinct department (43).
[56] Ibid., 35.
[57] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 21.

administration were in major or minor orders within the Church.[58] Administrative positions appealed to clergy because the Crown paid with benefices, and so lower-ranking scribes hoped to leverage their service into higher Church offices and sinecures.[59] In the twelfth century especially, officials such as the treasurer or chancellor were members of the royal household, usually advisors and confidants of the king. A growing number of clerical administrators was school-trained, with degrees in theology or law, and Green argues that this factor ought to be considered alongside war and conquest as a major driving force of twelfth-century administration.[60] She notes that the administrative dynasty founded by Roger of Salisbury may be the origins of this practice, as his nephew Nigel—father of *Dialogue of the Exchequer* author Richard fitz Nigel—is one of the first members of Henry I's administration to have received a school education on the Continent.[61] Clergy, including "new men," serving at this time were quite successful in bringing family into service as a convenient means of recruiting talent.[62] Under Henry II the trend of employing schoolmen accelerated due in part to the desire of the king and his chief administrators to grow the bureaucracy; and in part to the growing numbers of cathedral school and university graduates

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[58] Using the pipe roll of this year Green counts 104 men in royal service in 1130, only 7 of whom were clergy (*England under Henry I*, 173). Yet clerks dominated in certain roles, namely in the writing offices.

[59] Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 51-2, 58 55. Parish jobs were not lucrative, and any cleric with secretarial skills would choose administrative over parochial positions. A. K. McHardy, "The Churchmen of Chaucer's London: The Seculars," *Medieval Prosopography* 16 (1995): 64-5. Green says that of the seven clergy present in Henry I's central government in 1130, four became bishops and one an archdeacon (*England under Henry I*, 173-4); all but one of Henry I's chancellors became bishops (175). Royal clerks "had a virtual stranglehold on top [clerical] jobs" such as prebends and deanships (176).

[60] Green, *England under Henry I*, 162-3.

[61] Ibid., 160.

[62] Ibid., 166.

seeking work. As England's civil war came to an end with Henry II's accession in 1154, theinspired the new king to overhaul his realm's system of governance. Cathedral schools on the Continent produced highly-educated job candidates, but in England, the number of available scholarly positions was limited. School-trained intellectuals turned to secular and ecclesiastical administration in larger numbers, eagerly bringing their education to bear on politics and governance and melding together the more practical and theoretical aspects of administration.[63] The infusion of thinkers into the ranks of bureaucracy was both a cause and effect of increasingly-complex governance.

Not all members of the growing secular administrations were clergy, certainly, but noble or knightly laymen became administrators increasingly less frequently in the early phase and when they did it might be on a part-time or ad hoc basis.[64] Some courtiers and administrators were drawn from the aristocracy and had quite traditional relationships with the royal family, but others originated in families of the lower nobility or knightly classes.[65] Laymen could become bishops or archdeacons after years of loyal service, sometimes remaining in their civil service positions. It was not unusual for noble lay retainers to be literate, but

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[63] Richard Southern, "The Place of England in the Twelfth Century Renaissance," in *Medieval Humanism*, 174-79; Rodney Thomson, "England and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance," *Past and Present* 101 (1983): 19. Thomson suggests England's bureaucracy might actually have impeded further growth of schools, as "kings and their servants had no interest in permitting or fostering uncontrollable bodies of wandering teachers and students within the realm" (18).
[64] Ralph Turner, "The Households of the Sons of Henry II," in *La cour Plantagenêt (1154-1204): Actes du colloque tenu à Thouars du 30 avril au 2 mai 1999*, ed. Martin Aurell (Poitiers, Université de Poitiers, Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 2000), 61; Turner, *Men Raised*, 13; Green, *England under Henry I*, 157-9. By the end of the twelfth century simple literacy was not enough, as men like John of Salisbury, educated in the "new learning," were recruited to apply logic and reasoning to government (Turner, *Men Raised*, 9). On the other side of the coin, "the English episcopate under the Angevins [was] filled with men from the royal administration" (7).
[65] Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 889-91.

as the twelfth century progressed fewer members of the traditional nobility were requisitely literate or numerate to take on official roles.[66] Land-owning barons lost more interest in civil service once it gained a stronger reputation for housing the lowborn, though younger sons and members of lesser knightly families started to turn toward education and away from military occupations to make a living, finding employment in county governments and the central administration.[67] Henry I and Henry II in particular received criticism for advancing their retinues "from the dust," and contemporary commentator Orderic Vitalis would have it seem that these kings were surrounded by men of low birth. Green's examination of documentation from Henry I's reign concluded that the Anglo-Norman and Angevin kings certainly did bestow positions and wealth on "new men" to gain loyal and skilled servants, but they were from no lower than middling families and were not advanced at the expense of members of the nobility.[68] Some "new men"

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[66] Ralph Turner, "Changing Perceptions of the New Administrative Class in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England: The *Curiales* and Their Conservative Critics," *Journal of British Studies* 29 (1990): 111. After the Inquest of Sheriffs of 1170 the king began to call on fewer local magnates to be sheriffs, instead determining central officials were more likely to be loyal and efficient. Nicholas Barratt, "Finance and the Economy in the Reign of Henry II," in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Nicholas Vincent (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2007), 254.

[67] Turner, "New Administrative Class," 113-4.

[68] Green, *England under Henry I*, 134-93. Of the 104 persons discernible from the 1130 pipe roll "in central and local government," Green identifies 18 as "new men" (143). See also Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 70; Dronke, "Court of Henry II," 210. Turner interprets inflated rhetoric like Orderic's as born from evolving definitions of noble and knightly ranks which put a premium on participation in chivalric, feudal culture (Turner, "New Administrative Class," 93-5). The question of just how much discord existed between barons and royal administrators has been much debated, and centers on the desire of England's traditional nobility to retain its natural role as royal advisor and retain and expand privileges bought or won from the crown. Turner states that Orderic's complaints, though exaggerated, reveal a valid worry, as the resumes of many "new men" are evidence of the novelty and popularity of this career path (ibid., 106-16; *Men Raised*, 1-2). Hollister and Baldwin however argue that Henry I took every opportunity to draw magnates into official positions and in fact "the curia included a good percentage of England's wealthiest lay and ecclesiastical tenants-in-chief" ("Administrative Kingship," 890). J. C. Holt reminds that the barons desired strong and competent central administration, and so did not

came to the attention of kings through natural competency, though most studied to obtain administrative skills. Some had basic lay education, but at this point graduates from cathedral schools and then universities flooded into government positions.

Green states that already under Henry I some royal servants were "effectively professional administrators, men who had made their careers in royal government." [69] As the secretariat, taxation office, and judicial branches developed, specialization and career civil service intensified. Henry II's court attracted intellectuals who were not afraid to bend their skills to administrative ends, and who pioneered new business methods in the exchequer and chancery as well as writing political theory.[70] The Plantagenet kings harnessed together education and "literary discourse" to serve royal ends to a greater degree than did the rulers of other fledgling bureaucracies. This bolstered centralization as well as helped to establish a common courtly culture, a culture which produced much reflexive literature over the coming centuries.[71] Documentary production of missives and rolls increased, leaving royal scribes implicated in all government processes. Major developments to England's judiciary came in the second half of

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fashion administrators as an enemy so much as they demanded administrative loyalty to the law and kingdom rather than the fancies of the crown. *Magna Carta* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 24-6, 37-8, 41, 54-5. In fact, some who pressed Magna Carta in 1215 were descended from new men, though they did view the men that King John elevated as problematic both because they were often foreigners and because the nature of English landholdings made new men ever harder to accommodate (39-40).

[69] Green, *England under Henry I*, 163, 171, 193.

[70] Vincent, "Why 1199?" 20-6, 30, 40; Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 67-8; Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 877.

[71] Vincent, "Why 1199?" 19, 26; Nicholas Orme, "The Education of the Courtier," in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), 63-5.

the twelfth century, namely involving criminal law but also land and other civil disputes.[72] Although Henry I instituted royal local and itinerant justices, and there was a recognizable "upsurge in judicial activity…in the mid 1120s," the fully-fledged eyre system dates to Henry II's reign.[73] After the chaos during Stephen's reign Henry was left with the task of rebuilding—an undertaking that brought reform and innovation along with it.[74] Henry II attempted to build on what came before, but "as soon as [his] advisors had restored Henry I's system and discovered its limitations they promptly abandoned it. Royal government and its relations with the shires was totally restructured in the decade from the late 1160s to the late 1170s."[75]

Historians pinpoint 1166 as the moment when recovery was completed and royal income expanded greatly, due to various changes in the taxation and judicial apparatus.[76] Nick Barratt points to the Assizes of Clarendon and Northampton and the *cartae baronum* (a survey of knightly tenants and holdings) as major factors in "[bringing] royal justice into the heart of English society," establishing greater parity under the law of socio-economic classes and increasing the importance of the General Eyre as opposed to local or seigneurial courts.[77] Writs, whose forms proliferated, offered a streamlined mechanism for subjects to seek justice from the king or royal justices, and helped to standardize

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[72] Green, *England under Henry I*, 95-117, 217.
[73] Ibid., 49.
[74] Ibid., 107, 218; Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 882-5.
[75] Warren, "Norman Administrative Efficiency," 124.
[76] Barratt, "Finance and the Economy," 251-6; Warren, *Norman and Angevin England*, 105-22.
[77] Barratt, "Finance and the Economy," 251-2.

jurisdictions and procedures.[78] Barratt calls the exchequer the "important link between the Crown and its agents in the locality: the central plank of the Henrician financial administration."[79] This is one indication of the growing importance of central officials, with their varying backgrounds, as opposed to local noble families in the administration of justice in the counties. Another sign of the growing independence of bureaus was their relative continuity in times of trouble, like 1173-4.[80] Justice was implicated in revenue increases due to fees paid to secure writs and access courts; such fees also drove economic monetization and the intricacy of exchequer audits. The pipe rolls bear witness to the "rapid increase in business" and its complexity that came before the exchequer in the second half of the twelfth century.[81] Enrollment of various sorts and document retention became government mainstays under King John, resulting in a further compounding of the number of documents administrative scribes had to generate and copy in the thirteenth century.[82]

Encumbered by a greater workload, the exchequer and chancery could not easily travel with the king.[83] Starting in the late twelfth century expansion of the administrative bureaus initiated phases of what is often called "going out of court," or movement out of the king's itinerant household and establishment of permanent or semi-permanent locations in Westminster or London. Significant

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[78] Barratt, "Finance and the Economy," 252.
[79] Ibid., 254.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 252-3.
[82] Galbraith, *Public Records,* 66-71; Vincent, "Why 1199?"; Barratt, "Exchequer in the Thirteenth Century," 72.
[83] For example the number of documents existing from Henry's reign is more than triple those extant from 1066 to 1100 (Green, *England under Henry I*, 217).

administrative texts tended to appear at moments of transition, as will be explored in chapters 3 and 4. Exact datings of departmental moves out of court are difficult to determine, and sedentariness is not necessarily a sign of detachment. Consensus is that the exchequer was first to make the move, because its tax assessment and judicial functions proliferated early on and could be executed outside the king's presence. Already in the 1120s there seem to have been scribes who remained in Winchester working on treasury business rather than traveling with the king's court; instead the king's mobile chamber staff took on a more direct role in finance.[84] Starting in 1166 pipe rolls, more complex because of the accounting of income from various developing tax and judicial sources, suggest exchequer work was a decidedly full-time enterprise.[85] By the 1170s, when the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* appears, exchequer sessions no longer met in the king's palace, though it would be two more decades before this institution was decidedly separate from the *curia regis* with no shared personnel.[86] Overlap between wardrobe and exchequer functions had long created some disorder, but over the course of the thirteenth century kings relied more and more on the wardrobe for local financial transactions, especially during wartime, and many exchequer reforms were due to the need to keep pace with

[84] Green, *England under Henry I*, 30-1.
[85] Barratt, "Finance and the Economy," 253-4. The oft-cited phrase is that the exchequer became "an institution rather than an occasion," from R. C. Stacey's introduction to his edited volume *Receipt and Issue Rolls 1241-2* (London: Pipe Roll Society, 1992), ix.
[86] Harding, *Thirteenth Century,* 160; Richard Heiser, "The Households of the Justiciars of Richard I: An Inquiry into the Second Level of Medieval English Government," *Haskins Society Journal* 2 (1990): 226-7. Justiciars had much control over appointing their judicial and secretarial staff (227).

wardrobe activities.[87]

By the turn of the thirteenth century the exchequer's financial apparatus had sheared off from its court of common pleas, or Exchequer of Pleas, which had previously overseen cases *coram rege* but also heard cases in Westminster in the king's absence.[88] A royal law court would now operate independently as the Common Bench, a primary arena for common pleas, with the Exchequer of Pleas continuing to be used largely for "revenue disputes" and comprising a staff separate from the financial body.[89] In the first quarter of the thirteenth century the renewal of an institutionalized *coram rege* court, formalizing as the King's Bench—which initially had a jurisdiction overlapping with other royal courts

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[87] Barratt reviews the different arguments historians have made about the relationship between exchequer and wardrobe, and examines the role this relationship played in the developments to Crown finance ("Exchequer in the Thirteenth Century," 71-86). It wasn't simply that the exchequer was weak, but that in the wake of Magna Carta English kings had limits placed on their abilities to levy taxes and developed workarounds. Wardrobe officials traveling with the king, especially in times of war, borrowed sums from banks and private citizens that the exchequer would later have to sort out and repay, and over time document forms emerged that were "fictional," ostensibly authorizing the movement of money that had already been moved. See also Michael Prestwich, "English Government Records, 1250-1330," in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West*, ed. Richard Britnell (Rochester, NY: Boydell, 1997), 95-101.

[88] G. D. G. Hall, "Introduction," in *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*, ed. and trans. G. D. G. Hall, rev. Michael Clanchy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), xii. Henry II and Richard I's long trips to Normandy caused the judicial bodies to become accustomed to independence. Ralph Turner, "The Origins of Common Pleas and King's Bench," *American Journal of Legal History* 21 (1977): 241. Green suggests that even at the end of the eleventh century "there was probably a central royal court alternative to the itinerant household" (*England under Henry I*, 107).

[89] Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 160. Hubert Walter played a major role in establishing a bench distinct from the exchequer's financial work, and Turner pinpoints 1194 as a watershed in judicial professionalization due to his reforms, evidenced by the number of bench justices with legal training rather than more generalized administrative or curial experience ("Common Pleas," 244). Walter's measures to professionalize the judiciary also served to strengthen himself as the leader of a more independent judiciary. He recruited justices who were experienced yet still young enough to be more influenced by the justiciar than Henry II, and he expanded his own authority over royal courts of justice (Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 224-6, 228-9). Franklin Pegues states that the court system continued to draw judges from among the exchequer's functionaries, and a very limited number from chancery, through the first half of the thirteenth century, at which point enough judicial and shrieval clerks were available for promotion that these apprentices could be relied upon to provide all needed judges. "The *Clericus* in the Legal Administration of Thirteenth-Century England," *English Historical Review* 71 (1956): 537-42.

though with a greater likelihood of hearing criminal cases—caused the common law courts to achieve even greater independence.[90] Full-time, professional judges staffed the eyre circuits and Common Bench, many of whom had gotten their start in the exchequer or even chancery.[91] Yet over time royal judges were more likely to train directly in law rather than serving first in another administrative bureau, and justices often gained experience serving on the lower courts before appointment to King's Bench.[92] Growing complexity of litigation, including obtaining correct writs and making one's case in front of a judge, led to specialization and professionalization among legal practitioners, including some who worked as royal officials and others who operated independently as counsel.[93] A thriving market for legal advice and attorney work drove further

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[90] The court *coram rege* intensified its activity under John and emerged as the King's Bench when Henry III reached his majority (Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 169-70). As with secretarial departments, new judicial bodies are a sign that the king felt older-established bodies were no longer close to and staunchly loyal to himself (Turner, "Common Pleas," 238, 246, 250). Turner explains that the other royal courts grew and developed due to "increasing professionalization and specialization in government" while the King's Bench instead sprang from "royal resistance to the tendency of offices to 'go out of court' and…a royal effort to preserve 'familiar' or 'household' government which would be more responsive to the king's will" (239). The Common Bench remained the primary arena for important civil cases.

[91] Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 882-5; Paul Brand, "Origins of the English Legal Profession," *Law and History Review* 5 (1987): 47; Reginald L. Poole, *The Exchequer in the Twelfth Century* (1912; repr., London: Frank Cass, 1973), 174-81; Harding, *Thirteenth Century,* 169. It is difficult, however, in many cases to associate any given clerk with work in the exchequer because records tend not to designate them as such (Pegues, "*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 532-42).

[92] Harding, *Thirteenth Century,* 169-71; Pegues, "*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 537.

[93] Andrew Hershey, "Justice and Bureaucracy: The English Writ and '1258,'" *English Historical Review* 113 (1998): 832-9; R. C. Palmer, "The Origins of the Legal Profession in England," *Irish Jurist*, n.s., 11 (1976): 126. From Henry II's reign especially, suitors were faced with a perplexing array of writs to choose from, and needed legal advice. Attorneys acted as proxies, traveling on behalf of clients to the Chancery to commission a writ or answer a summons. Pleaders (also known as serjeants or *narratores*) were men experienced with the standard speech required in court, and appeared during proceedings alongside a litigant, speaking for him and arguing on the law (Hershey, "Justice and Bureaucracy," 845; Palmer, "Legal Profession," 127-9, 134). Some attorneys and serjeants were amateurs, but if they served enough clients and gained some legal knowledge, they might be able to bill themselves as professionals (Hershey, "Justice and Bureaucracy," 832).

bureaucratization, and chancery supervisors also took on the task of advising clients seeking writs as to which writs were appropriate for their suits.[94]

Chancery was the last of the original administrative departments to fix at Westminster, following the example of the exchequer and judicature, but this process was slow. David Carpenter calls the thirteenth century the chancery's "greatest age," because its workload was far greater than in the previous century while in the fourteenth newer secretariats infringed on its dominion; in the thirteenth century the chancery also enrolled its documentary output.[95] At this time chancery scribes became distinguished from clerks who worked at religious duties in the royal chapel and at other secretarial duties within the household.[96] Late in the thirteenth century chancery only sometimes travelled with the king, due in part to Edward I's foreign wars, while the first three quarters of the next century saw it remaining increasingly stationary in its permanent Westminster quarters.[97] In other words, in the fourteenth century chancery ceased being "at the centre of the king's personal rule."[98] Yet a small and convenient writing office remained desirable, and so kings created multiple incarnations of the secretariat, each an intimate, protective and productive epidermis pushing its ungainly

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[94] Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 169; Susan Reynolds, "How Different was England?" in *Thirteenth Century England VII: Proceedings of the Durham Conference, 1997*, ed. Michael Prestwich, R. H. Britnell, and Robin Frame (Rochester, NY: Boydell, 1999), 4-5; Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 56; Hershey, "Justice and Bureaucracy," 835-6.
[95] Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 49.
[96] Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 47-8; Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 166.
[97] Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 51-2, 58; A. L. Brown, "The Privy Seal Clerks in the Early Fifteenth Century," in *The Study of Medieval Records*, ed. D. A. Bullough and R. L. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 260-81; Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 160-6; Prestwich, "English Government Records," 98; Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 58. The chancery's budget became separate from the king's household, as evidenced by stipend payments to the chancellor with which to run his department and pay his staff beginning in 1260 (Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 48).
[98] Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 50.

predecessor further from the king. Wardrobe personnel took on letter-writing duties much as they were also shouldering duties previously managed by the exchequer. The Privy Seal originated as a component of the wardrobe, but grew into a semi-autonomous department as Edward I and Edward II used it for personal letters and writs.[99] By the 1330s the king's diminishing control over the Privy Seal saw it also become a stationary letter- and record-producing office, as the Crown turned to other wardrobe constituents as a private secretariat. The wardrobe was likewise defunct by the end of the century, and eventually the signet office took over this function.[100]

This complex bureaucracy required many more employees at the end of the middle ages. These men were of a different sort from the initial twelfth-century administrators, with a different relationship to the king, his court, the Church, and broader society. By the later middle ages, the linked trends of laicization and professionalization influenced the types of jobs available for literate men, and the sorts of men who trained for secretarial careers. The two primary strands of professionalization in medieval England occurred among lawyers and administrators.[101] Elite clerical administrators certainly never disappeared from the scene, but beginning around the middle of the fourteenth century more and more government workers belonged to the middling classes,

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[99] Prestwich, "English Government Records," 97.
[100] Noel Denholm-Young, *Collected Papers of N. Denholm-Young* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969), 25; Tout, *Administrative History*, 1:14-22.
[101] The medical profession also appears during the middle ages, but is beyond the scope of this project.

"men of humble and obscure backgrounds."[102] Some high-ranking administrators maintained the ear of the king and received generous endowments, while many just scraped by on their measly (and often delinquent) wages. Some took minor orders and learned to read and write in cathedral schools or monasteries, but did not aspire to higher Church offices. Others had no affiliation with the Church and instead trained as apprentices in noble households or special schools, preparing for entirely secular careers.[103] Common lawyers were often lay from the start, as it was natural for churchmen to study civil or canon rather than common law. The Church forbade its clerks to act as serjeants, and censured clerical judges.[104] On the other hand, Turner explains how frequently English clergy were able to work around these restrictions and become royal judges.[105] A larger share of justices were lay starting in the late thirteenth century when Edward I began promoting professional attorneys to these positions. These men had often trained at local schools and then county courts rather than within the Church, and so were more often lay than the judicial apprentices who previously tended to advance to the judiciary.[106]

Laicization also transformed the scribal profession, and laymen served as the highest officials of the chancery, treasury, exchequer and Privy Seal in the

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[102] Brown, "Privy Seal Clerks," 263.
[103] Orme, "Education of the Courtier," 74, 76; R. L. Storey, “Gentleman-bureaucrats," in Clough, *Profession, Vocation and Culture*, 103. Married secretaries appeared in chancery and the Privy Seal during the second half of the fourteenth century, and although various ordinances strongly discouraged the practice, by the early sixteenth century it was quite common (ibid., 98-9; Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 82-3).
[104] Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 171-2.
[105] Ralph Turner, “Clerical Judges in English Secular Courts: The Ideal versus the Reality,” in *Judges, Administrators and the Common Law in Angevin England* (London: Hambledon, 1994), 159-79.
[106] Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 171.

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[107] This was, in part, a consequence of the administrative offices' separating from the king's household and becoming more autonomous, with complex operational procedures, higher numbers of employees, and more ranks (such as senior and junior scribes). While it did remain more common for Chancery employees to be in minor orders, official ordinances tolerated higher numbers of married clerks in this century.[108] It seems that court criticism had come full circle, so that young men with scribal training avoided ordination because "contemporary opinion" was against the favoring of king's clerks for promotion.[109] In the early fifteenth century it was also much more common for the sons of aristocrats to leave home to train in schools and universities for non-ecclesiastical careers. By this point, literate careers produced "men of affairs," those who moved in important circles at the gentry level rather than within the church or high politics.[110] The professions now had a social niche of their own, joining small landholders, lesser-ranking knights, merchants, and

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[107] Orme, "Education of the Courtier," 63; Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 171. For instance there were lay chancellors from 1340-45 and 1371-77 (Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 56, 82). Under the Lancastrian kings more and more major officials were laymen. Between 1410-1430 it became more common for lay than beneficed men to hold primary positions within the exchequer, royal household and chamber, wardrobe, and works department (Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 100). On the other hand, in this period clerics with civil and canon law degrees were most useful as diplomats, foreign secretaries, and heads of Chancery and the Privy Seal and Signet; for this reason lay scribes penetrated these offices more slowly (100). One change involved the substitution of temporal benefits for church benefices as payment for administrators. Receiving land grants, lifetime custody of property, and in some cases knighthood drove the administrators' "ambiti[ons] to establish themselves as gentry" (104-7). This new practice strained royal incomes, but contributed to the influx of university graduates into the episcopate (106-7).
[108] Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 82-3. One piece of evidence for lay administrators is the adoption of the title "gentleman" (Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 97).
[109] Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 104. There was a general suspicion of priests and prelates in the later middle ages, as the Church had been weakened by schism and heresy (102). Astell describes how in the fourteenth century it became increasingly distasteful for clerics to advance within secular government ("Division of Clerks," 49-52).
[110] Orme, "Education of the Courtier," 77.

wealthy urban craftsmen in the emerging gentry class.[111]

Men with scribal and legal training formed professional occupational groups, including secretaries, lawyers, and estate managers, and textual expression and self-identification revolved around these professional identities. Members of educated professions experienced upward mobility, becoming one component of the evolving gentry in towns and in the counties. As these vocations professionalized, their associated knowledge and skills became specialized so that only men with a specific education could practice in the field.[112] Although some historians claim that true professionalization did not actually occur until the Early Modern Era, R. C. Palmer argues that professional lawyers appear as early as the first half of the twelfth century.[113] Royal judges also appeared as an early professional group, as government officials rather than local notables increasingly took on judicial duties in various jurisdictions. The Norman kings reorganized England's court system to aid royal oversight, so that by Henry I's reign a group of quasi-professional shire justiciars (rather than sheriffs) heard pleas of the crown in the counties.[114] Eyre justices replaced these under Henry II, around the time of the creation of the Bench which also staffed full-time, professional judges.[115] Professional associations construct themselves as exclusive corporate bodies which define, restrict, and regulate membership;

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[111] Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 175; Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 32; Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 97.
[112] Brand, "English Legal Profession," 42.
[113] Palmer, "Legal Profession," 145. Early examples of activities by advisers and representatives in the twelfth century in shire and royal courts might reveal legal "experts" rather than true professionals (Brand, "English Legal Profession," 31-2; Susan Reynolds, "The Emergence of Professional Law in the Long Twelfth Century," *Law and History Review* 21 [2003]: 348-52, 362).
[114] Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 882-5.
[115] Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 882-5; Brand, "English Legal Profession," 47.

offer quality assurance of members' work that might involve education or certification; and enumerate honor codes with occupational standards and principles.[116] One claim of this dissertation is that administrative literature offers more markers for evaluating professionalization, in terms of a conscious attitude toward difference and membership categories.

Chapter Overviews

The social history of medieval English administrators consists largely of prosopographical case studies, and studies of how the professions came into their own as they interacted over many centuries with government and Church needs.[117] As A. L. Brown has said, it is difficult to "add flesh to these bones and see these men as personalities."[118] When we can, it is largely because of their writing, which allows researchers access to "facets of clerks' lives which are

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[116] Palmer, "Legal Profession," 128; Brand, "English Legal Profession," 35, 45; Reynolds, "Emergence of Professional Law," 349; James A. Brundage, "The Medieval Advocate's Profession," *Law and History Review* 6 (1988): 440-1; N. L. Ramsay, "What Was the Legal Profession?" in *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England*, ed. Michael Hicks (Wolfeboro Falls, NH: Sutton, 1990), 62; Paul Brand, "The Serjeants of the Common Bench in the Reign of Edward I: An Emerging Professional Elite," in Prestwich and Frame, *England VII,* 85-7.
[117] The bibliographical entries in Turner's *Men Raised* are a starting point for prosopographies, and he lists many other studies on 160n71-73. Available documentation forces attempts to learn more about these bureaucrats to revolve around more important men, though Turner recommends the construction of "collective biography…to create a composite picture" (18). Brown and Tout offer similar approaches regarding the later middle ages, the former studying three Privy Seal scribes (Thomas Hoccleve, Robert Frye, and John Prophete) to extrapolate on how such administrators lived in general ("Privy Seal Clerks") and the latter discussing Chaucer, Hoccleve, and Privy Seal clerk John Winwick ("English Civil Service," 26-32). Yet those administrators who wrote literature and who thus are treated in this dissertation are not among the brightest luminaries, such as Thomas Becket or Hubert Walter. Instead, they fall into the category of support staff or lesser functionaries, and as such carried a more middling status that can shed light on the experiences of figures less studied by historians of English government and administration. These men lived a relatively entitled life, yet their texts express the growing anonymity and perfunctory nature of bureaucratic positions and the special stress put on civil servants whose positions were not guaranteed.
[118] Brown, "Privy Seal Clerks," 260.

never mentioned in the records,"[119] facets which are not quantifiable yet which nevertheless shed light on the experience of administrative work and the bureaucratic culture which such labor birthed. Administrative literature includes more personal texts like letters as well as ostensibly business-related items like the manual *Dialogue of the Exchequer* or common-law treatises. Yet administrative literature does not easily fit into categories of official or non-official. "Pragmatic" texts, those which "contributed to some legal or administrative operation...for the use of a particular administrator or property-owner"[120] could contain subjective and expressive elements. Bureaucrats often wrote themselves or their peers into pragmatic or semi-official texts, as characters (such as Richard fitz Nigel in his *Dialogue*) or commentators on procedure and theories of document-keeping (such as the authors of *Glanvill* and *Bracton*). Likewise, the Privy Seal formulary created by Thomas Hoccleve, a collection of letter forms for junior scribes to copy or adapt, certainly adheres to a requirement that government documents be clear and unambiguous, and thus utilize "formulae" and "routine, restricted vocabulary."[121] Yet study of chosen letter models and notations of Hoccleve's own authorship displace the documentary character of the collection and show it to be not simply a disinterested product of an administrative impulse but also an artifact of Hoccleve's melding of the private and public halves of his identity.[122]

On the other hand, the seemingly-subjective texts like letters are complicit

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[119] Ibid., 261.
[120] Richard Britnell, "Pragmatic Literacy in Latin Christendom," in Britnell, *Pragmatic Literacy,* 3.
[121] Ibid., 4.
[122] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 17-43.

in career strategies, serving purposes of networking and expressing joy or frustration at life experiences including occupational ones. Letters and letter collections, which important medieval figures often produced to showcase their composition skills, are an important source of evidence of self-representation as well as views of clerical service. But beyond indicating opinions, they can also be persuasive or expository treatises in their own right. Giles Constable links closely the flourishing of twelfth-century letter-writing to the new types of bureaucrats and concomitant "emotional developments" like "the desire for self-expression,"[123] but he still leaves many questions about how these writers were self-consciously and intentionally working to shape their image and legitimate the new social roles they filled. Letters can appear autobiographical, and it is sufficient here to only mention that debate rages among historians and literary critics regarding whether true autobiography existed anywhere in the middle ages. Even letters intended for public consumption could be quite personal, though sometimes the self was offered up as analogical model for the teaching of moral lessons or the offering of advice. It is not that claims about the self could be outright untrue, but that the motive was to express truths for the Everyman rather than assert scrupulously one's own circumstances. John of Salisbury and Peter of Blois, for example, who will be treated in chapter two of this dissertation, wrote hundreds of letters over the course of their careers which appear to vacillate greatly regarding their opinions on the careers of secular clerics. The men's sentiments at any given moment were heartfelt and passionate, but it is

[123] Giles Constable, "Dictators and Diplomats in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Medieval Epistolography and the Birth of Modern Bureaucracy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 37.

clear from their letters that they saw themselves participating in a great debate implicating many facets of Christian reform and praxis; the imperative was that ideas serving multiple positions be offered for evaluation. John and Peter were not hoping with each missive or treatise to utterly sway readers toward whichever position they expressed at the time, and their vacillations also appear to stem from a general commitment they had made to living in the world and the inevitable urge toward retrenchment and second-guessing this decision gave rise to.

Chapter Two concerns this plight which men like John and Peter found themselves in. It explores textual productions by secular clerics anxious to enter into royal administration—and sometimes even more anxious to leave civil service behind. The backdrop for this chapter is the ever-present opposition between church and state that received new life during the twelfth century, a period of intense and wide-ranging reform and institutional development for both sides, due to the investiture debate and the debacle of Thomas Becket's murder. But it is also the constellation of new ideas—for governance and for salvation and, more problematically, for careerism—that drove institutional antagonism. Bureaucratization and the flourishing of learning in England during the so-called twelfth-century renaissance involved many of Henry II's prominent clerks active in a court that encouraged learning and literary production.[124] This was a time of

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[124] Turner, *Men Raised*, 9; Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 195-6; Clanchy, *Written Record*, 226-30; Constable, "Dictators and Diplomats"; Dronke, "Court of Henry II"; Charles H. Haskins, "Henry II as a Patron of Literature," in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to T. F. Tout*, ed. A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke (1925; repr., Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1967), 71-7.

considerable social change and upward mobility for educated men or those with special martial skills, and this mobility caused a confusion in traditional social categories that some commentators were uncomfortable with. Criticism of worldly clergy, an old genre, intensified as more clergy—especially the school-trained—entered careers that involved direct service in secular administration or presence at secular courts, sometimes in the course of carrying out ecclesiastical duties. Yet this change was already a permanent feature of the English administrative landscape by the start of Henry II's reign, and criticism did not generally hope to change the tide and push clergy back into the cathedrals and monasteries.[125] Rather, this critical commentary by and large sought to shape the narrative of clerical administrators, constructing a certain kind of courtier-cleric and his role within secular government or a king's court. Criticism in advice manuals, satires, and letters often emphasizes the court's depravity in order to reveal the great need for clergy there. Careerist clergy suggested that they were ideal administrators, and furthermore that clergy with administrative experience in turn made the best bishops.

The most significant feature of court criticism in the second half of the twelfth century is that it was written not by outsiders viewing worldly clergy with disdain, but by worldly clergy themselves. Court criticism is a genre not simply *about* but *by* clergy at court. This feature has been recognized by historians but not adequately explored. Ralph Turner, for instance, does not seem to recognize the oddness of this situation in his study of the ideals and realities of clerical

[125] Turner, "Clerical Judges" lays out legal and rhetorical attacks on clerical administrators in twelfth-century England (159-79).

secular service, and treats the writing of men like Peter of Blois, Walter Map, and Gerald of Wales as if it offers no special problems, placing their texts in a continuity of criticism alongside papal bulls and canon law banning clerical employment as judges or other types of officials. If these men's writing requires special explanation, to Turner it is simply that their "bitterness" at career failures led them to disparage other men for holding careers much like their own.[126] Yet, if the most biting criticism was written by the offenders, conventional Church ideology regarding the suitability of clergy at court is not a sufficient enough explanation for the outpouring of court criticism in the twelfth century. This chapter will question why the century's most vocal court critics presented such vastly vacillating perspectives over their own secular service and that of other clergy, and will examine the figure of the "sage cleric," a rhetorical solution in the form of a wise Christian advisor who serves God by shepherding kings and courtiers. John of Salisbury revived the genre of court criticism in the mid-twelfth century, influenced by Continental examples and inspired by his broad reading of Classical literature such as Cicero's *De res publica* and other treatises on government and statesmenship. He did so, I argue, in response to his own awkward positioning between church and state which led him to take charge of the discourse about worldly clerics, and due to a recognition that this mode allowed him to express misgivings and consider every side of the issue while also ultimately asserting a proper course for clergy wishing to undertake worldly

[126] Turner, "Clerical Judges," 175.

service.[127]

Men like John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Walter Map, and Gerald of Wales had to justify career decisions to their ecclesiastical colleagues, but also needed to make themselves appealing to the Crown and civil servants who made staffing decisions. Court criticism initiates a long administrative trend of identifying weaknesses or problems of contemporary bureaucracy and offering solutions in the form not of the author's individual capacities but in terms of the special capabilities of an occupational group—in this case, learned clergy. Corruption, flattery, and sin, which medieval texts had long taught were rife at court, were the special province of the sage administrator. By participating in an established convention of court criticism, a versatile mode of social commentary appearing in a range of texts which themselves often interwove a variety of diverting and didactic content, John of Salisbury and his followers censured the court in traditional ways but with a different purpose in mind. They identified different sorts of malefactors, but also engaged in explicit self-criticism, naming themselves as members of the despised class of ambitious, worldly clerics. The trope of a misspent youth would become common in medieval literature generally, so it might come as no surprise to find Hoccleve bemoaning a wasted life much like his twelfth-century predecessors had. But while Hoccleve would seem to parody the genre, regretting wine and women, John and his twelfth-

[127] It has been suggested that later writers of criticism were not simply engaging in emerging generic or humanist currents but directly imitating or referencing John of Salisbury, including Peter of Blois (Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 7; Neil Cartlidge, "An Intruder at the Feast? Anxiety and Debate in the Letters of Peter of Blois," in *Writers of the Reign of Henry II: Twelve Essays*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006], 80-1) and Walter Map (Echard, "Author, Narrator, and Reader," 304).

century contemporaries disputed with and amongst themselves about their principle life decisions. They brought their internal turmoil into their court criticism, altering the genre not simply into a mode of personal expression but into one capable of commenting on the selfhood and subjectivity of careerist clergy. From this point on, administrative literature would reflect on the melding of person and occupation to the point of conflation between document and self, administrative task and administrative subject. To debate personal problems and seek personal solutions was to deliberate about bureaucratic problems and solutions; and just as the resolutions to a civil servant's life challenges were to be found in efficient and trustworthy administration, so administrators themselves were the solution to bureaucratic or courtly troubles. Hoccleve as the Everyman appeared to be writing about a clichéd misspent youth, but as we will see, such a life story was every bit as implicated in his occupational experience as was Peter of Blois' exasperated questioning of the validity of a life lived outside the cloister.

Sage administrators sought entry into an intellectual world that would ideally take the material form of inclusion among the king's *familiares* and employment as a functionary within the household or emerging chancery and judiciary. Chapter Three investigates the writing of officials experiencing the first phases of bureaucratic movement out of court, at a time when important officials still travelled with the king but also spent time away from court at established administrative offices. These are manuals more than they are political philosophies or governance treatises, yet they envision the perfect ordering and functioning of a government in many of the same ways as the writings of mid-

century sage-administrators. Treasurer Richard fitz Nigel was "one of the greatest office-holders under Henry II and the author of one of the most significant treatises to have emerged from the Plantagenet court," but, as Nicholas Vincent notes, this very significance kept him away from the king and unable to witness charters, one of the traditional pieces of evidence for a historian evaluating the courtly social hierarchy.[128] On the other hand, Fitz Nigel's father seems to have purchased his treasurership and he himself admits in his *Dialogue of the Exchequer* that his mistakes led the king to place a supervisor over him at the exchequer table.[129] Historians are more likely to disagree with Vincent and evaluate Fitz Nigel's character and reputation cynically much as they do to court critics.[130] We have a remarkable source of information about Fitz Nigel in the form of his *Dialogue*, yet we cannot know whether his contemporaries in the English administration were any different without the benefit of treatises from their pens. But given what we do know, Fitz Nigel's authoring of the *Dialogue* appears more as a sign of marginality than importance or centrality. Much like how John and Peter's impulse to write stemmed from uncertainty in a time of social transition, I argue that Fitz Nigel's inspiration to write administrative literature came from his unique placement near the head of a bureau with a vital role in royal business at a time when its relationship to the king was being re-theorized.

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[128] Nicholas Vincent, "The Court of Henry II," in Harper-Bill and Vincent, *Henry II*, 291-2.
[129] *Dialogus de Scaccario* (Amt), 25-7. The supervisor was Richard of Ilchester, bishop of Winchester.
[130] Richard's lackluster career, despite his long tenure as treasurer—his father Nigel seems to have paid for the position—leads Amt to evaluate him as "capable but apparently not brilliant, even somewhat pedestrian" ("Introduction," in Amt, *Dialogus*, xvi-xvii).

As treasurer, Fitz Nigel had serious responsibilities, but he was fixed in Westminster while his superiors enjoyed time at court for part of the year. He was distinctly of the administration, not of the court. His discursive *Dialogue* reflects Fitz Nigel's need to understand what it meant to be of the administration, and what his bureau's identity and function was in this evolving government system. In its details, the auditing procedures the *Dialogue* discusses and the common law tenets that underlay them are often technical to a degree that only a trained exchequer official or scribe would understand, and in this way the text lives up to its claims to transfer knowledge which exchequer personnel may not learn in the normal course of business or may overlook because they are so "busy with great things."[131] Yet this text is not a manual in the modern sense for how to undertake an audit of shrieval accounts or how to manage the other responsibilities of the treasurer. It is a somewhat manic recording of the collected knowledge of one man, who does not assert himself conceitedly as an institutional repository so much as he worries that without such an archive knowledge will be lost. He details the continued construction and use of pipe rolls, offering a glimpse of the thought-world of an official at a point when written records were not yet replacing personal memory, but administrators were busily attempting to collect utterance and knowledge into an institutional memory as yet fragmentary, inefficient, and vulnerable. Fitz Nigel likely felt his own vulnerability as he worked through the passage defending the king's decision to place Richard of Ilchester over his shoulder to watch for errors. Errors were emerging ever more definitely as the

[131] *Dialogus de Scaccario* (Amt), 7.

enemy of the bureaucrat and the government document, and in order to protect against them administrators themselves strove for personal perfection and diligence.

Fitz Nigel reacted to the exchequer moving out of court by establishing the trustworthy independence of this institution while also detailing the special competencies of financial officials that allowed them to serve as a sort of protective edifice around the king's interest in much the same way that sage administrators safeguarded the moral interests of the court. The *Dialogue of the Exchequer* stresses how the king's Christian rule hinges on economic responsibility facilitated by an efficient taxation apparatus, and the ideal administrator is one with specialized monetary skills and numeracy. Similarly, the legal manuals that began to appear in the early thirteenth century claimed a unique role for lawmen as defenders of the royal person and interest. *Glanvill* and *Bracton* appeared during the professionalizing of common law jurisdiction when trained royal justices (the identity of the treatise-writers is uncertain, but both were likely composed by men with experience on one or more forms of common-law benches) contributed to the formation and elaboration of law courts outside the *coram rege* proceedings still overseen by the king at his itinerant court. Justices at this date were still by and large important and experienced functionaries often within the household-to-episcopacy pipeline, who would have moved in the king's orbit more securely than exchequer officials or their own junior scribes. I do not wish to emphasize the insecurity of distance from royal favor or patronage so much as the challenging yet promising task lawmen faced

in the creation of independent law courts. The *Glanvill*- and *Bracton*- authors present themselves as every bit as protective of accumulated knowledge as was Fitz Nigel, and equally troubled by loss or the perpetuation of inaccurate information or unjust legal decisions.

We see here another glimpse into the mentalities produced by a transition to recording and now, with greater proficiency, employing and wielding records for administrative purposes. Early attempts at presenting accumulated bureaucratic wisdom and describing complex government mechanisms forced authors to think about the administration's own organization and best practices. This was a new way to conceive of royal government, a move away from mirrors-for-princes and their general advice about selecting trustworthy and capable officials. Yet government growth was not a matter of regular reappraisal and restructuring to fit new needs. It was a matter of accretion and overlapping jurisdiction; movement out of court was not a novelty designed to improve efficiency but a capitulation to necessity as letter-writing, tax-collection, and other tasks slowed down and became a burden on the itinerant court. The *Dialogue of the Exchequer, Glanvill*, and *Bracton* reflect a working and intellectual environment flush with contingency, expressing worry about a job done insufficiently, in justice being mis-served, improper precedent being set, or documents being produced inaccurately. But they also reflect the enthusiasm of forging ahead and creating order from disorder. Richard fitz Nigel, for instance, viewed the writing of his manual as the felling and planing of wood from virgin forest that will eventually, in the hands of his successors, transform into a royal

palace.[132] Rhetorical instruction in the form of the emerging genres of administrative and legal manuals speaks to the high standards that courtiers and administrators set for themselves. When the perfection expected of documents spilled over into the behavior and appearance of the scribes producing them, worry over the loss of knowledge morphed into the potential loss of self—or at least self-importance.

Here was the challenge for Thomas Hoccleve's narrator-character in his autobiographical poems, who risks losing himself to madness, self-doubt, and even the written word. He dwelled on issues earlier administrators showed concern for, and the final chapter looks ahead to Hoccleve's administrative milieux, addressing how his career reflections and anxieties manifest in his expressive verse. *Bracton* responded to a disordered judicial system in which under-prepared lawmen "misapplied…laws and customs" and a "confusion of opinions" obscured the clarity of pronouncements.[133] Decades later, Hoccleve likewise reacts to a state of bureaucratic inefficiency caused, in part, by the political flux of the Lancastrian regime. Hoccleve observed a world seemingly lacking reason, in which the English throne had been usurped by a regime with a propaganda machine effectively producing a veneer for the Lancastrian reputation; literature composers were simultaneously vital for this propaganda and censored; a highly demanding job did not necessarily produce wages; and multiple writing offices served a king by and large by writing letters amongst

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[132] Ibid., 191-3.
[133] George E. Woodbine, ed., and Samuel E. Thorne, trans. and rev., *Bracton de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglie. Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968-77), 1:19. Future citations will cite page numbers from this edition.

themselves. Hoccleve's most acute problem was late annuity payments, and petitionary poems were one means of reminding or cajoling those officials with control of the treasury. Yet his poems also cast financial difficulties as symptomatic of a more serious spiritual calamity for both poet and administration, involving malfunctioning communication amongst the bureaucracy's human constituents. Whether or not there ever was a Privy Seal scribe who went mad during the reign of Henry V and subsequently found himself ostracized and occupationally frustrated, Hoccleve thought this narrative plausible and useful for thinking through the troubled state of poetic and bureaucratic authority in the Lancastrian era.

I argue that Hoccleve's well-being was tied to the proper functioning of government to the extent that health and sanity become an ideal metaphor in which to couch criticism of bureaucratic or political shortcomings. The literal closeness of the metaphor to reality also makes it uncomfortable, so that the truth of the cause of Hoccleve's misfortunes is only ever lightly obscured beneath the surface of his words. His autobiographical poems appeared at different points in his career and represent an evolving strategy for thinking through and expressing his feelings toward his occupation and the Lancastrian regime. At the same time, he also collected these texts into holograph manuscripts, a move revealing his desire to present to readers a message derived holistically from the poems.[134] Petitionary poems served an immediate purpose, but they also served

[134] Hoccleve composed two or three manuscripts collecting his poems, including Durham University Library MS. Cosin V.iii.9 (containing the *Series*) and Huntington Library MSS. HM 111 and HM 744 (which John Bowers argues were originally one manuscript, containing *La male*

a longer-term one, as a public archive of a distressed civil servant with a history of appeals against the administration. In his final personal piece, a collection literary critics call the *Series*, Hoccleve progressed from a theme of misspent youth and old-age infirmity to one of mental illness, upping the ante as it were, using madness to further accentuate his message about the internal and external constraints poets face and the disorderly world they live in. His personal journey to overcome not just madness but continued social isolation involved introspection and faith in God reuniting him with Reason, whom Hoccleve encounters in person as he reads a borrowed book: "With the speche of Resoun was I wel feed."[135] As Helen Hickey points out, madness is the opposite of Reason, and so the perfect trope for writing about reason and making sense of one's world.[136]

By the time Hoccleve's Privy Seal underwent its move out of court,

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regle and many other short works). "Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs: The First 'Collected Poems' in English," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 15 (1989): 27-51. Bowers dates both manuscripts to the last years of Hoccleve's life, c. 1422-6, and thinks Huntington 744/111 likely preceded Durham Cosin V.iii.9 (38-42). The former contains *La male regle* alongside Hoccleve's petitionary works, while the latter includes the *Series*. Other copyists likewise preserved these texts together, as for instance the five other complete copies of the *Series* all appear alongside the *Regiment.* M. C. Seymour, "The Manuscripts of Hoccleve's Regiment of Princes," *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 6 (1974): 255-297. Rory Critten describes what he calls in these manuscripts "a textual environment in which readers are encouraged to view the *Series* as part of an argument that is larger in scope than that pertaining solely to the author's recovery." "'Her Heed They Cast Awry': The Transmission and Reception of Thomas Hoccleve's Personal Poetry," *Review of English Studies* 64 (2013): 394-5. Regarding these manuscripts and others in which the incomplete *Series* appears with the *Regiment*, D. C. Greetham points to what he calls the "perceived unity to the Hoccleve corpus" in which the narrator-character of the *Regiment* prologue "finds his ultimate fulfillment." "Self-Referential Artifacts: Hoccleve's Persona as a Literary Device," *Modern Philology* 86 (1989): 246, 246n15).

[135] *My Complaint*, in *'My Compleinte' and Other Poems*, ed. Roger Ellis (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), line 315.

[136] Helen Hickey, "Doubting Thomas: Hoccleve's 'wilde infirmite' and the Social Construction of Identity," in *Deviance-Textual Control: New Perspectives in Medieval Studies*, ed. Megan Cassidy, Helen Hickey and Meagan Street (Melbourne: University of Melbourne History Department, 1997), 62. Likewise Penelope Doob argues that madness is an excellent motif for discussing sin. *Nebuchadnezzar's Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 220.

England's government was strongly bureaucratized and the semi- or fully-independent functioning of offices was a familiar feature of Westminster. Yet peculiar to the writing offices was the overlapping and accreted nature of secretarial functions. Historicist studies of Hoccleve's literary production often stress the disorienting and alienating effect of the Privy Seal moving out of court, and the poet's attempt to close the distance between his own sphere of influence and the royal court. Yet an awareness of how bureaucratic predecessors handled their own departments' periods of transitions suggests that it could also be an opportunity for career advancement and playing a role in shaping governmental or bureaucratic structure. Intimate connection between king and Privy Seal had already been lost when Hoccleve entered service, and so this scribe was not experiencing the process so much as the accomplished fact. Hoccleve was a middling sort of figure, laboring on the margins of a ponderous institution (or set of institutions) that he had a vision for. Hoccleve is preoccupied by speech acts in his poems, presenting his utterances and those of others to produce a discursive matrix in which the danger of malicious or ineffectual speech is ever-present and a language-based solution desirable. This absorption in speech draws attention to the effectiveness of an existing communication system, London talk, which he harnesses to encourage readers to spread the word that he is a sane man, a trustworthy colleague, a reliable administrator and counselor. By extension, bureaucratic talk—verbalized, notarized, or poetized—is a public solution to administrative weaknesses, a modern communication system mobilized on a network of *literati* who command official documentary and epistolary as well as

popular literary transmission of ideas. What Hoccleve and his colleagues have to offer a king, in the vein of a sage administrator's Christian counsel or a taxman or lawman's technical skills, is control of the language that circumscribes a king's reputation and government communications. Much like Fitz Nigel and the *Glanvill*- and *Bracton*-authors understood their distance from court to be a benefit because it allowed them to be a first line of defense against the disorder that might plague court, to Hoccleve the independence of the Privy Seal was a potential source of strength for a poet. Lancastrian kings needed not only a firm grip on their courtiers and court talk, but also cooperating *literati* at strategic nodal points away from court intrigue.

A functionary like Hoccleve unites the skills of the administrator with those of the poet, and is thus, so he would have readers believe, an ideal bureaucrat and royal advisor. Hoccleve builds his case on the figure of Geoffrey Chaucer, England's paragon of the poetry-writing bureaucrat, under whose shadow Hoccleve has largely lived his afterlife. It has seemed to stand to reason to scholars that Chaucer served as a model for Hoccleve, another bureaucrat who fancied himself a poet; and Hoccleve himself addressed the subject directly by canonizing his forebear as the father of English poetry. Hoccleve has garnered more attention in the last few decades due to an increasing realization that he was not simply an imperfect epigone of "Father Chaucer," but a clever and innovative poet in his own right. The scholarly paradigm of Chaucer's poetic progeny is giving way toward a recognition of the idiosyncratic elements of post-Chaucerian poetics. A critical approach has revealed a more complex

relationship between Hoccleve and the literary figure of Chaucer, even a potentially adversarial one in which the former "usurps" rather than inherits the mantel of poet laureate.[137] Chapter Four will question Chaucer's status as a literary origin point for the bureaucratic literature of the late middle ages, and view Hoccleve and his contemporaries as inheritors of not simply a vernacular but also an administrative literary legacy. Once we view him out of Chaucer's shadow as a skilled manipulator of Chaucer's reputation and his own life's story, we can begin to understand the nature of the stresses Privy Seal employment inspired and his motives in writing about his outlook on administrative processes. Hoccleve's bureau had lost its privy status, and his acute poetic attention to his own and his forebear Chaucer's career context participated in a strategy to reassert the bureaucracy's advisory role.

[137] See chapter "Eulogies and Usurpations: Father Chaucer in the *Regement of Princes*" in Knapp's *Bureaucratic Muse*, 107-27.

2
Perplexus inter Christum et Cesarem: Sage Administrators in the Twelfth Century

> In a...spirit of perplexity I may say that in the court I exist and of the court I speak, and what the court is, God knows, I know not.
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> —Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*

Around the year 1192 learned theologian Peter of Blois, cathedral school graduate, secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury and sometime retainer of England's King Henry II, wrote a letter to himself. He upbraids himself for a career spent indulging in writing on lighthearted and pagan themes, he, a Catholic clerk, "who should have been an organ of truth." He asks, "What are they to you, these vanities and false insanities? How long, then, will you limp in two directions?"[1] At this time Peter was firmly established in a career that spanned the divide between royal and ecclesiastical administration. He spent this career confronting anxieties and insecurities surrounding the proper social role of an educated cleric with ambitions for government service—ambitions encouraged by the demand for educated men in nascent European bureaucracies. Richard Southern has convincingly argued that there was in fact a second Peter of Blois to whom our Peter wrote this letter, a man whose

[1] Dronke translates these excerpts from Peter's Letter 76 in "Court of Henry II," 197. He interprets the recipient as Peter's "alter ego," drawing on the work of Reto Bezzola (196). The manuscript and publication history of Peter's letters is complicated. Peter himself collected his letters, and many of these appear in the *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 207 which remains the ultimate source for most letters mentioned or quoted in this dissertation. Others not collected by Peter himself have been printed by Elizabeth Revell in *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois*, Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 13 (London: Oxford University Press, 1993). Historians have attempted to produce a more reliable edition, and the challenges of doing so are discussed in Richard Southern, "Toward an Edition of Peter of Blois' Letters," *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 925-37 and Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 269-88.

biographical details fit those present in the letter.[2] Yet circumstances suggest the letter-writer saw himself mirrored in this namesake, expecting his clerical contemporaries—who might come across the letter in his epistolary collection—to recognize it as an ironic opportunity to reflect reflexively on the nature of the contested self and its textual expression. If not a true alter ego, this second Peter of Blois, to whom our Peter had previously written perhaps ten years earlier another letter urging the recipient to engage in literate affairs, appears as a sort of blank canvas onto which the administrator projected alternative lives or choices as a means of thinking through the ramifications of decisions which he made about his own life.[3]

Peter, like many of his contemporaries, felt pressured by peers, including those long-dead church fathers, to stop writing secular texts and working for the royal government. He was a competent and even accomplished ecclesiastical administrator and diplomat for Henry II, yet his correspondence and string of politico-theological treatises reveal uncertainly and self-doubt. Self-censure is admittedly not uncommon among those on the Apostolic path, but Peter's conflict was born not of the inner struggle with one's demons but of what has been called the "clerical dilemma," a set of anxieties that accompanied the careers of clergy, often educated at cathedral schools or universities, who desired careers in royal

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[2] Southern presents evidence of the letter's recipient in his "The Necessity of Two Peters of Blois," in *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Margaret Gibson*, ed. Lesley Smith and Benedicta Ward (London: Hambledon, 1991), 103-118.
[3] Southern dates letter 77 to 1182-4 and believes letter 76 appeared "about ten or more years" later ("Two Peters of Blois," 103, 106).

and ecclesiastical administration.[4] Such men wished to apply abstract learning to practical causes, like government theory, and inject learned spirituality into the public sphere where it could benefit the whole realm. Peter and his bureaucratic colleagues were "perplexus inter Christum et Cesarem"; caught between Christ and Caesar, church and state.[5] This chapter examines what twelfth-century clergy with administrative ambitions thought and wrote about their dilemma, and where and how they found potential for resolution. I argue that certain figures in the court of Henry II and his successors adapted court criticism, a genre or style that censured courts and courtiers and especially clergy employed or otherwise active at royal or even ecclesiastical courts. A primary component of this writing is an insistence on being able counsellors to kings and lords. Seemingly mirroring traditional denunciations of courtly sinfulness, twelfth-century critics instead emphasized the great need for men of God at court and among kings. They featured the figure of the "sage courtier" or "sage administrator," a member of the clergy brought to court to advise the king or perform other pastoral duties, so-called because he embodied a bastion against the moral abuses most courtiers and bureaucrats peddled at court.

Though the genre of court criticism was not new when he wrote his *Policraticus* in 1159, school-trained theologian John of Salisbury is said to have inspired a wave of writing critical of secular and clerical courtiers. It had long been the case that England and other European kingdoms relied upon educated

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[4] Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*; Carolyn Poling Schriber, *The Dilemma of Arnulf of Liseux: New Ideas versus Old Ideals* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
[5] Peter uses this expression in a letter printed in Revell, *Later Letters*, letter 10, p. 59.

clergy for the literate services of government. Criticism emerged in step with bureaucratization and the clericalization of bureaucracy, appearing first on the Continent during the reign of Emperor Otto I in response to the growing number of school graduates obtaining employment under the Holy Roman Empire.[6] Early critics debated whether Church interests were better served by close or distant relationships with secular rulers. Criticism acquired new salience during the Gregorian reforms beginning around 1050, when distaste for courtier-clerics reached a critical mass among some segments of the Church who viewed this issue as one of the most pressing problems facing the Catholic institution.[7] Criticisms were couched in a framework of attacks on the worldly sinfulness of secular courts, with the intention of showing just how inappropriate it was for a man of God to be present in such a setting. Peter Damian's *Tractatus contra clericos aulicos* of around 1072 coined the term "episcopus curialis," or courtier bishop, in response to a trend of royal favorites promoted to bishops in the Holy Roman Empire. Damian disapproved of the split priorities of a man holding both ecclesiastical and governmental offices at the same time, and of the process of aspiring clergy working their way up through friendship with a king rather than loyal service to the Church. To him, one can serve either the Church or court, but not both.[8] Damian judged that the *curialis*, or courtier-cleric, "is hardly a true

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[6] Stephen Jaeger, "The Court Criticism of MHG Didactic Poets," *Monatschefte* 74 (1982): 399; Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, especially 54-66.
[7] Jaeger, "MHG Didactic Poets," 399.
[8] Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 23, 155.

cleric at all."[9] Intensifying administrative employment in twelfth-century England caused clergy to pick up this question of whether clergy had a legitimate place at secular courts. Their political treatises and mirrors for princes respond to a contemporary dialogue regarding the best way to run and staff government, at a time when administrative positions were up for grabs.

As the number of educated clergy increased, conceptions of their rightful employment shifted to encompass more secular endeavors, so that some could argue that life in the non-cloistered world was, if not superior, at least a worthwhile test of mettle. In the 1180s Peter of Blois could claim that he had served Henry II "on the road, in his quarters, and in the chapel," figuring a scribe who was available at the king's side at all times and in all places, not hidden away within a church or monastery.[10] The notion of a cleric at the beck and call of a secular lord, available in all places rather than secreted behind a cloister or cathedral wall, was a contentious one for twelfth-century intellectuals. One hundred years in to the Gregorian Reform movement the royal court became a primary arena for discussing the ideal cleric and the nature of secular clergy. Gone were the days in which holy men "sought to erect an invisible wall between

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[9] John Cotts, "The Critique of the Secular Clergy in Peter of Blois and Nigellus de Longchamps," *Haskins Society Journal* 13 (1999): 139.

[10] The phrase "in via, in camera, in capella" used in this dissertation's title comes from Peter's letter 14A, written around 1182-4 and addressed to the clerks then serving in Henry II's court. At that time Peter was probably working for the archbishop of Canterbury, and he reflects in the letter on the time he spent at court doing the archbishop's business and the different ways he served the king (Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 78). Lena Wahlgren prints the text in *The Letter Collections of Peter of Blois: Studies in the Manuscript Collection* (Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1993), 145.

the Church and the world,"[11] replaced with an active debate on the need for cooperation between Church and secular rulers. As Aldo Scaglione describes the period, "the perception of the courtier's role is a chapter in the history of the ancient, medieval, and Renaissance debate on the relative merits of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*."[12] Clerics, especially those with advanced educations, now had career opportunities in secular and ecclesiastical administrations as well as the schools themselves, and they had to justify and defend them. Along with reform came a "new attitude towards the Christian life which stressed service to others,"[13] and the growing ethos among these men was that the saving of their own souls was not sufficient but rather their holy learning ought to impact society outside church walls. Some of these men would construct a new understanding of the active life, predicated on the benefits of civil service performed by spiritual leaders, but they faced the disapproval of more traditional-minded clergy who advocated for a redoubled flight from the world.

Not only did the increasingly complex mechanisms of administration require the intervention of intelligent men, but these *eruditi* also found at court a "personal satisfaction" in applying their education this way, their day jobs providing an "intellectual stimulus" for writing.[14] They possessed what Scaglione calls an "ethic of worldly service,"[15] but one they struggled to reconcile with their theological training. Far from cordoning off spiritual enlightenment from the

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[11] Henry Chadwick, "Pachomios and the Idea of Sanctity," in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1981), 13.
[12] Scaglione, *Knights at Court: Courtliness, Chivalry, and Courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 57.
[13] Ethel Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas in the Letters of Peter of Blois," *Speculum* 50 (1975): 238.
[14] Southern, "Place of England," 176.
[15] Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 58.

masses, John of Salisbury wanted school education to be relevant, “to make its ideas meaningful to the broader world.” [16] Most administrators who wrote literature were school-trained, and educated clerks became “essential for the conduct of business, but they were not yet quite at home in the world.”[17] Peter of Blois for instance recognized that secular clerks “represented a social group that fitted somewhat awkwardly into the established order,” and wrote on this issue at length in his letters and treatises.[18] Their rightful sphere was seemingly more the educational institution than the exchequer, and it is not surprising that office-holders’ textual productions justify the presence of graduates as well as clerics among administrators. Here in England was a prime opportunity for school-trained clergy to assert themselves as leaders of a refined Christian governance, guiding the king while protecting Church interests. Realistically, it was difficult for learned churchmen at the time to avoid contact with the royal court, and other options weren’t always appealing. Staying at the schools would obviate any pastoral role, more so than even court office, which was a common criticism of the latter. Avoiding an education in the first place would lessen one’s ability to be an effective priest and guarantee no role in national developments, including religious reform. Motives for textual composition were professional as well as personal, and reveal alongside careerism a desire for self-expression and

[16] Monagle, "Contested Knowledges: John of Salisbury's *Metalogicon* and *Historia Pontificalis*," *Parergon*, n.s., 21, no. 1 (2004): 4.
[17] Southern, “Place of England,” 175.
[18] Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 266.

performance of intellectualism.[19]

By the middle of the twelfth century, whether ideal or not, advancement to higher ecclesiastical office such as an archdeacon or bishop rarely happened for men who had not served in some capacity as ecclesiastical or royal administrators, a fact that contemporary thinkers recognized.[20] As the importance of administrative experience for bishops was becoming increasingly recognized, young clergy desired to acquire this experience wherever they could.[21] Alternative sources of rudimentary education would eventually develop, but at this point graduates from cathedral schools and then universities—men with clerical training—flooded into government positions. It was not uncommon for clergy to gain experience in more than one institutional context, including secular, ecclesiastical, and seigneurial/baronial administrations.[22] A good number of "new men" were clergy, gaining clerical status from the oaths they took while students or masters at cathedral schools; yet many members of the clergy were high born, particularly those who served as royal chancellors or other high officials. Criticism of courtiers and courtier-clerics is sometimes treated as a class issue based on

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[19] Jaeger emphasizes that scholars of John of Salisbury's generation were "forced into alternative jobs" because an "educational crisis in Germany and France" pushed them out of the schools in favor of a new crop of scholars with a different intellectual orientation. "Origins of Courtliness after 25 Years," *Haskins Society Journal* 21 (2009): 208-9.

[20] Baldwin, *Peter the Chanter*, 1:178. Peter the Chanter was at the forefront of serious discussions of how clergy with training in canon law might be allowed to participate in policy-making and litigation without breaking their religious vows against bloodshed. Continental clergy like Peter and Robert of Courson wrote theoretical treatises on these issues, but their arguments did not always have practical application to secular clergy in courtly orbits (Turner, "Clerical Judges," 171-3). In Turner's estimation, clergy who served in English administration scarcely needed to write supportive texts in the vein of Continental theorists, as "opposition to the king's use of clerics in courts and chanceries was so ineffective," including diocesan and papal proscriptions (174).

[21] Baldwin, *Peter the Chanter*, 1:178.

[22] Green, *England under Henry I*, 168-9.

resentment toward lower-born agents of social mobility.[23] Yet the real contestation appearing in intellectual treatises was between personnel who received clerical education and those laymen who either rose by means of royal favoritism or through newer emerging forms of administrative education. Arguments against employment of clergy in the secular sphere were not primarily material efforts on the part of the secular barony to retain a traditional hold over royal counseling, but concerned the risks to a man of God's immortal soul. In seeking the role of advice-giver to princes, court critics viewed the contest not as one of birth but of sanctity: unlike laymen at court, even feudal barons, clergy did not have their own best interests at heart, but those of Christendom. They were sons of the church and fathers to their flocks, and envisioned a role for themselves separate from the sea of courtiers who did not have the spiritual wherewithal to sustain their virtue. When secular clergy begin to write court criticism in greater numbers in twelfth-century England, it is not solely because they are protesting a challenge to feudal values, as Ralph Turner or Stephen Jaeger might argue, but because they are themselves the ambitious and sometimes "new" men, and they must write themselves into the court setting.[24]

Historians have also often viewed court criticism as "polemical literature of the Investiture Contest,"[25] artifacts of struggles between the Church and secular

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[23] See for instance Turner, "New Administrative Class."
[24] Jaeger's *Origins of Courtliness* describes a "clerical rebellion against courtliness" responding to the demilitarization of a general twelfth-century European noble castes and the degenerate infighting taking the pace of war (see pp. 176-94 especially). Ralph Turner bases much of his analysis on the castigations of Orderic Vitalis, alongside which evidence from other court critics regarding their view of the lowborn takes on exaggerated significance.
[25] Leidulf Melve, "'...to distil the excellence of their genius': Conceptions of Authorship in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Polemical Literature," in *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages*,

governments over jurisdiction. These treatments recognize but inadequately explain a significant feature of court criticism that disdains the moral turpitude of royal courts and proscribes clergy from attendance: it is often written by clerical-courtiers themselves. Although such compositions certainly do involve spirituality and discussions of church rights and investiture, they also fit squarely into what Richard Southern terms the "literature of secular government."[26] We cannot take for granted that anti-court rhetoric, found in all sorts of texts, intended to take a pro-Church position in a church-versus-state dispute. Clergy composed texts that firmly situated their authors in the world—continuously wracked by doubt and uncertainty, certainly, yet experiencing their dilemma from within Henry II's sphere. Southern stresses that such diverse texts as legal treatises, political theory, and verse satire have much in common, because the most important characteristic of twelfth-century English government growth was the "increasing application of learning to the work of government." Key figures of this growth are chancellor-turned-archbishop Thomas Becket and his sometime secretary John of Salisbury, each the "kind of man" with a passion for learning and religion but with a day job in administration.[27] Rodney Thomson offers an instructive revision to Southern's broad category of "literature of secular government," calling it "the literature of the art, practice, and evils of secular government," which underscores the presence and prevalence of court criticism within serious

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ed. Slavica Rankovic and Ingvil Brugger Budal (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), 136.
[26] Southern, "Place of England," 174.
[27] Ibid., 175.

treatises and mirrors for princes.[28] This link is important because it speaks to the manifold purposes of writing texts which both criticize a court and offer to that court supporting advice.

John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* or Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* written probably over the course of the 1170s through the early 1190s, for example, participate in both modes, inextricably combining political advice and social commentary. Viewed collectively, the disparate texts composed by civil servants reflect career anxieties specific to secular clergy active at court. The theme of the able, sage counsellor reveals a proposed solution to the dilemma faced by clergy at court pulled between loyalties to church and state, or between intellectualism and spirituality, a solution which relies upon critical traditions about the sinful nature of court life to defend the clerk's vital role as shepherd and advisor. Court criticism is highly preoccupied with model courtiers and counsellors, and writers like John of Salisbury characterize the ideal administrator as a cleric, the "sage administrator." This figure lay at the fulcrum of Church-state conflict, arbitrating between powers; he featured in texts as a means of expressing the frustration some educated clergy felt at being pulled in two directions. An incomplete understanding of clerical motives for composing critical texts leads historians to unsatisfactory explanations of two seemingly odd features: its writers vacillated greatly over whether at any given time they supported the administrative employment of clergy; and second, the harshest critics of courts and clergy employed at court were often clerg employed at court. Vacillations like Peter's in

[28] Thomson, "Twelfth-Century Renaissance," at 21.

his letters to his namesake, the first urging him to engage in literate pursuits and the other retracting this advice, have been explained as writers' career frustrations or periodic introspection and self-reform.

This theory fits to a degree, as for instance when Southern explains that Peter's encouraging letter 77 of the early 1180s appeared a time when Peter was "self-satisfied," his role of archdeacon at Bath and his writing skills bringing him a promising "standing among men at the centre of Angevin affairs, including the king himself."[29] By the time the follow-up letter 76 appeared in his fourth and final letter collection revision of 1198, Peter was "old, ill, without a patron, without any important employment, turning his mind increasingly to a life of religion."[30] A previous, third revision to the collection earlier in the 1190s similarly made the tone more serious and condemnatory, as Peter removed a letter (150) supporting clerical employment at court and altered another (14) to make its denunciations of such employment "darker."[31] John of Salisbury's writings can be seen to follow a general trajectory toward spiritual matters in his last twenty years of life, though his letters were more explicitly political than Peter's revolving as many of them did around the Becket controversy; Becket's actions caused John to be

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[29] Southern, "Two Peters of Blois," 106-7.
[30] Ibid., 107. The date of letter 76 itself is not known, but Southern thinks Peter wrote it at least ten years after the letter of 1182-4 (103).
[31] Cotts, "Critique," 146. At this time Peter was no longer serving as a lawyer to Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury, and contemporary letters "concern predominantly spiritual matters" including thoughts of entering the priesthood (143). Peter also revised Letter 26 in the 1190s, originally published in his 1184 collection, to add to his description of his time studying law in Bologna a paragraph advising students to avoid study of civil law (143; Wahlgren, *Letter Collections*, 68-71).

reactionary and defensive rather than just spiritually torn.[32] A few years into his and Becket's exile, in 1166, John redoubled his allegiance to the archbishop against Henry II—perhaps because his own falling out with the king worsened his potential for service at court—and his depictions of a manipulative and destructive lay court intensified.[33] Criticism might flow from the pen of clergy with thwarted ambitions, bitter at their lack of promotion at court or within the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and this has certainly been said about the century's major figures including John of Salisbury, Peter Blois, Walter Map, and Gerald of Wales.[34] And there were real reasons to doubt the wisdom of clerical attendance at court or service within a royal administration, causing even the ambitious to hesitate.

The "worldly cleric" was a natural target of criticism from all sides, as he potentially abused his clerical oaths by surrounding himself with secularity, sin and oftentimes great wealth. Courtiers of all types opened themselves up to

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[32] Nederman judges that John's writings became more reflective, philosophical, and humanistic later in his life, including the *Historia Pontificalis* finished in the later 1160s and second letter collection gathered in the 1170s. *John of Salisbury*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 288 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 33, 84-6.

[33] John McLoughlin, "The Language of Persecution: John of Salisbury and the Early Phase of the Becket Dispute (1163-1166)," *Studies in Church History* 21 (1984): 76, 83-7.

[34] Recent researchers are more likely to have an empathetic understanding of the clergy's difficult position in this age, though traditionally historians have tended to take a cynical view of schoolmen's motives for seeking office positions. See for example Egbert Türk's *Nugae curialium: Le règne d'Henri II Plantagenêt (1145-1189) et l'éthique politique* (Geneva: Droz, 1977) and *Pierre de Blois: Ambitions et remords sous les Platagenêts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006). Southern insists both that school or university graduates would not likely prefer administrative work to academic positions, and that government service was always pursued out of a desire for material improvement and upward mobility rather than conviction or principles (Southern, "Place of England," 159 and "King Henry I," 206-33). Thus John of Salisbury, although one of the most popular and successful twelfth-century thinkers, must be a "failed academic driven into administration by lack of scholarly opportunities" (Southern, "Place of England," 159). Gerald of Wales, composer of vast polemics denouncing kings Henry II and John for blocking his own advancement to an archbishopric and support of the ecclesiastical independence of Wales from Canterbury, was thought to turn to study because of "disappointments suffered at the Plantagenet court" (Baldwin, *Peter the Chanter*, 1:177).

accusations of gossip, flattery, and other sins of the tongue, because they pursued intellectual and verbal activities like disputation (as opposed to knightly combat) and because their modus operandi to receive promotion and financial support was to petition the king for favors and patronage.[35] Catalogs of courtiers' sins soon became common in satirical literature, sometimes intended to produce humor rather than outright reproach, becoming a "distinctively English" school of writing.[36] Courtiers were filled with envy and greed, fighting for the king's attentions, miring him in their perversity, and levying him with their flattery. They wasted time on hunting, waging war games, banqueting, dancing, gambling, drinking intemperately, watching actors and jugglers, and indulging disreputable hangers-on like magicians, astrologers and prostitutes.[37] Courtiers were also full of ambition—akin to greed and lust—and this all served to create an unholy atmosphere for clerics.[38] Some clerical writers regretted that so many graduates of cathedral schools flocked to the courts instead of taking vows as monks or regular canons.[39] Peter of Blois wrote in the early 1180s to Henry II's court clerics that a clerk's skills are wasted and polluted if exercised at court, and ambition, greed, and other faults are doubly troubling in a man of God.[40] Chancellor Becket faced accusations that court corrupted him into "a pastor of hounds and hawks,"

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[35] Turner, "Households," 55; Turner, "Definition of *Curiales*," 11-3.
[36] Thomson, "Twelfth-Century Renaissance," 21. In Cotts' words, "attacks on the clergy because of their educational and professional ambitions came into their own as a literary form" (Cotts, "Critique," 138).
[37] Books 1-3 of the *Policraticus* in particular concern courtly "frivolities."
[38] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 12; Forhan, "Political Thought," 65-74.
[39] Turner, *Men Raised*, 12.
[40] He says this in Letter 14, Peter's harshest criticism of Henry II's court, which he soon retracted by means of letter 150. See Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 231 and Wahlgren, *Letter Collections*, 140-44 for this letter's complex revision history.

as he was famous for participating in the courtly pastime of hunting.[41] Clergy exposed to the sins of court risk their spirituality, but most importantly they risk losing sight of and neglecting their primary responsibility, the cure of souls. Peter of Blois wrote multiple letters to bishops and priests urging them to avoid habits like hunting in order to focus on pastoral duties like hearing confessions or giving sermons.[42] The Third Lateran Council of 1179, one of many ecclesiastical councils that debated the role of clergy in the world, took an official stance against clerics serving as administrative or judicial officers, strictly limiting instances when clergy could act as advocates in lay law courts.[43]

In duas partes

The wave of criticism inspired by John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* has caused the second half of the twelfth century to appear as, in the words of Stephen Jaeger, a "clerical rebellion" against growing secularity.[44] Learned clergy had reasons for avoiding the court environment entirely, yet avoid it they did not. Clerical writers did not renounce their worldly ways solely late in life; Peter of Blois' letters 14 and 150 indicate that he experienced changes of heart as a younger man as well, and did not simply have one attitude adjustment as an aging and disaffected

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[41] Michael Staunton, "Thomas Becket's Conversion," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XXI: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1998*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1998), 196. The phrase comes from Herbert of Bosham's *Vita sancti Thomae, archiepiscopi et martyris*, printed in *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J. C. Robertson and J. B. Sheppard, Rolls Series 67 (1875-85; repr., Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1965), 3:183.
[42] Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 227.
[43] Baldwin, *Peter the Chanter*, 1:178, 195. At the most practical level, scribes or judges involved in issuing corporal punishments contravened a clerical directive against bloodshed (1:175-204).
[44] Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 176.

man. These letters were exchanged with Henry II's curial priests in the early 1180s, the first, letter 14, harshly criticizing the chaplains and the latter, letter 150, retracting this criticism and apologizing. In this second missive Peter claimed he had been influenced by the pessimism of illness when he wrote previously but did not really believe in those criticisms.[45] As a young student Peter had also foresworn study of civil law to pick theology instead, only to argue a case on behalf of Baldwin of Canterbury in the late 1180s.[46] On the other hand one of his latest writings, the *Canon Episcopalis* of 1196 or 1197, once again insists that clergy have a role to play in "protecting the poor from unjust laws."[47] His *Invectiva in depravatorem* written in or around 1198 likewise passionately defends him against typical sorts of criticism and renews his arguments about sage counsellors. John of Salisbury's early works, including the *Policraticus*, also offer complicated ruminations on the problem and demonstrate that John was conflicted throughout his career. Changes of heart can potentially serve as damning evidence of the court, indicating that even the encouragers of courtier-clerics were only lukewarm supporters and usually ended up on the other side of the conflict. Writers like John and Peter can easily appear to be hypocrites, variously supporting their own career efforts and those of their friends when it suits them. Ethel Higonnet ascribes to Peter a sort of clinical shrewdness, suggesting he always acted out of resentment, variously supporting and castigating *curiales* when it benefitted him: "when in favor he approved; when in

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[45] Cotts, "Critique," 146.
[46] See Ibid., 137, 143.
[47] Ibid.,147.

disfavor, he disapproved."[48]

Such a view denudes clerical writing of all sincerity and emotion, other than the emotions of frustration and vexation, so at odds with the arguments Peter and John make about clerics at court. It would do a disservice to twelfth-century court criticism to judge that the negative commentary outweighs and thus disqualifies the good; even if clerical writers veered towards cloistered spiritualism later in life, that still would not mean that the positions they took as younger men were not valid in a discussion of contemporary beliefs. We must consider how and why these men argued in support of clerics being active ecclesiastical administrators and even participating at secular courts. Much of the Latin poetry produced in England during Henry II's reign, Peter Dronke points out, is inherently ambivalent, an "embodiment of that *sic et non"* common in intellectual circles, sometimes for example pro-court or pro-clerical and other times anti-court or anti-clerical.[49] We might see Peter's intention as laying out two halves of an argument for consideration—a *sic et non*—rather than attempting, even late in life, to unilaterally advocate for clerics to abandon court. Yet, unlike the balanced perspectives of a scholastic *summa*, in the poetry "the contrary positions often remain unresolved."[50] Revisions like Peter's decision in the 1190s to remove letter 150 from his collection might constitute an attempt to eliminate "doctrines or opinions of which he no longer approved,"[51] yet previous iterations

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[48] Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 229.
[49] Dronke, "Court of Henry II," 189. See Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 56 for a similar argument about the *Policraticus*.
[50] Dronke, "Court of Henry II," 189n16.
[51] Southern, "Two Peters of Blois," 105.

of this collection contentedly presented both letters 14 and 150, preserving their contrast. Likewise, when he added letter 76, he kept 77. While individual letters may seek to be persuasive, collections are a different sort of artifact. Higonnet suggests that Peter might have intended to show readers the ambiguous truths of court life through "deliberate juxtaposition" of letters in his collection that were anti-court and pro-court.[52]

Neil Cartlidge furthers the notion that Peter's seeming ambivalence is a rhetorical strategy—a "rhetoric of disorientatedness": his "obsessive problematization of the clerk's role in society is Peter's means of denying or destabilizing the particular forms of social situatedness that determine identity."[53] Cartlidge sees the identity indeterminacy of Henry II's courtiers as a spur for ambivalence, producing texts that claim to offer "detached commentary" but are in reality reflexive.[54] Yet Peter's presentation of the clerical dilemma via *sic et non* is not solely an academic exercise, I argue, "forcing the reader to consider the complexities of the question."[55] There is too much at stake. John Cotts remembers that Peter is a cleric and perceives an occasional need for him to "display penitence," to show he is aware of his precarious position and does not take worldliness for granted.[56] I argue that Peter does not pay lip service to his clerical oaths by casting the courtly world as a sinful foil which his weakness leads him to, but that such descriptions and criticisms are a vital part of his

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[52] Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 229.
[53] Cartlidge, "Anxiety and Debate," 84-5.
[54] Cartlidge, "Anxiety and Debate," 83.
[55] Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 229.
[56] Cotts, "Critique," 148.

program to justify and understand his own worldliness. Court criticism following the *Policraticus* paradigm did not simply become more inconsistent because its writers figured in an increasingly complex employment world where they had good reasons both to attend and avoid court. As clergy within the secular orbit picked up the traditional themes of political and social commentary in their own multi-genre treatises and letters, descriptions of the sinful court became under their pens justifications not of the unsuitability of clergy in the world, but of the pressing need for Christian influences at court. Writers like John and Peter really did vacillate, but on balance a keen sense emerges of their belief that court employment is a worthwhile, holy endeavor.

John of Salisbury's first foray into court criticism was his *Entheticus Maior*, likely first drafted during his school days in Paris in the 1140s but completed during Thomas Becket's chancellorship; John also reworked it into a poem known as the *Entheticus Minor* appended to the beginning of the *Policraticus*.[57] This burst of writing (John finished both the *Policraticus* and *Metalogicon* in 1159) accompanied a time when John's career seemed promising, with potential for secular administrative service or further promotion within the Church. It has been noted that passages of *Entheticus Maior* which John seems to have written first

[57] The relationship between the two poems is complex. Jan van Laarhoven argues that the *Entheticus Minor* was written second and although it must have been finished by 1159 in order to be published alongside the *Policraticus*, it was not necessarily written after the *Maior* version was finished. Most scholars give the *Maior* a finishing date of 1155-56 there are references to Becket as archbishop which may have been added as late as 1161. Van Laarhoven concludes that the *Minor* poem is not simply a redaction of the longer text, but is a mature reworking of its content with a more focused goal in mind and new material not present in the *Maior.* "Introduction," in *John of Salisbury's Entheticus Maior and Minor*, ed. and trans. Van Laarhoven (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 1:15, 48, 65-7. Subsequent citations from the *Maior* and *Minor* will refer to line numbers and pages from this edition.

betray schoolboy naïveté and conventional theological wisdom about the laity and courtiers.[58] His thinking and writing on the subject soon becomes more complex, his Canterbury experiences and Becket's chancellorship causing him to question assumptions and explore nuances. He responded as a sort of Canterbury spokesperson to the career moves of Thomas Becket, whose move *into* central government as Lord Chancellor in 1155, and whose decisive move *out* of it back to Canterbury as Archbishop in 1162, required some explanation. John had to contend with a close associate taking steps that he maybe thought were inappropriate, but maybe at the same time thought were the exact steps he himself wanted to take. His motives were both personal and professional, leading him to eventually innovate new forms of court criticism, a combination of shrewd politicking and genuine uncertainty over his stance. Thomas Becket was by no means Europe's first cleric to accede to high royal office, but he was the first close associate of John's to do so. At a less personal level the optimistic atmosphere surrounding Henry II's new reign meant that Becket's role had the potential to set beneficial or dangerous precedents. John's texts reveal that he was not certain of much except that the Church must be defended, and this meant a twofold strategy of obscuring Becket's rumored excesses while urging on him contemplation and reform.

John of Salisbury rekindled an enthusiasm for court criticism amongst Henry II's literati, and he did so unintentionally, out of a desire to participate in

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[58] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 49, 50. For a discussion of the poem's dating and motives, see Cary Nederman and Arlene Feldwick, "To the Court and Back Again: The Origins and Dating of the *Entheticus de Dogmate Philosophorum* of John of Salisbury," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21 (1991): 129-45.

shaping social norms upset by Becket. John couched Becket rhetorically as the ultimate sage administrator, introducing in his texts about the councilor's life, career and death archetypal arguments for the beneficial qualities of a statesman with a foot in both spheres. Namely, clergy are potentially impervious to the court's corrupting influences, and while they school others in virtuous living, they undergo a challenge to their faith that forges strong ecclesiastical leadership and proves their sanctity. As friend to Henry II, Becket defended the Church and offered learned advice that led to a time of peace following civil war and anarchy; once Becket renounced his ties to the court to become archbishop, political lessons learned as chancellor guided him in resisting Henry's unfair policies. John worries at times that Becket has made poor decisions, but the worse scenario, as emerges from the *Policraticus*, is when lifelong civil servants—some of whom had no previous association with the Church—move into the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Becket and men like him protected their clerical interests as royal advisors, and impeded the king's prerogative of filling positions with men loyal only to him. My reading of the *Policraticus* searches for a reconciliation between extremes of anti-and pro-court sentiments. What I find is that on balance, John believes that a chosen few clerics have real potential to remain stalwart in the face of the court's corrupting sinfulness, benefitting themselves from this holy adversity while benefitting the king and his kingdom by means of their advice and moral presence.

Stephen Jaeger argued in his *Origins of Courtliness* that "only criticism of the court and its clerical officials could legitimately make its appearance in the

authoritative form of the written word….conservative Christianity generally was blind to any good in court service." In other words, genuine criticism of courts was a dominant voice and any others which may have existed were rare "apologia."[59] A major limitation to his study is that he treats in separate chapters the negative and positive evaluations of the court by twelfth-century writers like John of Salisbury and Peter of Blois, thus never questioning how and why they coexist, which in turn leads to an underestimation of the presence of "pro-court" sentiments in England. Yet court criticism did not simply flourish in twelfth-century England but entered a new phase marked by its co-option by the very secular clerics who attracted criticism. Writers of court criticism offer many defenses of sage administrators, including how learned their advice is and their willingness as spiritual shepherds to engage in correcting the sinful behavior of courtiers and kings. They turned this genre from one about other people to one about themselves; a reflective, reflexive, almost autobiographical genre that promoted secular clerics as advisors to kings and justified their presence at court. In this wave of courtly criticism, castigations of courtly immorality are not an end of their own. The potential dangers to clergy are not necessarily intended to warn away. I argue that John retooled critical tropes into a defense of Becket's

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[59] Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 83. He identifies one medieval text as "pro-court," the early thirteenth-century *Morale somnium Pharaonis*, which populates Pharaoh's court "with flatterers and detractors…to show that the state falls into the hands of rabble when good men are lured from its service by such pious enticements as rest, study, and contemplation. It points up the absurdity of leaving the center of government in order to keep virtue alive; virtue lives and thrives in the center of vice" (95). Jaeger views court criticism as a monolithic genre in contrast to episcopal hagiography that idealizes the lives and careers of courtier bishops, suggesting that criticism writers intended to represent court "at its worst" and had suspicious motives for writing due to their own career failures and frustrations; their texts are not as trustworthy as the hagiography because the writers "held sharp biases against the court and its head" (65-6).

chancellorship, using denunciations as an argument for Henry II's—or any court's—desperate need to be Christianized. This claim had two major components: shepherding kings and nobility was a role of paramount importance for a cleric, and, unlike other sorts of advisors, true men of God could withstand the corruption at court and remain trustworthy advisers.

Omnibus omnia fit

In Books 5 and 6 of his *Policraticus*, school-trained cleric John of Salisbury makes lengthy use of a treatise supposedly by Plutarch called the *Institutio Traiani*, a text which scholars generally accept is made up. John purports to draw from Plutarch the extended metaphor of Church and state officials as members of the human body, which he employs as a framework for evaluating the duties of statecraft and the spiritual pitfalls of neglecting them. Hans Liebeschütz demonstrates that John in fact likely borrowed the metaphor from his teacher Robert Pullus, enlivening his own version with illustrations drawn from classical sources. Some of these sources he names, but often uses them while claiming their content is Plutarch's.[60] To Liebeschütz, Plutarch is an authorizing device. John's invention of the *Institutio Traiani* allowed him to "throw a cloak of classical authority over his discussion of contemporary political problems," while resting responsibility for the following advice for princes on Plutarch avoids the fallout of

[60] Liebeschütz, "John of Salisbury and Pseudo-Plutarch," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 6 (1943): 33, 37-8; Janet Martin, "Uses of Tradition: Gellius, Petronius, and John of Salisbury," *Viator* 10 (1979): 66. The text's most recent editor, Cary Nederman, reminds that novel ideas were sometimes dismissed outright. "Editor's Introduction" in *Policraticus: On the Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. and trans Cary Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xxi.

being billed an assertive "ecclesiastical politician."[61] However, John's necessary manipulation of his sources in order to Christianize them bears more attention. Placing Trajan and Plutarch in a fictional philosopher-king relationship conforms the text to a standard mirror-for-princes format, as Janet Martin recognizes, and the Plutarch-Trajan relationship enters a chronological series that implicitly culminates with John and Henry II: "John lays claim with the *Institutio* to a place in the tradition of courtier-sages exemplified by Seneca and Plutarch."[62] This contrived mirror, then, extended through two books of the *Policraticus*, enhances the text's presumption to counsel princes (and its dedicatee, Thomas Becket). Yet, John does not base his role as royal counsellor simply on the sage footsteps he fills or on "the learning displayed in the very invention of the *Institutio*," as Martin says.[63] His streamlining of source material under Plutarch's name allows him to present himself as an ideal counsellor due less to his qualifications as scholar or translator and more as a Christianizer of received instructive tradition.

If classical texts are a well of valuable information for Christian kings, they require irreproachable men of Christian learning to transcribe potentially dangerous pagan documents into Christian exemplars. It is well known that John

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[61] Liebeschütz, "Pseudo-Plutarch," 35-6.

[62] Martin, "Uses of Tradition," 67. Trajan was a typical medieval example of kingly virtue, and John would have read much about him in the Roman historical works which he mined for source material. John would also have read enough about Plutarch, who held some civil service posts under Trajan, to imagine a relationship between the two men (Liebeschütz, "Pseudo-Plutarch," 34-6).

[63] Martin, "Uses of Tradition," 67. She further argues in "John of Salisbury as Classical Scholar," in *The World of John of Salisbury*, ed. Michael Wilks (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984) that John intended his audience to recognize his inventions as "shared jokes" which "reinforce[d]…their sense of being a learned elite" (196). According to Nederman, this subterfuge was necessary to avoid undesirable novelty, as John was extending and complicating Pullus' work (*John of Salisbury*, 54-5, 57).

welcomed pagan literature for what it could teach about morality and spirituality,[64] and in the *Policraticus* we see him elaborating on a program of study that can safely receive and transmit pre-Christian wisdom. This notion pervades Book 7, which comes down on the side of recommending the reading, assimilation, and teaching of pre-Christian texts but also underscores the importance of allowing only carefully-trained readers access to these sources. John says that people commonly accept the wisdom of classical philosophers, yet their shortcoming was that they lacked God: "those who became fully acquainted with almost anything… were completely lost to the greatest knowledge of those things which are true on the basis of the one and only Truth."[65] Thus even wise pagan texts include troubling errors. Wisdom requires reading be done "with the presence of grace,"[66] which we know is exactly the practice a school-educated clerk has been trained for. Approaching a pagan text to counsel a king requires that "the reading is done with discrimination and that only is selected which is edifying to faith and morals. There is matter which is of profit to stronger minds but is to be kept from the artless….It is somewhat dangerous to expose the unsophisticated to pagan literature; but a training in both is very useful to those safe in the faith, for

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[64] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 41-3.
[65] *Policraticus: On the Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. and trans. Cary Nederman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 7.1, 149. The *Policraticus*'s printing history has produced no complete translation; John Dickinson prints portions of the text deemed to relate to serious advice on governance as *The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury* (1927; repr., New York: Russell & Russell, 1963). Joseph Pike later supplied a translation of the remaining portions having to do with courtly "frivolities" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1938). Nederman provides a fresh translation of some sections with overlap of both Pike and Dickinson, and this version will be preferred when available. Future citations of the *Policraticus* will indicate the appropriate translation, the Book and Chapter numbers, and page number.
[66] *Policraticus* (Pike), 7.9, 250.

accurate reading on a wide range of subjects makes the scholar; careful selection of the better makes the saint."[67]

John models himself doing just this with Plutarch. He explains that Plutarch "develops his argument on somewhat superstitious lines, after the manner of pagans," and describes his translation process as "insert[ing] some of Plutarch's ideas…[and] expressing them in Catholic sense and language," undertaking a mediated paraphrase of the treatise rather than a translation.[68] John insists that Plutarch's treatise is quite valuable to a ruler if one undertakes to "subtract the superstitions of the gentiles."[69] He must reframe the treatise to fit Christian dogma: while Plutarch's "point of departure is from reverence for supernatural beings; ours is from God."[70] John makes continual reference in Book 5 to this "catholic language" he must insert into the *Institutes*, drawing attention to the relevant examples from Christian history he adds alongside Plutarch's pagan examples of good character and leadership.[71] He regularly begins chapters with Plutarch's wisdom then quickly launches into Biblical examples, and often makes reference to the Christian God wherever Plutarch discusses pagan gods. Biblical examples appear to the greatest extent in the material pulled from the beginning of Plutarch's text, regarding matters of the soul, presumably because spiritual material requires the most thorough Christianization. John supplements Plutarch's list of famous men by noting that

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[67] *Policraticus* (Pike), 7.10, 253.
[68] *Policraticus* (Dickinson), 5.4, 77.
[69] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 5, prologue, 65.
[70] *Policraticus* (Dickinson), 5.3, 67.
[71] *Policraticus* (Dickinson), 5.3, 67-69; 5.4, 77.

he is able to counteract the "taint of his infidelity [by] touching on his doctrine…in Catholic language" by offering corresponding examples from Scripture.[72] He qualifies one bit of Plutarch's wisdom as being "[in] accord[with] the saying of the Apostle (although of course he does not know the Apostle)."[73] Similarly, he swaps out pagan principles for Christian ones by noting that Plutarch's exemplars of good living are "Those…whom we see conforming by the propriety of their life to the divine goodness, [whom] we ought to revere as the truest and most faithful image of God."[74]

Another instance of Christianizing a pagan author appears in Book 7. John quotes Macrobius' metaphor regarding learned readers collecting knowledge into wisdom like bees collect pollen into nectar, but he silently amends it to replace a general sentiment about the need to *write* wisdom, with a moralistic commentary on harnessing knowledge to virtue. He then supplements the passage with another addition of his own, a more explicitly Christian commentary about blood, which Macrobius has said is like nectar. John adds: "for blood is set apart by divine commandment for the avoidance of sin."[75] In Book 8, John more explicitly states that he will use a pagan book titled "On the Ends of Tyrants" to build his theory of tyrannicide, but will "abridge its contents with diligence…and…verify [it] by the examples of divine and faithful history" from a "divine book."[76] Thus, John repeatedly follows his own advice that "pagan writers be read in a way that their

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[72] *Policraticus* (Dickinson), 5.3, 67.
[73] *Policraticus* (Dickinson), 5.3, 67.
[74] *Policraticus* (Dickinson), 5.4, 79.
[75] *Policraticus* (Pike), 7.10, 254.
[76] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 8.20, 206.

authority be not prejudicial to reason."[77] John silently amends a source for the same reason he obscured his use of Robert Pullus, not simply to claim ancient origins for the ideas but to perform the role of Christianizing scholar.

John certainly does not always moralize every chance he gets, but offers lengthy passages on, for instance, Roman law and military practices. Historians commonly interpret such material as John demonstrating to a potential patron that he knows of such secularly useful things as common law and war. Within the framework of a Christianizing text, we can be sure these heavily pagan passages have also been carefully vetted by a clerical eye. But in the context of a political climate in which the use of pagan sources was hotly contested by reformers, John's strategies effectively bring this large body of knowledge under the aegis of Christian learning, positioning himself, yes, in the pro-pagan text camp, but also asserting that clergy are now the source of such valuable knowledge. Pagan literature is no longer an alternative to Christian learning but becomes subsumed within it. Many of the chapters in Books 5-6 have an undercurrent of the sermon, John's tone that of a preacher, as if to demonstrate that the man of God is an ideal reader and advice-giver on even secular topics. If obedience to God's will is a prince's primary objective, from which all secular bounties and powers derive, then a clerical counsellor is singularly adapted to ensure the king's adherence to God's will in all matters of governance. Lest any reader suspect that John himself has missed the point and erred in pursuing worldly affairs, he refers to his *Policraticus* as his "prayer," as if his corrective advice is akin to praying for

[77] *Policraticus* (Pike), 7.10, 255.

colleagues' souls.[78] Such a statement not only insists upon the efficacy of a cleric's counsel, but casts the entire text as Christian utterance.

John's exhortation that pagan wisdom be Christianized, and his strategies to model himself as a potential sage administrator, illustrate the arguments contemplated and posed in twelfth-century court criticism. This fabrication of classical tradition exemplifies how educated clergy conceptualized the role of a royal advisor, which in turn responded to anxieties about their proper place in society and opportunities for career advancement. The theme of proper counsel pervades the writing of office-holders, including the explicit manuals for the performance of legal or scribal duties which shall form the focus of the subsequent chapter. Clerical writers responded to the question of their place at court or in secular office by reasoning out how clergy were well-suited to administrative work—or, more accurately, how administrative work was suited for a clerical laborer. Clergy envisioned administrative work specifically but life in the court orbit more generally as a sort of holy labor, because of the propinquity between bureaucracy and king. If to Peter Damian the courtly or worldly cleric was not a true cleric, to John of Salisbury, the curial clergy just might be the best clergy, most ardently and effectively living up to expectations; and clergy might be the ideal administrators. School graduates were steeped in traditions of perfection, while education and spiritual enlightenment prepared these clergy to be holistically-skilled advisors. Thirdly, dedicated clergy also performed pastoral duties for the king and courtiers.

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[78] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 8.25, 230.

Graduates like John of Salisbury were steeped not only in theology but in classical political theory and conduct literature, which they turned to for theories and models of ideal statesmanship. The vast body of Roman legal and governance treatises as well as poetry were the source for a constellation of ideas relevant to administration, and particularly the role of a cleric in government, once they were adapted to a Christian context. This process began in the Ottonian Holy Roman Empire, when Otto I's courtier-bishops—his "royal priesthood"—borrowed the rhetoric of comportment from Roman and early Christian intellectual traditions in order to associate themselves with revered statesmen who served in positions of both administrative and religious authority.[79] In England, "the Ciceronian statesman, articulate, well-educated, and virtuous, was to be the model for the twelfth-century public man."[80] The classical past demonstrated how important it was for any statesman, either official or prince, to be moral and upstanding. Any statesman or advisor to princes must hold himself to high standards. Administrative literature is preoccupied with ideals for kings and their courtiers to the extent that a realm becomes metonymically linked to its ministry; a kingdom is only as strong as its counsellors, and a king cannot be just without the proper advisers and servants. Court criticism functions as a mirror for both princes and officials, instructing them about proper comportment in part through emphasizing how *not* to behave; it is an instructional

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[79] Emperor Otto referred to his brother Bruno of Cologne embodying "a royal priesthood" in a letter. Stephen Jaeger, "John of Salisbury, a Philosopher of the Long Eleventh Century," in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and John Van Engen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 512-13.

[80] Forhan, "Political Thought," 67. Nederman suggests John of Salisbury himself "recogniz[ed] a kindred spirit" in Cicero, "joined by similar predicaments as philosophers involved in political affairs" (*John of Salisbury*, 53).

literature that entertains by displaying the inversion of ideals present at a corrupt court, establishing categories of corrupt and saintly courtiers.

One component of school theory that became incorporated into bureaucratic training first in Germany, then by the twelfth century in France and England, was the notion of perfection born from the traditional Christian belief in the accordance of the inner and outer man. This accordance and its concomitant emphasis on proper behavior and form influenced a preoccupation with representation, including ways that a man might signal externally what lay inside and how identity markers might serve as shorthand for one's beliefs and qualifications.[81] In Germany "the importance of outer signs of inner dispositions was clearly part of the political dimension of the special ethos for public administrators and social leaders."[82] Under the Ottonians, a near obsession with perfection in appearance and behavior gripped bureaucratic culture, informing an evolving court ethic that led powerful clerics closer into the world of the secular court, and attempted to "civilize" knights.[83] An "ethic of worldly service arose from the model of the courtier bishop" and spread to courtiers and secular clergy in other parts of Europe, implicating the cleric deeply at royal courts.[84] We can witness these trends in Insular texts. Often in twelfth-century England, letters and other texts have to do with representations and ideals, like Peter of Blois having to defend Archbishop Richard of Dover, Becket's successor, as an ideal bishop

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[81] Stephen Medcalf, "Inner and Outer," in *The Later Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen Medcalf (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981), 108-71.
[82] Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 56.
[83] Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, 7, 12-14, 28-40, 116-18, passim.
[84] Ibid., 101.

against accusations that he allowed Henry II too much sway over the church.[85]

Behavioral ideals were not uncommon in medieval hagiography, of course, but it is significant how in the late eleventh century and increasingly into the twelfth bishops' *vitae* stress any administrative skills they had whether practiced in their own see or for a king's government.[86] Twelfth-century texts make regular reference to the spiritual side of the ideal administrative role, such as how priests and bishops can serve as models to their flocks. Priests and bishops did not simply dispense wisdom from on high, but served as exemplars, instructing the flock "in the ways of the Lord by word, deed and example."[87] The notion intensified that clergy were models, and writers also took on this role, offering themselves as models for their readers, sometimes playfully within modesty statements about their suitability as negative role models, and sometimes earnestly as spiritual guides. One element in the twelfth-century "discovery" of the individual and emphasis on authorship was a reliance on the authority of experience, and Walter Map, Peter of Blois, and John of Salisbury advertised their texts as collections of court experience intended to benefit their peers.[88] Experience and perfection are certainly not the same thing, but twelfth-

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[85] John Cotts, "Monks and Mediocrities in the Shadow of Thomas Becket: Peter of Blois on Episcopal Duty," *Haskins Society Journal* 10 (2001): 152.
[86] Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, especially 19-53; Cotts, "Monks and Mediocrities."
[87] Higonnet quotes Letter 148 in "Spiritual Ideas," 227. Peter also wrote in his *Canon episcopalis* to dedicatee John of Coutances (nephew of Walter of Coutances, archbishop of Rouen), who had just been promoted from the king's curia to the see of Worcester, that he ought to "Edify others not only by word, but by deed and example…Edify your subjects with respect to their appearance, countenance, bearing, attire and gait" (quoted in Cotts, "Monks and Mediocrities," 156).
[88] The standard work on twelfth-century individualism is Caroline Bynum's "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 82-109.

century scholars carried with them the Ottonian concern for idealized comportment—in fact the very failures of this perfection, in part due to conflict over the clerical dilemma, reveal how deeply writers like Peter of Blois and John of Salisbury felt the obligation. Just as governments were starting to rule through the written word, the producers of that writing, administrators, were coming to realize how they could rule and define themselves through writing, using composition and authorship to find power and place in the world. Writers tentatively conflated text and person, thus requiring a document's creator to be as flawless as the document. Texts became a sort of proxy for the advisor in which the man himself was expressed by the text. In other words, texts represented or signaled the qualities of the creator, as when Peter of Blois urged detractors to look to his writings for proof of his goodness.[89]

The high-medieval reforming impulse penetrated political institutions, and allowed twelfth-century clergy to dedicate themselves to what Cotts has called their "struggle for sacrality at the royal court."[90] John of Salisbury "attempted to make the life of the philosopher available to those in the world," including secular clerics and kings, by showing the applicability of classical morality to anyone willing and able to read these texts.[91] To an educated, travelled observer like John, education—especially a traditional liberal arts education involving rhetoric and grammar more so than logic or dialectic— "alone produces a civil society."[92] In his *Metalogicon* and *Historia Pontificalis* John outlines the stakes involved in

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[89] See Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 228-30, 241-4.
[90] Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 140.
[91] Forhan, "Political Thought," 73.
[92] Monagle, "Contested Knowledges," 6.

providing kings with educated and trustworthy advisors, claiming that language study aids society while the lack or misuse of knowledge puts society at risk. Poor advice-givers "[attack]…the whole of civic life."[93] It was a medieval commonplace that an educated and Christian king is vital for the well-being of any kingdom, so it is not a surprise to see John and others contending that this education involves clerical advisors. Peter of Blois often praised Henry II's education, and even wrote directly to the king that his well-trained mind makes him "prudent in the administration of great things, subtle in judgements, keen in precepts, circumspect in council."[94] In another letter he wrote that "whatever great richness of harvest results from the labor of your studies, you should offer the maniples of justice for the acquisition of souls."[95] One of the most common themes of praise for kings was their wisdom in seeking and following trustworthy advice, and men like Peter who write such letters about and to the king wished to be seen as qualified advisors. To John of Salisbury, clerics make the best courtiers due to their intelligent and Godly advice, and ought to serve as "the king's right hand."[96] He explains in his *Life of Thomas Becket* that Archbishop Theobald sent Becket to the young Henry II specifically to counter the "foolishness and malice of the youths and perverse men by whose advice the

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[93] *Metalogicon*, ed. and trans. John Hall (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), Bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 127. John's treatise argues that a course of study focusing too much on logic and dialectic at the expense of rhetoric and grammar is dangerous. Future references will give the book, chapter, and page numbers from this edition.
[94] Letter 67, quoted in Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 240.
[95] Letter 230, quoted in Ibid., 241.
[96] Here John is describing Thomas Becket in particular, in the poem *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 26, 1:232 which acts as a preface to the *Policraticus*.

king seemed to be guided."[97] Clergy were double defenders of the court, due to their learning and spirituality; in order to be promoters of reform, therefore, clergy must bring their efforts into the court and the presence of the king and not flee from the world in the hopes of purifying the Church.

In this capacity courtier-clerics advised on religious but also political and other secular topics. By extension, it made sense for them to serve in official capacities as chancellors, accountants, diplomats, or chapel priests, ensuring that administrative duties conformed to Christian virtues. Leidulf Melve, in a study of the impact of the Investiture Conflict on notions of authorship, notes that after the conflict intensified in the 1070s, school-trained, clerical intellectuals became more likely to engage in rhetoric of expertise and counsel. They cast themselves as "intellectual conflict solver[s]" who ought to be "solely responsible for presenting the correct interpretation of issues pertaining to" church-state relations.[98] Continental scholastics like Peter the Chanter and his followers wrote about the thorny legal issues involved in such employment, but overall felt the most important consideration was that clergy performed important tasks at court, which included pastoral duties like hearing confession, but even more importantly "in lectures, debates, and judgments of litigation, they gave their learned opinions on the difficult questions of the realm"; they also provided "assistance to the king in promoting the public welfare by aiding the poor [and] defending religion and

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[97] John's *Life of Thomas Becket* appears in *Anselm and Becket: Two Canterbury Saints' Lives*, trans. Ronald E. Pepin (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 76. Future references to this work will give a page number from this translation.
[98] Melve, "Conceptions of Authorship," 142-3.

the church."[99] Peter of Blois' Letter 66 describes Henry II's court as one where there is present "a daily academy of the most learned men, the continual discussion and analysis of problems."[100] Higonnet stresses that Peter "had at times served in a position of power" and this informed his perspective and principles.[101] His letter 84, written in defense of bishops whom the pope accused of worldliness, emphasized both the education and morality of clerical advisors, asserting that "bishops should be present in the councils of kings" because they are "more expeditious and efficient in the administration of the affairs of state" and their knowledge and dedication to the people's welfare and justice constitute "a duty to advise".[102] In a letter to Ralph of Beauvais, who had previously denounced the Canterbury curia as excessively worldly, Peter praises the archbishop's clerks as "the most erudite men," rather than stressing more conventional clerical qualities such as meekness or piety.[103]

Peter also bragged that the clerks serving the archbishop at Canterbury, where he held his next post, were so wise that "all the difficult and knotty questions of the realm are referred to us."[104] When learned men could not be physically present before the king, their texts could stand in proxy. Peter of Blois wrote to Henry II offering unsolicited advice about topics such as the king's sons' education or abuses by government officials.[105] In his letter from the early 1180s

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[99] Baldwin, *Peter the Chanter*, 1:177.
[100] Quoted in Cartlidge, "Anxiety and Debate," 87.
[101] Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 229-30.
[102] Quoted in Ibid., 229-30. See also Cotts, "Critique," 145 for an evaluation of this letter.
[103] Letter 6, quoted in Cotts, "Critique," 144.
[104] Letter 6, quoted in Ibid.
[105] Higonnet describes this letter, 95, as demonstrating "how Peter himself was necessary to the king" by decrying various "injustices perpetrated throughout the kingdom" ("Spiritual Ideas," 230).

to the second Peter of Blois he also claimed about a writer's utility that the publicizes and memorializes the deeds of powerful men, including Henry II: "only writings…preserve mortals in some immortality of fame."[106] John of Salisbury similarly states in the *Policraticus* that great men are "distinguished by the memorials of writers" and in fact "no one would ever be illuminated by perpetual glory unless he himself or someone else had written….therefore, there is no better counsel to those who seek glory than to be worthy of the greatest thanks of men of letters and of scribes."[107] Melve points to a contemporary realization that education fostered a talent for conflict resolution, "based on the ability to consult texts" for precedent and wisdom.[108] John of Salisbury himself points out in the *Policraticus*' prologue that the valuable "examples of our ancestors" would have been lost without the industriousness of writers,[109] and he exhibits throughout his corpus his own grasp of textual traditions in his many quotations of the Bible and various classical and patristic texts.

As advisers, clergy specifically aided the Church by directing kings toward protective policies. Peter of Blois wrote that clerics were singularly qualified to mediate between kings and God, ensuring justice and salvation for the people, but also advancing the Church's interests.[110] Peter served as tutor to William II of Sicily during his minority in the 1160s as well as the kingdom's seal-keeper, and

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[106] Letter 77, quoted in Ibid., 241.
[107] *Policraticus* (Nederman), prologue, 3.
[108] Melve, "Conceptions of Authorship," 143.
[109] *Policraticus* (Nederman), prologue, 3.
[110] Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 68. Lanfranc and St Anselm are earlier examples of the traditional belief that the English kings and their archbishops were "partners" or even "co-rulers," and that the king ought to turn to his bishops first for advice. Sally Vaughn, "Henry I and the English Church: The Archbishops and the King," *Haskins Society Journal* 17 (2006): 135-7.

reflected on his duties in a letter to the next man to take on the tutoring position. He likened the courtier cleric to Christ, as if a martyr to the cause of Christian education, suffering from the court's ways yet obligated to honestly advise even a king unwilling to hear the truth.[111] His letters at the time reveal that Peter "saw himself living up to the ideal of a wise royal councilor" in Sicily.[112] Later in life his *Invectiva in depravatorem* claimed that "the king, thanks to my own poor prodding,…pardoned great debts for ecclesiastical persons, relaxed their burdens, and lightened the torments of the condemned."[113] To John of Salisbury, Becket "for the protection of the freedom of the clergy is harsh to Mandroger and his confederates," referring to Henry II and his *familiares*.[114] When the "house of Antipater" (or, anti-cleric) reigns at court, John of Salisbury says, "reverence for sacred law is removed from its midst."[115] Becket's tenure as royal chancellor, though it received criticism from some clergy, was described by supporters as an opportunity for Canterbury to do her duty as a protector of the faith and the pope's policies. John's *Policraticus* offers regular reminders to Becket about how to behave and specifically how to keep the Church in mind when advising Henry II. After Becket's death John wrote that the man's purpose as chancellor had been to "restrain the violent impulse of the new king lest he vent his rage upon the Church; also that the chancellor might temper the maliciousness of the advice given to the king, and repress the boldness of officials who…conspired to

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[111] See Cotts, "Critique," 144 for a discussion of this letter, numbered 10; also Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 72-4.
[112] Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 140.
[113] Trans. in Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 68.
[114] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1361-62, 1:192.
[115] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1414-15, 1:196.

plunder the property of the Church and of the provincial bishops."[116] Peter of Blois even defended Henry II's promotion of three favorites to bishoprics after Becket's death "by maintaining that a large episcopal presence at the royal court is essential for the preservation of ecclesiastical liberty."[117]

Critical contemporaries claimed that clergy who served at court neglected pastoral duties at churches where they acted as deacons or bishops or held benefices. In response, some defended the sage administrator by insisting that clerical courtiers were shepherds to Christian kings and other courtiers, a flock most in need of spiritual guidance. John of Salisbury is certain that Becket's presence at "the mad court" is meant to allow him to "win over to himself the love of the feasting crowd with whom / he lives, so that it may not drunkenly complete the journey of death."[118] In letters to fellow cleric Peter of Blois harnesses reform language to his description of courtier clerics, "appealing to an ideal of pastoral duty that is essentially that of Gregory the Great's perfect shepherd: a wise, sage counselor leading his flock back to the fold."[119] As spiritual figures, Peter says, clergy can be a positive influence on leaders, and traditional pastoral duties are not the only spiritual tasks clergy can perform at court. His time in Sicily was a continual effort to distract the young William II from "leisurely pursuits" and keep him focused on his education, and out of trouble at court.[120] Peter conceded that treatise- and letter-writing were alternatives to preaching sermons and could

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[116] *Life of Thomas Becket* (Pepin), 76.
[117] Cotts, "Critique," 145, referring to Peter's Letter 84.
[118] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1459, 1461-62, 1:200.
[119] Cotts, "Critique," 144.
[120] Letter 66, quoted in Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 140; Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 74.

serve the same purpose in terms of instructing the laity and encouraging fellow clergy.[121] Peter does concede that courtiers tend to "have no time for prayer and contemplation," though he acknowledges in his letter 150 to Henry II's court chaplains, apologizing that he had been too hasty to disparage the recipients of the previous letter 14, that clergy at court "are nonetheless busied with what is useful to the State and frequently accomplish works of salvation."[122] Late in life, he left court and entered a spiritual phase in which he still sometimes advocated for the good work his fellow scholars could do at court. His *Canon episcopalis* of c.1196-7 advocates for clergy to play a role in aiding the poor as a lawyer or advisor more so than a shepherd.[123]

A cleric's beneficial potential only goes part way to support the contention that he ought to be at court, and writers also asserted that they were ideal because of their spiritual armor against the corrupting influences that turn other advisors bad. John's *Policraticus*—and later twelfth-century critics—readily admits that many clergy were corrupt and insincere, and lengthy passages detail the unscrupulous dealings of priests and bishops and other members of the Papal curia and episcopal administration.[124] But degeneracy was not inevitable,

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[121] See Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 227-8 regarding letters 230 and 244.
[122] Letter 150, quoted in Dronke, "Court of Henry II," 195.
[123] Cotts, "Critique," 147.
[124] For instance *Entheticus Maior* warns Becket that once he returns to Canterbury he must "beware of the triflers and money-worshippers" (Van Laarhoven, 1650, 1:212); John goes on to detail the bad types among the secular clergy (pp. 212-18). *Policraticus* claims that clergy can be as corrupt as secular officials: "what else are deacons or archdeacons…but men in whose hands are iniquities and their right hand is filled with bribes? Ask our most happy king of England…what his honest opinion is of those whom he thrusts into the offices of the church, and he will say, I think, that there is no malady in the clergy of which such men are not the cause" (Dickinson, 5.16, 151-2). Higher clergy are no better off: "Bishops hold a venerable name and office if it were only filled with as much diligence and sincerity as it is at times sought with ambition….But as it is they deprive themselves of all reverence and love by their ambition for honors…" (p. 152).

and this is an important point for understanding how this criticism operates. Clergy are the only potential advisors and officials who stand a chance at remaining upright, and critics justified secular clerics serving at court by showing that some could stand up to the sinfulness of their surroundings and effectively instruct kings in how to avoid sin. Imperviousness also proved the devoutness of courtier-clerics who did not fall for the temptations of court, allowing steadfast men of God to be more easily identified and promoted. Texts juxtaposed descriptions of courtly debauchery with assertions that, in Peter of Blois' words, the court becomes a "fortress of God" and "gate of heaven" when clergy are present.[125] Describing his time as tutor to Sicily's William II, Peter also assures readers that clerics were themselves not flatterers and gossips but protectors of the king against them, and describes a sort of holy battle in which opponents of the Church tried to lure him from the king's side with bribes.[126] To John of Salisbury, its high concentration of clergy makes Kent and, specifically, Canterbury the "head of the kingdom and the home of justice,"[127] helping to make sense of his assertions throughout the *Entheticus* that Canterbury personnel ought to travel to court to help govern and assure justice. The secular world is sinful, but this fact does not lead John to advocate a cloistered life; instead he warns Becket and other readers of a safe path to follow to and—importantly—back from court.

Peter of Blois acknowledged that cloistered monks had access to a safe

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[125] Letter 6, quoted in Cotts, "Critique," 144, defending Canterbury clerks from the accusations of their enemies.
[126] Cotts, "Problem of the 'Court,'" 72-4, drawing on Peter's Letters 72 and 46.
[127] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1640, 1:210.

space free of the world's corrupting influences, but he refused to believe that this meant that secular clergy could not find their own brand of spirituality by serving in the world. Learned clergy who wanted to study practical subjects like law and administration and to implement what they learned had to reconcile public lives, sometimes lived in the secular sphere, with both philosophy and spirituality. A cloistered life is enviable and ideal for contemplation and right living, John admits, yet this means monks have an easy spiritual path that is not necessary for secular clerics who wish to face extra challenges, in a sense as martyrs of the church.[128] John also resents how the noise of court makes writing and study difficult but defends the increasingly worldliness of secular clergy, a group which had long found itself on the defensive.[129] He suggests that secular clerics earn an unfair reputation of worldliness from the designation "secular," and that clothes don't make the man—those who don't "[wear] the black robe" or pace the cloisters have an equal opportunity to be holy and respectable.[130] In fact secular clergy achieve a special sanctity from choosing to live a life that even some monks undertake only "very reluctantly."[131] John argues that if secular clerics have a rule to follow, as monks do, it is to be out in the world yet "to keep oneself unpolluted by the world," an undertaking possible for the stalwart at court.[132]

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[128] Peter of Blois argued this especially towards the end of his life, when he had left court and his spiritual life had achieved a new level of importance to him (Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, 214-62).
[129] John claims any inconsistencies in his text result from "those affairs of court by which I am distracted to the extent that one is allowed hardly any time to write" (*Policraticus* [Nederman], prologue, 7).
[130] *Policraticus* (Pike), 7.23, 284.
[131] Ibid. See Book 7 chs. 21-23, printed in Nederman, 167-75 and Pike, 278-86 for John's elaboration of what he calls the secular cleric's "more useful, even though not more secure" lives and labors (Nederman, 7.21, 175).
[132] *Policraticus* (Pike), 7.23, 285.

A letter to John from monk Peter of Celle, who conceives of a cleric's rightful surroundings as a "beata schola" in comparison to Paris, can show us what John in turn thought of as the ideal for an educated cleric. Peter of Celle writes that ideal contemplative surroundings are those free from "the toil of reading" and study, where "no book is employed" and thus there is "no fear of forgetting" and "there is a clear conclusion of all questions."[133] Secular clerks like Peter of Blois or John of Salisbury, educated men with proclivities toward reading, writing and administrating, were not content with such a world—the inactive life. They desired reading and writing's toil, the burden of remembering and instructing others, the use of books and records to solve the practical problems of government. For them, "the true nature of a clerk is that of an educated advisor:…a working, active man of letters who serves Christ through his wisdom."[134] For critics the world is not a place of delights for secular clergy to indulge in, but a special trial clergy were lucky for the opportunity to face, a trial which on the one hand monks were lucky to avoid but which on the other hand encouraged a courtier-cleric's faith. Peter of Celle's letter also offers insight into the anxieties bureaucrats had about creating and retaining knowledge. In order to prove that the benefits clerics could bring to court did not put themselves at risk, and thus stain the entire Church they represented, writers of court criticism

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[133] Letter 170, printed in *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, ed. Julian Haseldine (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 565-59. For another reading of correspondence between Peter of Celle and John of Salisbury see John Cotts, "Monks and Clerks in Search of the *Beata Schola*: Peter of Celle's Warning to John of Salisbury Reconsidered," in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*, ed. Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 255-77.
[134] Cotts, "Critique," 145. Here Cotts is interpreting letters John wrote to Ralph of Beauvais and Pope Celestine III in response to their criticism of Henry II's bishops and Canterbury's secular clergy.

insisted that some clergy were so righteous that they remained impervious to the corruption of the secular world and even the court.

Different writers had varying opinions on whether this ideal was actually achievable, though some considered themselves to be among the elect. More commonly, writers vacillated over this designation, at times celebrating their own experiences as functioning and effective courtiers, and at other times feeling wretched and dejected over wasting their time in sin. Though from a later time period, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), writing in the vein of court criticism, claims that no one in reality probably fits the criteria, but he can still conceive of a man whose "God-given talent equips him to conquer [courtly vices]…and this man I will except from my prohibition of the court, since his merit is so much the greater for being wrestled from great dangers."[135] One tactic for apologists was to cast clerical-courtiers as biblical advisers, such as Joseph or David, as did Johannes of Limoges, a Cistercian abbot in Hungary in the early thirteenth century, admitting of steadfast administrators that "some good men are chosen to survive floods."[136] Ralph Diceto, twelfth-century archdeacon of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, concurs that those who serve God can be counted on to uphold law and justice. He noted in his chronicle *Ymagines Historiarum* that Henry II had appointed three bishops as justiciars in 1179 because high clergy are "lovers of justice who could not be corrupted by high office" and who are not

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[135] This comes from Piccolomini's *Aeneae Silvii de curialium miseriis epistola*, quoted in Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness,* 86.
[136] Ibid., 90; Jaeger is translating from Johannes' *Morale somnium Pharaonis* from the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

easily "swayed by worldly influences."[137]

John of Salisbury's two attempts at poetry, the *Entheticus Maior* and *Entheticus Minor*, reveal that in the 1150s John was certain the way was open for a man like himself or Thomas Becket to serve at court safely. In fact Becket lay at the heart of England's recovery after Stephen's reign and the civil war, John believes, and he makes this case most forcefully in the *Entheticus Maior*. A young man when he succeeded to the throne in 1154, Henry needed trustworthy and capable advisors, because "the new court under a youthful / king believes that all things are lawful for it."[138] The *Entheticus Maior* is critical of Henry, and may have been one cause of John's brief exile from court in 1156-7.[139] The poem casts Henry's government as lax and lacking justice, while Becket is the bulwark working towards improvement. John portrays the chancellor single-handedly rescuing England from the brink, as "He is the one who cancels the unjust law of the butchers / whom captive England has for a long time had as kings."[140] If Stephen was a "seller of the church," Becket was the "defender of true freedom."[141] Both poems speak eloquently to John's program of supporting clerical employment at Henry's court and the degree to which his thought processes followed Becket's career moves. John considered Becket's proper

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[137] Trans. Duggan, "Richard of Ilchester: Royal Servant and Bishop," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 16 (1966): 1.
[138] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1463-64, 1:200.
[139] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 18.
[140] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1297-98, 1:188. John softens criticism of Henry II a bit in the *Minor*: Becket "is the man who cancels the unjust laws of the realm, / and who carries out the equitable commands of a pious prince;/ if anything is harmful for the people or dangerous for morals, / whatsoever it is, through him it ceases to be hurtful" (*Entheticus Minor* [Van Laarhoven], 29-32, 1:232).
[141] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1308, 1:190; 1357, 1:192.

place to be at court: "What the court may be able to do, what the people may hope, wherein / lies the strength of the kingdom, one home alone is able to teach," and that is the London home of Becket.[142] To John, travel from cathedral to court and back again involves risks and tactics but is also a normal action, a smooth transition rather than an inadvisable crossing of palpable boundaries. Becket's precedent reveals that a cleric can "go safely on any road whatever. / Under his leadership you will be safe in the cloister, safe in the court, / safe…everywhere."[143]

The two *Entheticus* versions follow the addressee—which is Thomas Becket as well as the general reader and the text itself—traveling to Henry II's court and back to Canterbury.[144] This structure is more apparent in the streamlined *Minor* version included in the *Policraticus*, itself dedicated and addressed to Becket. Van Laarhoven describes the poems, and especially the *Minor*, as conveying a sense of "constant threat," with "warning signs…everywhere" and "swords in the hands of mighty men who are threatening the addressee" and writer.[145] Yet John's solution is not to keep his fellow Canterbury clerks home, but to offer advice on their safe travel to court. While the *Maior* takes the travel for granted, the *Minor* does open with the advice to "not enter the threshold of the court: stay at home!"[146] Yet this is tongue-in-cheek counsel designed to set the tone of playful admonition for a poem celebrating the

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[142] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 83-4, 1:234.
[143] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1358-60, 1:192.
[144] Van Laarhoven, "Introduction," 48-9; Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 44-5.
[145] Van Laarhoven, "Introduction," 86.
[146] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 1-2, 1:230.

presence of a stalwart churchman, Becket, stationed in Henry II's court. From both poems one can discern the writer's own hopeful mindset, his aspiration to follow in Becket's footsteps by receiving an important court post, protected and perhaps aided by the chancellor.

John offers advice in verse to his traveling book to speed it on its way, evidence of the means by which he thought a cleric could remain pure at court. The dangers posed by courtiers are the very reason why travel there—and Becket's presence there—is so necessary. Warnings of courtly sins prepare a traveler because "A prudent man avoids more sturdily the dangers he has heard of, / for missiles which have been foreseen usually do less harm. / Hence the wise man wishes to hear whatever can harm, / so that he may avoid whatever can oppose."[147] A clerk ought to keep quiet most of the time to avoid openings for censure or ridicule, and avoid speaking too much truth, as courtiers shun truth.[148] He must take as "companions" Truth and Understanding, "from [whom] emanates the holy rule and the way of life."[149] John typecasts certain types of men whom a traveler will encounter at court, in order that a clerk might learn to evaluate how to handle them: "each man will have to be appraised according to its own individuality."[150] A courtier-cleric must learn how to respond to criticism: "If your frivolities should perhaps be scorned at court, / let not your hand be unfair or your tongue audacious." [151] John maintains a "sticks and stones" approach to

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[147] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 115-18, 1:176.
[148] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1503-4, 1:202.
[149] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 11-18, 1:104.
[150] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1753, 1:218.
[151] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 205-6, 1:242.

remaining firm in the face of criticism and attacks, and urges a moral strength signaled by a "face harder than steel… / that blush from words may not mark your face."[152] Overall, a clerk is safe at court if he remains true to his teachings: "He who fears nothing, safely performs all things; / he safely performs all things, whom neither hope nor fear oppresses; / he to whom no bad thing gives pleasure, safely performs all things." [153] Knowledge and virtue will "safeguard…each and every person and of rational nature."[154]

Becket himself provided protection for any acolyte traveling to court. A courtier-cleric will "scarcely escape insolent tongues and / hands, unless there is one under whose guidance you can safely go," namely, Becket.[155] John seems to see Becket as paving the way for future travels between Canterbury and court, proving that such a career move is desirable and possible. It is right and good for a man of God to serve at the heart of a secular government because, as we have seen, Becket was the main source of stability for England at the start of Henry II's reign. It is also incumbent upon powerful clergy to aid others at court, creating a sort of network of incorruptible clergy whom the king can trust for aid. Becket is "wont to encourage / writings, and once he receives names, he makes them famous."[156] A clerk's first act upon arrival at court is to track down Becket, and John even offers a script of what to say to the chancellor to get in his good

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[152] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 223-34, 1:242.
[153] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 118-20, 1:236.
[154] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 3.1, 16.
[155] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1289-90, 1:188.
[156] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1291-92, 1:188.

graces.[157] Within the *Policraticus* proper John moderates this assertion, showing John's advancing worry that Becket must take great care as he remains at court, yet he is still hopeful about Becket's prospects. He subtly and jocularly upbraids Becket, but the tone is admonitory more so than it is light:

> Behold that you possess the truest and most faithful path….this path alone can suffice for good and happy living, to such a great degree that the external world adds either little or nothing to perfection. And I do not prohibit you from wrapping yourself in a variety of glittering garments overlaid with gold, nor from feasting splendidly every day, nor again from occupying the foremost public offices, and…from yielding to the times and even perverse morals (even though you yourself are righteous in all moral matters)….For you are so great that you ought not and cannot be captured by these traps.[158]

Furthermore, Becket is he "in whom frivolity could never be demonstrated" and "the most discriminating man of our times,…more righteous and more prudent in doing what is useful in order to stand immobile upon the solid foundation of virtue, neither a lightly swaying reed nor a follower of soft pleasures. Rather, you command the vanity that otherwise commands the world."[159] He was able withstand the trials of court life because his time at Canterbury had prepared him, and this "grace and diligence preserved him."[160]

John writes of a Becket who has remained pure at court, then, but he and other supporters had to contend with rumors to the contrary. At this stage in his career it was vital for Canterbury that Becket be "the light of the clergy, the glory

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[157] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 43-120, 1:232-34.
[158] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 8.25, 229-30.
[159] *Policraticus* (Nederman), prologue, 4-5. He says further, "Extremely rare is the person whose moral character is sufficient to perform the duties of both philosopher and courtier, since these would mainly consist in the most incongruent activities. For this reason you are seen to command an almost impossible thing" (7, prologue, 145-6).
[160] John of Salisbury, *Life of Thomas Becket* (Pepin), 77.

of / the English people, the king's right hand, the model of goodness."[161] In reality this luminary accrued a reputation for grand living. John countered these stories in the *Policraticus* by advising Becket to dissemble a luxurious and dissolute life as a teaching tool for those around him, thus directing any other reader to detect the genuine cleric behind the courtier facade. Later hagiographical accounts by John and others borrowed this solution into biographies of Becket's saintly life, insisting that Becket remained pure and only pretended to indulge in order to get close to influential men. It is difficult to know how sincere John's belief was that Becket remained pure, but what is important is that this strategy was one component of an overall plan to construct and justify the presence of sage administrators at court. The *Entheticus Maior* insists the chancellor has found an ideal means to spread morality at court. Becket, greatly aware of the court's sins, "plans a method by which he may bring help and advice":

> In order that their savageness may grow more gentle, he usually / feigns many things, he simulates that he himself is also savage; / he becomes all things to all people [omnibus omnia fit]; in appearance only he assumes the role / of the enemy, in order that he may learn with equal zeal how to love God. / That trick is good which yields profit to utility, / when through it joy, life, and salvation are procured.[162]

Becket would not get far with preaching, with "direct reason," but getting close to courtiers by putting on a wolf's clothing "often draws to his wishes reluctant men."[163] Because "Pure faith alone…is not pleasing to everyone," an official seeking to improve his compatriots must try to lead by the example of a "good life," taking on in general the life of a typical courtier while offering small, subtle

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[161] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 25-26, 1:232.
[162] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1435-42, 1:198.
[163] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1475-80, 1:200.

lessons which will be more effective among courtiers than the preacher's pulpit.[164] Contemporaries like Herbert of Bosham, Guernes, and William of Newburgh also admitted that being an official required a certain amount of showmanship to earn the respect of other courtiers and do the job well.[165]

Becket *vitae* elaborate on similar imagery, leading Stephen Jaeger to liken Becket to a spy in an "undercover mission."[166] Biographers had the option of presenting Becket's transition to archbishop as an instantaneous conversion, thus admitting his earlier life was corrupt and relegating it to a hagiographical postscript. It was not uncommon in the twelfth century for a cleric to be thought to experience a "divinely-inspired change of heart" upon elevation to a bishopric or other church office, and Becket certainly did seem a changed man when he became archbishop.[167] But in the *vitae* "the theme of conversion [is] integrated into the narrative of Becket's earlier and later life, providing an internally consistent picture of sanctity from birth to death."[168] The *vitae* do focus their greatest attention on Becket's time as archbishop, but describe his earlier phases of life and work as royal chancellor as compatible with his seeming "conversion" to a defense of the Church late in life. Hagiographers chose to describe the chancellorship as a period in which Becket is only pretending to conform to courtly expectations in order to work as it were undercover in the interests of the Church—he "carefully concealed the soldier of Christ under the beauty of his

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[164] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1279-80, 1:188.
[165] Natalie Fryde, "The Canterbury Connection," in *Culture politique des Plantagenêt (1154-1224)*, ed. Martin Aurell (Poitiers: Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 2003), 336.
[166] Stephen Jaeger, "Irony and Role-Playing in John of Salisbury and the Becket Circle," in Aurell, *Culture politique*, 328.
[167] Staunton, "Becket's Conversion," 194, 201.
[168] Ibid., 193-4.

vesture, so that his appearance might be agreeable to the people."[169]

Becket's dissembling was especially motivated by his drive to use his friendship with Henry II as an opening to suggest policies amenable to the pope and Canterbury. While it must be kept in mind that *vitae* typically idealize their subjects and are therefore dubious sources of historical information, this idealization is also the very stuff of court criticism. But supporters believed such an approach to Henry II was necessary because the king was more likely to listen to the measured advice of a friend than to dogmatic prescriptions from an ardent church defender. Though some historians suspect that the post of chancellor was not yet a significant one, Natalie Fryde contextualizes the great amount of work Becket must have done to achieve his success, and charter attestations confirm that Becket was often present with the king doing business.[170] John of Salisbury wrote in his *Life of Thomas Becket* that Becket unwillingly entered into the office of chancellor in order to use the opportunity to right wrongs done the church by magnates—and that the current archbishop, Theobald, had put in a good word about Becket with Henry II for the same reasons.[171] It is historically confirmed that Theobald introduced Becket into court for these reasons, as he himself was more involved at court than Archbishops of Canterbury had tended to be, in order to smooth out the difficulties of Stephen's reign and ensure that Henry would succeed.[172] William of Canterbury, another

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[169] John of Salisbury, *Life of Thomas Becket* (Pepin), 79. See Staunton, "Becket's Conversion," 196.
[170] Fryde, "Canterbury Connection," 336-7.
[171] Staunton, "Becket's Conversion," 197-8.
[172] Fryde, "Canterbury Connection," 335.

biographer who served Becket as a clerk, wrote that the chancellor "fought against the beasts of the court, bearing the necessities of the Church, and…contend[ed] against the king…."[173] Although Herbert of Bosham reproved Becket for being a lax archdeacon,[174] by and large biographers portrayed Becket as the diligent official, with the potential for greater spiritual awareness, fitting the profile of the overworked administrator rather than the cleric neglectful of spiritual duties.

Biographers, then, did not "hide the sumptuousness and pomp of Becket's life as chancellor," and they also did not deny that his career was sometimes less-than-holy before his conversion upon elevation to the archbishopric. Instead the choice to cast his whole life as part of the conversion process allowed them to mine his life for clues presaging his later martyrdom, and Becket's administrative profile is compatible with his predestined role in the Church.[175] John of Salisbury's earliest texts directed at Becket had emphasized the chancellor's eventual return to Canterbury, which did transpire in 1162.[176] But regarding Becket's archbishop, *vitae* do not simply excuse his time at court but celebrate its effects on the man, including the sharpening of administrative skills, strengthening of his resolve to work in the interests of the Church even if it meant butting heads with Henry II, and the spiritual test life at court effected. Becket left court a stronger man of God and leader, fulfilling predecessor Theobald's desire

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[173] Staunton, "Becket's Conversion," 198, translating a passage from William's *Vita et passio s. Thomae* which is printed in Robertson and Sheppard, *Materials*, 1:5.
[174] Fryde, "Canterbury Connection," 337.
[175] Staunton, "Becket's Conversion," 196.
[176] John's *Entheticus Maior* exhorts this return: "Kent, mother of bishops and of kings, has fostered you / and prepares a hospice for you, or rather a home. / She asks you to return and to rest in that place" (Van Laarhoven, 1637-39, 1:210).

"that this man will succeed him and he prays that the same / wil [sic] strengthen the office and position of bishop," as reported in the *Entheticus Maior*.[177] But Becket's conversion did not simply create a powerful cleric and defender of the church where there had not been one; his experiences created him as one, like any saint. Far from his clerical career being superfluous, dangerous, and distracting from the natural course of elevation in the church, John conceives of Becket's chancellorship as a typical (if somewhat potentially risky) stage in a cleric's career. This is presumably in part because of the duties Becket is said throughout the poems to have performed at court, the civilizing of barbarous courtiers and the guidance of young king Henry's ship of state.

If the aptitude of learned churchmen for clerical work argued for them as the ideal bureaucrats, then the skills and traits clergy acquired during administrative careers also suggested that administrative experience made for the best ecclesiastical officials. Letters, political treatises, episcopal hagiography, and other twelfth-century texts suggest that it was preferable for archdeacons, bishops, and archbishops to have served in an ecclesiastical court if not also a royal court. Such a background was seen as preparatory rather than simply prefatory to an exalted episcopal career, in part because it gained the officeholder familiarity with government structures and personalities with whom a bishop must work for church affairs, and because it solidified a bishop's sanctity and desire to do good in the world. This was the case with biographies of Becket, whose life story could easily have served his followers as a warning against close

[177] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1295-96, 1:188.

interaction among secular and clerical figures, but instead served as an opportunity to show that such interaction best suited the Church's interests—and Christendom. Historians have claimed that schoolmen were unwilling bureaucrats, preferring to stay in cathedral or university orbits when possible.[178] Yet those who took on administrative work typically still strove for higher church offices, archdeaconries and bishoprics, and secular and ecclesiastical administration were considered part of the same career track as spiritual offices. Clergy must not justify secular employment to make a move out of a clerical track and into an administrative one, but must demonstrate a valid world view in which various sorts of employment serve Church ends. As mentioned previously, John of Salisbury recognized that the worst sort of promotion was that of secular favorites to bishoprics, and as such preferment increased in the twelfth century, clergy provided themselves as an alternative by increasing the rate at which they themselves gained skills from the secular world.[179]

Writers attempted to show that study itself, in the form of a monastic life devoted to prayer and contemplation or of a schoolmaster, were not enough to

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[178] See note 34 above.

[179] John says of the wicked clerical officials that "for the most part such men have been promoted by the court to the offices of the church against the unanimous wishes of the faithful" (*Policraticus* [Dickinson], 5.16, 153). Though John and other twelfth-century secular clergy wrestled with these categories and would sometimes defend curial promotions, in general they crafted a division between "curial clergy" and those like Becket who spent a shorter time at court or in secular administration. In the 1170s Peter of Blois wrote a letter to Pope Alexander III (albeit in the name of the Canterbury archbishop) defending Henry II's recent promotions of three curia members to bishoprics, arguing that the Church was better off when its defenders had influence at court (Cotts, "Critique," 145), though there were certainly other factors involved in this defense. Twenty years later Peter seems to maintain his characteristic uncertainty regarding this issue, recognizing in his *Canon Episcopalis* that dedicatee John of Coutances rose from the royal curia to the see of Worcester but not attempting to offer unequivocal answers about how to navigate this position—John's status as a "self-contradicting entity" is one point of the text (Cotts, "Monks and Mediocrities," 157-8).

forge a successful bishop; according to John of Salisbury, knowledge must be applied to the real world and not just written and read about in order to harness its potential.[180] To Peter of Blois, the most important tasks a clerk could set himself to include "reading, disputation, and the judgment of cases,"[181] which are tasks of bishops that clerks could practice at court. Court critics viewed scribal duties as a sort of holy labor, and such employment constituted an accepted phase in the lives of celebrated episcopal figures and saints. Textual arguments generally cast careers as the sort of spiritual journey common to Christian rhetoric. Education and vocation drove spiritual growth and wisdom; just as school graduates were thought better-able to perform administrative jobs than the unlearned laity, so the decision-making tasks of high ecclesiastical officials were thought to be refined by careers doing such work. On the other hand, a life devoted to prayer and reflection, at the school or the monastery, was said to mislead a bishop's priorities because it downplayed the realities of life faced by bishops who must direct secular leadership and benefit the poor. One of the remarkable things about Peter of Blois' letter collection is the way it "recorded his spiritual and intellectual growth,"[182] showing how being a man of God is a lifelong pursuit, and requires many stages of preparation and experience to reach a point where one can be a reliable leader and counsellor. The conservatism Peter developed later in life sometimes led him to criticize secular courts, but in general his reading of the "book of experience" taught him that a person will undergo

[180] Monagle, "Contested Knowledges," 4, 7.
[181] Letter 6, quoted in Cotts, "Critique," 144.
[182] Higonnet, "Spiritual Ideas," 241.

many changes of heart over his lifetime but his own career has left him in a better place to work "for the acquisition of souls."[183] Peter's collecting of his letters demonstrates that he saw himself a possible model to readers, of a cleric who reached a point where he could write effective advice regarding education and the priesthood only after a long career as a clerk for the archbishop of Canterbury.

Thomas Becket's career trajectory became a model for similarly-positioned twelfth-century clerics, and his *vitae* appeared at a time when they set a useful paradigm for those who viewed administrative work as instructive and valuable. Becket's very martyrdom and sainthood stemmed from his career choices and experiences, because it was his earlier friendly relationship with Henry II that put him in a position to contend with the king over church rights, and because this opposition as well as the exile and murder were the denouement of his "spiritual journey."[184] Becket was able to thwart Henry II's plans against the church because he had become "a most experienced man" and "knew the king's ways, as well as the depravity and obstinacy of his officials, and how efficient was the malice of informers in that court."[185] Becket's career was not presented in stark terms as pre- and post-conversion, but in stages that did not end even when he became archbishop but continued to develop. Herbert of Bosham seems to accept his trajectory without problem: his life story reveals "how great

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[183] Letter 230, quoted in ibid., 241. Peter started writing about the priesthood in the later 1190s after leaving off administrative work in Canterbury (Cotts, "Critique," 143.
[184] Michael Staunton, "Exile in the Lives of Anselm and Thomas Becket," in *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002*, ed. Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 179.
[185] John of Salisbury, *Life of Thomas Becket* (Pepin), 77.

Thomas was in court, and how great he was after he had begun to be in the Church, having adapted to the rank of pontiff; how vigorously he first served Henry, illustrious king of England, and how gloriously thereafter he began to serve Christ…; in the court rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and in the Church to God the things that are God's."[186] Herbert further celebrates Becket's road to martyrdom: "Truly God is marvelous in his saints, Who leads them down a wonderful road, from tribulation gladdening, from pressure expanding, from temptation proving, by destroying building, by persecuting healing, by killing giving life." [187] To William of Canterbury, "the divine dispensation which called to the older [Thomas] instructed and engaged the younger, as if in preparation for the future."[188]

The official's skills advanced over time, requiring experience in office to grow into the archbishop he would become. Biographers treated Becket's pre-episcopal life much like they treated lapses in his steadfastness that happened afterward, as lessons part of "a process of renewal which maintained and strengthened his conversion."[189] Lapses, such as Becket's acceptance of the king's demands at the Council of Clarendon, functioned in the texts to show that

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[186] Staunton, "Thomas Becket's Conversion," 208-9, translating a passage from Herbert's *Vita sancti Thomae* which is printed in Robertson and Sheppard, *Materials*, 3:247.
[187] Staunton, "Exile," 174, translating Herbert's *Vita sancti Thomae*, in Robertson and Sheppard, *Materials*, 3:325.
[188] Staunton, "Thomas Becket's Conversion," 197, translating William's *Vita et passio*, in Robertson and Sheppard, *Materials*, 1:4. Staunton describes one technique of the Becket biographers that "intersperses the narrative of Becket's rise from London clerk to archdeacon to chancellor with passages which comment on his emerging qualities. As he climbed the career ladder towards archbishop, Thomas is seen to have simultaneously grown in chastity, generosity, prudence, wisdom and humility" (198).
[189] Staunton, "Thomas Becket's Conversion," 209.

his time as archbishop was work at conversion,[190] requiring every bit of skill he would have acquired during his life in the world. The *vitae* also stress Becket's ability and willingness to take action, skills learned while at court. Becket had successes on the battlefield, for instance, and John of Salisbury pinned many of Henry II's victories in France on Becket's natural military prowess (certain, of course, that the man still managed to "defend innocence" while at war).[191] William of Canterbury also praised the real-world experience Becket built up, writing that one of his strengths was that he was "present in the things of men and the conversations of angels" alike.[192] His successes did not happen because he turned away from politics and toward prayer, but because he, unlike the courtier-bishops who sided with Henry II instead of Becket, knew how to engage in resistance toward the secular sphere to prevent the king from taking advantage.[193] John of Salisbury states that as a "bishop predestined by God" Becket needed "an ability in pleading and deciding cases, and in teaching people," which he picked up through studying law.[194] William FitzStephen described Becket obtaining as a young clerk cultural capital such that "in later life he had no difficulty in managing with caution and prudence the common interests of the Church in England and the public affairs of the kingdom."[195] Virtue and promise were written into Becket's life, then, but hagiographers also recognized

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[190] Ibid., 209.
[191] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 8.25, 230.
[192] Staunton, "Exile," 174, translating William's *Vita et passio*, in Robertson and Sheppard, *Materials*, 1:49.
[193] Staunton, "Exile," 176.
[194] *Life of Thomas Becket* (Pepin), 76.
[195] Staunton, "Thomas Becket's Conversion," 197, translating a passage from William's *Vita sancti Thomae, Cantuariensis archiepiscopi et martyris* which is printed in Robertson and Sheppard, *Materials*, 3:14-15.

that his early life's secularity and administrative experience facilitated his transformation into the Church's champion.

In the words of Richardson and Sayles, Becket's gruesome murder in 1170 at the hands of Henry II's retainers "left the relations between Church and State otherwise undisturbed."[196] This might seem a surprising conclusion, and one might suppose Becket's supporters lost steam after his death and were not able to maintain the fervent attack against Henry II that the archbishop had led while he lived. Becket's *vitae* do shame the murderers, but they, significantly, do not attempt to keep the fire of rebellion burning. Taken alongside the strategies to cast Becket's clerkships and chancellorship as phases of a holy life, one purpose of the biographies seems to be to highlight that the man had done no wrong in seeking out a humanist education and secular employment. He triumphed a martyr because of these decisions, not in spite of them. It was a small step from Becket's mold to the practice of secular officials retaining their positions after a promotion to bishop. The years after Becket's death were largely a time of "compromise and cooperation between secular and ecclesiastical authorities in England,"[197] as when in 1173 Henry II promoted three members of his household to bishoprics, Richard of Ilchester, Geoffrey Ridel, and Reginald Fitz Jocelin.[198] It

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[196] Quoted in J. W. Alexander, "The Becket Controversy in Recent Historiography," *Journal of British Studies* 9 (1970): 24.
[197] Ibid., 24.
[198] As further examples Henry also elevated to bishoprics royal clerk John of Oxford in 1175; royal clerk Walter of Coutances in 1183; and royal justice Godfrey de Lucy in 1189 (Duggan, "Richard of Ilchester," 13; Cotts, "Monks and Mediocrities," 148; Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 24. Three of these curial bishops became chief justices in 1179, including Richard of Ilchester, Geoffrey Ridel, and John of Oxford (Duggan, "Richard of Ilchester," 1). In Duggan's words, "A different spirit was at work, in Church and State alike, from that in Becket's day…[and] a general pattern of harmonious compromise between the rival jurisdictions of Church and State was

also became more common for bishops to retain civil service positions held before their elevation. Becket may have been spinning in his grave, and some did protest the elevations; but court critics like Walter Map, Peter of Blois, and Gerald of Wales continued to defend courtier clerics in the decades after the murder. It is in hagiographic literature about Becket, including John of Salisbury's offering, that we find some of the most poignant portrayals of the sage administrator who moves seamlessly from service to king and church. Becket's tragic murder did not put a halt to writing about how clergy should be good (or vital) royal advisers; in fact showing this became all the more important.

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In 1187 Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury attempted to found a school of secular canons near Canterbury—an effort supported by a king eager to have access to a pool of "clerical elite."[199] One cause of renown for this episode is that Peter of Blois acted in an official capacity, using his legal training to assist in litigating the matter, which would have displaced the Canterbury monks as managers of the diocese. This episode is a good example of how educated clerks in Peter's position, serving as ecclesiastical administrators, could be drawn into worldly business in order to adjudicate in the church's interest. But Baldwin and Henry II's scheming also offers us an opportunity to explore the notion of an administrative sphere or identity toward the end of the twelfth century—how secular clergy active as bureaucrats thought about themselves and their social

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worked out" (14, 21). In the next century, a bishop's continued pursuit of a civil service career had become what Pegues calls "a prominent characteristic of the English civil service in the thirteenth century" ("*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 535).

[199] Cotts, "Critique," 137.

role. As Cotts describes the affair, the king and archbishop (as well as the *eruditi* surrounding both men) desired "an organized secular chapter for Baldwin's clerks…from which king and archbishop could possibly direct ecclesiastical policy for the province."[200] It is easy to understand the reason for placing this group of secular clerks in a religious institution instead of the court—this way, the king does not need to foot the bill for their salaries.[201] It might also be easy to understand why this group could not simply be attached to the cathedral, because as ecclesiastical (and royal) administration expanded, the need for administrators pushed the limits of the number of clerks the cathedral could support.

Going were the days when cathedral officials could work part time for administrative purposes; a large body of dedicated administrative employees was now called for which was conceptually—and geographically—distinct from the clergy serving a cathedral as priests or monks. This "institutionaliz[ation of] a group of clerks" indicates a growing conception of a separate sphere or identity existing for administrative personnel. Historians have commented how twelfth-century administrators, at least by the end of the century if not before, appeared to have developed a "self-consciousness of belonging to a particular section of government."[202] These men had spent the century living in a liminal zone between church and state, existing not fully in either realm, and now we can see

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[200] Ibid., 137.
[201] One reason kings welcomed clergy as administrators in such great numbers is that their salaries could be paid through church benefices, or rights to collect tithe money from parishes (Green, *England under Henry I*, 175-6.
[202] John Hudson, "Administration, Family, and Perceptions of the Past in Late Twelfth-Century England: Richard FitzNigel and the Dialogue of the Exchequer," in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Rio Grande, OH: Hambledon, 1992), 91n86.

an attempt to create a new material zone for them in the Canterbury suburbs. These men would spatially be away from court and church, thus materially indicating they are not *of* either realm; they are not courtiers or preachers. Late in the twelfth century, we can discern subtle changes in court criticism in satire, with works by Gerald of Wales and Walter Map, for example, parodying arguments that were more sincere in the midcentury writings of Peter of Blois and John of Salisbury. When Henry II came to the throne in 1154, secular clergy were on the defensive, but by the final quarter of the century their place at court was more familiar to lay and clerical observers alike. The dual courtier-cleric or sage administrator identity was still contested, but now less at risk. In the next chapter, we will investigate texts that began to emerge in the later twelfth century, more explicitly manuals of legal, accounting, and scribal business lacking the philosophical musings of the *Policraticus.* These texts are written by both clergy and laymen, and continue to reveal discord between the spiritual and secular spheres as well as bias due to class and education backgrounds. Yet we start to see a solidifying of the notion of a professional bureaucrat, balancing duties to church and state but less torn between them because dedicated occupationally to a third sphere.

Court criticism flourished at the court of Henry II not because new practices emerged, but because they intensified in a period of sweeping political and social changes. Yet Peter's dithering discourse in his letters to his namesake would have been at home twenty years prior in the *Policraticus*, and it is significant that clergy maintained late in the century their uncertain and worried

attitude toward secular civil service. It is also significant that they continued to write of their experiences. The epigraph for this chapter comes from Walter Map's treatise on the so-called trifles of courtiers, written over his long career as a secular cleric serving Henry II's court in various capacities, between the 1170s and 1190s.[203] He indicates the uncertainties of the late twelfth century and what it has become for ambitious, educated men. The court is unknowable even to its members but they still must reflect on what it may be and how it might best operate. For courtier-clerics like Map, Becket's death was a call to take stock of themselves and their surroundings. A premise of this chapter is that the very unknowability of the court was a theme of twelfth-century court criticism, as members of the royal administration and those in its orbit worked to determine what the role of civil servants was in a time of booming bureaucracy and metamorphosed intellectual culture. At the heart of this definition was the advisory role learned men ought to play, especially learned clergy, who desired to fulfill the king's need for loyal Christian counsellors. Echoes of this theme percolate to the end of the Middle Ages in the writing of men like Thomas Hoccleve, the subject of our final chapter, who likewise cast themselves as advisory characters in their poetry. Administrators would come to complain of distance from the king and court; at this end of the story, twelfth-century clerical writers contended with their entrance into a world on principle closed off to them.

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[203] Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), dist. 1, ch. 1, page 3. Future references to this text will give the distinction (or book) number, chapter number, and page number for the English of this facing-page translation.

3
Clerici Regis: Administering the Move Out of Court, 1179-1250

> "But with what manner of ambition do they dare to charge me, seeing that the whole life of that Archbishop [Hubert Walter], the whole story of his promotion reeks with ambition? Whence came the Archbishop? From the Exchequer!…From this study…in which he has grown old, he, like almost all Bishops of the Church of England, was called"
>
> —Gerald of Wales, *Invectiones*

> "Through…men pre-eminent in the doing of justice, the law is given effect. For it is of little value that law exists in the state if there are none to administer it"
>
> —*Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England*

If John of Salisbury's imaginary "Letter of Trajan" exemplifies a twelfth-century tendency to look to the past for legal lesson and precedent—whether that past is ancient or Scriptural, real or imagined—one thirteenth-century text produced in England displays a very different impetus. The author of the "Conflictus inter Deum et Diabolum" recounts Christian universal history within the framework of a civil suit, depicting the Devil using Justinian's *Digest* as a springboard for continuing his perpetual battle against Christ and the forces of good.[1] This battle now takes place in a courtroom, and as the Devil defends his legal rights, we can see contemporary procedure cast backwards rather than eternal Biblical truths

[1] William Marx, "The *Conflictus inter Deum et Diabolum* and the Emergence of the Literature of Law in Thirteenth-Century England," in *Thirteenth Century England XIII: Proceedings of the Paris Conference, 2009*, ed. Janet E. Burton (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2011), 57-9. The author is unknown, though he was certainly trained in canon and civil law, and three manuscripts from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries remain in England (57, 66). This Latin prose dialogue is an early example of the "trials of Satan" literary tradition and "is of interest because it is one of the earliest literary texts to use legal language and metaphor in connection with the theological ideas which emerged from the twelfth-century controversy over the Devil's rights." Idem, "An Edition and Study of the *Conflictus inter Deum et Diabolum*," *Medium Aevum* 59 (1990): 16. The original composition dates from between 1140 and the thirteenth century (17).

brought forward as counsel for Christian kingship. This century witnessed the steady growth of common law and the professionalization of a body of legal practitioners who adjudicated cases, served as pleaders or attorneys, and penned legal treatises.[2] The "Conflictus" suggests that legal practice was imbued at this time with its own sense of the eternal, established enough for the Devil to feel obligated to press his suit under the aegis of Roman law and reliable enough for Christ to prevail. If much of the twelfth century was characterized for the English proto-bureaucracy by the contested boundary between sacred and secular duties, the period late in and following Henry II's reign witnessed a new sort of placement of religion at the royal court. The "Conflictus" reflects a period when a growing number of clerically-trained administrators viewed their primary loyalty as lying with the king, and civil service as either an end in itself or as an occupation not to be set aside after elevation to a bishopric.[3] These clerks mixed

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[2] Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 149-79; Palmer, "Legal Profession."

[3] Policy changes after Becket's 1170 death reduced papal influence and pressure on English curates maintaining royal administrative duties, and though Becket supporters continued to agitate along the same lines he had, his martyrdom had the effect of quieting more than stoking dissent. Beryl Smalley, *Becket Conflict and the Schools: A Study of Intellectuals in Politics* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 118-20. More royal officials unabashedly retained their positions after moving into bishoprics. Henry II filled over half of episcopal vacancies in 1173-4 with men from the royal household, including Richard of Ilchester, Geoffrey Ridel, Geoffrey Plantagenet, and Reginald of Salisbury; Geoffrey Ridel resigned his chancellorship but did not leave government service entirely, remaining for instance a baron of the exchequer, and the other men also continued their royal service. Geoffrey Plantagenet actually resigned his see to become chancellor after Ridel, and following chancellors including William Longchamp and Hubert Walter served coterminously as bishops (Duggan, "Richard of Ilchester," 13; Vincent, "Why 1199?" 20; Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 24; Cotts, "Monks and Mediocrities," 148-9, 157). In 1179 Henry promoted three bishops to chief justiciars and in 1189 appointed four renowned administrators to bishoprics: William Longchamp, Godfrey de Lucy, Richard fitz Nigel, and Hubert Walter (Duggan, "Richard of Ilchester," 1; Jill Mann, "Does an Author Understand his Own Text? Nigel of Longchamp and the *Speculum stultorum*," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 17 [2007]: 15). Hubert Walter is perhaps most emblematic of the new paradigm, as he continued as chief justiciar while Archbishop of Canterbury, so that "he held supreme spiritual and secular power within the kingdom" (Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 229). Richard I had two archbishops, including Walter, and one bishop among his four justiciars (ibid.). Kings Richard and John also

with laymen especially in the judicial field, which career was particularly suited to men of knightly class without the restrictions of clerical orders. For these officials who wished to remain in the secular sphere, an administrator's theological training became a less important qualification than practical skills, those learned formally at school or informally through observation and apprenticeship. These administrators wrote texts justifying their place at court or in central government not as sage religious advisors but as experienced financial and judicial functionaries. The years around the turn of the thirteenth century were an institutional "turning-point…when legal precision began to be stamped on a great number of previously indefinite relationships," and there was reason and scope for segments of society to map out their boundaries and alliances.[4]

Though defensive court criticism with its mid-twelfth-century heyday continued to be written into the early thirteenth century by the likes of Gerald of Wales, Walter Map, and Peter Blois, in the final quarter of the twelfth century emerged the practical procedural treatise acting as both manual and archive of a civil servant's long career collecting minutiae about the job. Quite different from the learned philosophies and theology-infused governance treatises of John of

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raised 14 and 18 royal clerks to bishoprics, respectively (Turner, *Men Raised*, 8). Papal injunctions prevented clerics from acting as attorneys or issuing blood judgements as judges, and pundits continued to be critical of clerks acting in any administrative capacity. Yet there was an emerging group of royal clerks who did not want promotion to bishopric (see Pegues, "*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 529-59 for the prevalence of clerks in thirteenth-century English government). Pegues offers Walter Mauclerk as an official whose "career illustrates a prominent characteristic of the English civil service in the thirteenth century, and of many clerks who achieved success and fortune in the royal service. Although he had been elevated to high ecclesiastical office in distant Cumberland, he continued to play an increasingly important role in governmental administration" (535). During the thirteenth century Church policy relaxed towards clerks who did not wish to take higher orders or reside in their benefices, showing how common this position was among administrative personnel (558).

[4] L. K. Born, "The Perfect Prince," *Speculum* 3 (1928): 472.

Salisbury, texts like the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* and the law-books *Glanvill* and *Bracton* established an administrator's usefulness to the king less as advisor and confidant and more as loyal and trustworthy functionary. Royal decree actively shaped the constitution and function of the various administrative departments and their overseers, but important figures like Ranulf Glanvill, Richard of Ilchester, and Hubert Walter were largely responsible for many significant reforms and in some sense the administrative treatises themselves fashioned and refined government departments and occupational duties as they recorded them. The Christ of the "Conflictus inter Deum et Diabolum" appears, not surprisingly, much like a thirteenth-century English king; the Devil insists that "in vain he calls upon the assistance or help of the law who does not fear to go against the law."[5] Medieval legal theory was perpetually concerned with the relationship between king and law, debating whether kings must obey and place themselves under the law. In the decades surrounding the turn of the thirteenth century, the English king's legal authority risked, so some observers thought, overstepping its traditional boundaries because the strengthening royal bureaucracy gave the royal position an edge over ecclesiastical and baronial interests. It is not known whether the author of the "Conflictus" was a theologian or school-trained lawyer, and editor William Marx can make a case for either position and its concomitant commentary on the contemporary correspondence between church, secular, and educational institutions.[6] Yet regardless, this text demonstrates an awareness of law as a force of its own, stemming perhaps from

[5] Marx translates this passage in "Literature of Law," 59.
[6] Ibid., 66.

God or King but not belonging to any fully secular authority. Administrative writers in this period contend with the king's place in law's creation and practice. When they emphasize the divine nature of the king's place as wellspring of law and justice, they do so not to claim that the English court becomes the domain of spiritual advisors, but to assert the civil servant's role as assistant in this divine plan. These composers do not place themselves as clerical mediators between God and King as did the sage-administrators before them, as the kings under this textual paradigm did not need such mediation.

In the end, the Devil of the "Conflictus" is undone by a procedural problem; millennia of apocalyptic struggle between good and evil—and control over humanity—is resolved on a legal technicality. He, like many another unfortunate legal advisor, sought the incorrect writ and thus cannot press his suit in the court as it has been constituted.[7] Here we have an echo not of canon or civil law as they operated in the thirteenth century, but the maturing of England's common law and its complicating writ.[8] Marx argues that while the literary law court of the "Conflictus" "[tests]…the validity of the central doctrine of the Redemption," the law itself is being tested, and proven: "the effect—because of Christ's victory—is to strengthen for the audience the validity of man-made laws."[9] We can push this conclusion further by noting that the Devil's contention that Christ had no legal

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[7] Ibid., 60. See Palmer, "Legal Profession," 124 on the position of pleader developing to prevent this problem.
[8] J. Holt reviews Henry II's administrative inventions as well as the history of modern writ study in "The Writs of Henry II," in *The History of English Law: Centenary Essays on Pollock and Maitland*, ed. John Hudson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 47-64. Palmer argues that lawyers professionalized first in the form of pleaders in the twelfth century in part because of increasingly complicated procedures and document forms that became void if any small error were made in text or speech ("Legal Profession," 134).
[9] Marx, "Literature of Law," 65.

right to distrain humankind—the Devil's possession—because Christ never used civil law procedures to take ownership, suggests that law in England binds Heaven itself.[10] The writer of this text imagines God obliged to obey a law of which He is the origin, in much the same way as an English lawyer might argue that a king must obey autochthonous English common law.

Marx perceives in England a "rivalry within university circles and the upper echelons of the church between theologians and lawyers," and the "Conflictus" may represent either theology as a handmaiden of law or vice versa.[11] We can find this tension reverberating through administrative texts which were probably written by clerks with civil and canon law training who went to work in England as common-law professionals rather than canon lawyers (sometimes representing ecclesiastical interests in provincial and royal courts). In this context, Christ's legal triumph due to documentary error seems to comment on the common law experience, which could very well have pervaded an English theologian's worldview if such was the identity of the author.[12] Another effect of this imagined law suit is to suggest that a claimant wins a court case less because his cause is just and more because he "can cite the law more effectively"[13] than his opponent, as was the case with Christ and the Devil. Christ's advanced legal training and maneuvering might appear less comforting to a medieval reader than would an unquestioned right of His to have redeemed mankind. The Devil doesn't get his

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[10] The relevant passage is translated in ibid., 59.
[11] Ibid., 66.
[12] Already in the reign of Henry I people were complaining of frequent "dismissal of cases on technical grounds for mistakes" (Green, *England under Henry I*, 117).
[13] Marx, "Literature of Law," 61.

due so much as he gets a reminder to study his law books more diligently, and perhaps hire an attorney, before his next attack on his adversary. What hope does the common man have of justice if even a trickster like the Devil can be outsmarted on a point of law, and a well-trained (and well-paid) attorney or advocate might likewise lose a just case? Law and litigation were nodal points of twelfth- and thirteenth-century popular discourse, and administrators implicated in legal developments expressed their own views in their semi-official textual productions.

For many decades, the prevailing understanding of thirteenth-century English domestic turmoil was that there existed a great animosity between the barons and the bureaucrats. This opposition was a dominant thread in traditional histories of the growth of England's government and administration from the late twelfth century through the thirteenth, and was considered to have driven the Barons' Wars. Criticism of "new men" and the "excesses of royal officials" continued through this period and England's feudal nobility had reason to worry about the power of administrators, some of whom had enormous influence over policy changes, and some of whom even governed the kingdom as regents in the king's absence.[14] Though civil servants born on the Continent or "raised from the

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[14] Hershey, "Justice and Bureaucracy," 843. "A truism of textbooks is that feudal societies naturally fostered an adversarial relationship between magnates and monarchs, assisted by their lowborn administrators, to whom they turned because such servants' complete dependence upon royal favor made them more loyal than great nobles" (Turner, "New Administrative Class," 95). See also Turner, *Men Raised*, 1-19; Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 890; D. A. Carpenter, "King, Magnates, and Society: The Personal Rule of King Henry III, 1234-1258," *Speculum* 60 (1985): 39. Though more administrators in the late twelfth century and thirteenth century were lay, the large number of clerks still receiving payment in the form of church benefices and seeking higher church office worried the nobility because this dependence on the king was thought to buy loyalty (Pegues, *Clericus* in Legal Administration," 531). In particular

dust" may have lacked loyalties to baronial interests, members of the knightly class also sought administrative positions at a greater rate in this period (and some families were knighted in order to open positions up to more persons).[15] This chapter will not be a history of the Barons' Wars, but they lie in the background, as the inherent closeness of royal administrator to king is an undercurrent in civil servants' textual expressions of identity and position.

Civil service became a prime opportunity for upward mobility, upsetting convenient divides between those with and without traditional sources of power. Whatever baronial propaganda may have said to malign bureaucrats, there was a growing number of government employees who did not work in the king's presence, and this was in part because of the phenomenon of departments

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barons took issue with taxation and the existence of professional judges, demanding representation both on the bench and in the king's council (Denholm-Young, *Collected Papers*, 152-4). Ranulf de Glanvill served as viceroy for Henry II in 1180, and the two men were so close that contemporary chronicler Richard of Devizes called Ranulf "the king's eye." J. S. Falls, "Ranulf de Glanville's Formative Years c.1120-1179: The Family Background and His Ascent to the Justiciarship," *Mediaeval Studies* 40 (1978): 326-7. See Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 223 for Richard I appointing justiciars as regents. Henry I had weakened Norman noble families' control in the countryside by giving "less exalted, more pliable men" positions as sheriffs instead of powerful magnates (Hollister and Baldwin, "Administrative Kingship," 885) while Henry II replaced many sheriffs in 1170 with clerks from the Exchequer and other household offices (Turner, *Men Raised*, 13). Henry II and his successors also replaced magnates with royal officials in county and itinerant courts, so that officials loyal to the king virtually ran the government in both London and the countryside (8). Even after the loss of territory in France meant English kings resided domestically, John and Henry III both attempted to bring governance and bureaucracy more closely under their control, including the career civil servants who ran them (Turner, "Common Pleas," 244-48). Magna Carta in 1215, the Provisions of Oxford and Westminster of 1258-9, Confirmatio Cartarum of 1297, and the Articuli super Cartas of 1300 represent baronial attempts to disrupt bureaucratic procedures and drive policy reforms, in part to limit government spending by making each office more accountable, and to simplify the processes of communication that had been obscuring just how much money was being spent (Hershey, "Justice and Bureaucracy," 829). Civil service was politically charged because the shifting fortunes and power of men like John's justiciar Peter des Roches or Henry III's justiciars Hubert de Burgh and Stephen de Segrave, affected who was in de facto control of policy and day-to-day governance. Government reforms, including those demanded by magnates, often involved ousting and jailing bureaucrats (Turner, "Common Pleas," 248-50; Carpenter, "Rule of Henry III," 41).

[15] Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 224; Turner, "Who Was the Author of *Glanvill*? Reflections on the Education of Henry II's Common Lawyers," *Law and History Review* 8 (1990): 105, 113.

moving “out of court” to settle in a permanent location and with a relatively independent personnel. Administrative texts appear at key moments in these processes, probably because it was when departments reached critical mass in terms of numbers of employees and importance of business—precisely the point when they were too unwieldy to travel connected to the *curia regis*—that operational manuals or handbooks became desirable. But the *Constitutio Domus Regis, Dialogue of the Exchequer, Glanvill*, and *Bracton* were not official productions created on a royal order to act as royally-inspected and -sanctioned representations of exact departmental procedures. There remained a degree of improvisation in the administrative modus operandi that made unofficial descriptions rather than official prescriptions more appropriate.

We must also consider occupational as well as individuals’ impetuses for writing texts of procedure and document form. If an English nobility was first engaging in its own acts of self-definition in the late twelfth century, defining itself in opposition to a body of civil servants deemed over-close to royal person and power “by taking on political responsibility as the king's natural counselors,”[16] how did these same royal servants cope with a lived experience that removed them from the king’s side? The *Dialogue of the Exchequer, Glanvill* and *Bracton* appeared as the finance and common law branches respectively earned greater self-sufficiency and their staffs further professionalized. As important as treasurer Richard fitz Nigel was to central administration, his exchequer duties kept him rather permanently away from court unlike some other functionaries with a

[16] Turner, *Men Raised*, 3; Turner, “New Administrative Class,” 93, 95.

financial role, and for this reason he is nearly invisible in records of court such as charter attestations.[17] *Dialogue of the Exchequer* contends with the novelty of this position, much like Glanvill's author was an early shepherd of the semi-independent civil court system. If institutional self-sufficiency and professionalization were new to jurisprudence when *Glanvill* was written, its later revisers and users would be more used to holding trials without the royal presence in the Common Bench and on eyre. At the time of *Bracton*'s writing these courts gained more independence due to the renewal of an institutionalized *coram rege* court, formalizing as the King's Bench. *Bracton* was written by a judge whose experience up to that point had comprised Common Bench and eyre trials, William Raleigh, who clerked for the Chief Justiciar, Martin of Pattishall, who was himself largely responsible for ending the custom of holding the court *coram rege* and instead situating it in Westminster.[18] Raleigh and his own clerk, Henry de Bracton, reviser of *Bracton*, had a range of judicial experience both in front of and away from the king, at a time when experimentation over judicial bodies and procedures resulted in a changeable status for career administrators witnessed in *Bracton*'s anxious commentary.

"Est ei labor infinitus atque…maximus"

The first texts with a practical orientation towards law and administration appeared one or two generations before such manuals began to flourish in the

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[17] Vincent, "Court of Henry II," 291-2.
[18] Alan Harding, "Pattishall, Martin of (*d.* 1229)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, ed. online by David Cannadine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

thirteenth century. The *Constitutio Domus Regis* of circa 1136 was a unique production in its time, recording divisions of the king's household near the end of Henry I's reign and each position's remuneration.[19] Henry I is traditionally considered an administrative reformer, and contemporaries like William of Malmesbury suggest the king responded to criticism of his household's rapaciousness while on circuit by restructuring its composition.[20] The *Constitutio* was outdated even as it was written, in that some functionaries like the chancellor had already stopped traveling regularly with the king, and to some degree the text can be viewed in the sense that it is intentionally nostalgic for the days before Stephen's anarchy.[21] As a bare-bones recital of names and duties the *Constitutio*'s detailed contents do not offer much for a historian of mentalities, though the sense it offers of the inter-relationships among personnel colors the royal household as one demanding much of its officers in the way of cooperation, efficiency, and reliability. The text establishes an expected hierarchy, treating first the chancellor, "master of the scriptorium" and royal chaplains (197).[22] It is a document of inclusion and exclusion, a Who's Who of those with access to the king such that they dine in his household or whose duties require them to travel "on the king's business" (211). The author does not fully generalize but preserves specific names of some officials, noting for instance that keeper of the seal

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[19] *Constitutio Domus Regis*, ed. and trans. S. D. Church, is printed in one volume alongside Richard fitz Nigel's *Dialogus de Scaccario*, in Amt, 196-215. Further citations to this text will refer to page numbers of the English portion of this facing-page translation.
[20] S. D. Church, "Introduction to the *Constitutio Domus Regis*," in Amt, *Dialogus*, xxxviii; Green, *England under Henry I*, 27.
[21] Church, "Introduction," xl.
[22] In terms of hierarchical importance, perhaps we should not look too much into the significance of those officials dealing with food appearing before those dealing with keeping the peace.

Robert de Sigillo earned a raise while serving as master of the scriptorium (197), or that the chamberlain—at least while William Mauduit holds this position—receives a per diem of fourteen pence (207). We learn the names of some eleven employees in this way, some who seem to have a place in the household by virtue of their individual utility to the king rather than as fillers of empty positions. Indeed, some positions emerged specifically to offer an institutional home to the first man who occupied them.[23] We are thus dealing with persons rather than interchangeable personnel, and a pliant administrative system still in its early phases of development that was prepared to account for personalities and how they appeal to the king who might reward accordingly.

Though the *Constitutio* seems intended to be used by household employees and possibly also the king, it encodes what its editor S. D. Church calls a "symbolic" element regarding members' reciprocal relationship to the king in which certain officials were entitled to food from the king.[24] "In providing bread and wine for these men, the king was indicating to them and to the outside world that they were his followers, entitled to the succour and protection due to a member of the king's affinity….It was the relationship with their king that gave members of the king's domus…their status in society." [25] (lviii-lix). These household officials in the twelfth century were by and large "men of rank" and *familiares* who might have influence over the king.[26] At the time of the *Constitutio* royal servants were "omnicompetent," meaning that success depended on

[23] Green, *England Under Henry I*, 31.
[24] Church, "Introduction," lviii, lxiv.
[25] Ibid., lviii-lix.
[26] Green, *England under Henry I*, 35-6.

mastering many skills to aid flexibility in working in more than one capacity.[27] As administrative departments became sedentary, outside the king's constant orbit, members began to write about their semi-independent functioning in terms of their vitalness to the king's governance. By the turn of the thirteenth century fewer omnicompetent noblemen appear in government offices and instead education, especially in the law, is the foundation of a civil service career.

By the time the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* was written between 1175 and the mid-1180s, the exchequer was not "a discrete institution…completely separated from the household" of the king yet it had taken steps toward a rather independent existence in Westminster outside the king's regular presence.[28] Author Richard fitz Nigel served as treasurer from 1160 to 1198, one of a bloodline of treasurers that began with his great-uncle Roger of Salisbury, who was credited with the invention of the exchequer and who served as its head as de facto justiciar under Henry I. Roger was a powerful administrative figure, serving as Chancellor and regent for Henry I, and as Bishop of Salisbury for much of his government career. Roger's nephew Nigel of Ely, Richard's father, was Treasurer under Henry I and Henry II, helping to rebuild the administration

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[27] Church, "Introduction," li.

[28] Hudson, "Perceptions of the Past," 91n86. Exchequer sessions occasionally took place outside Westminster around the time Fitz Nigel became Treasurer (Amt, "Introduction," xxvii). The *Dialogue* names 1177 as the year the fictional dialogue took place, and this is traditionally considered the date when he began composition (xviii). H. G. Richardson argues against older understandings of the text having been completed by 1179, showing that Fitz Nigel worked on parts of the manuscript as late as 1189 when he became bishop. "Richard fitz Neal and the Dialogus de Scaccario: Part I," *English Historical Review* 43 (1928): 166, 332, 340. Furthermore Amt suggests Fitz Nigel didn't necessarily stop revision even in 1189, and, following Poole, notes that textual passages previously identified as interpolations could very well be by the author himself and not another manuscript user, and are either evidence of Richard's revision process—keeping the text updated for maximum utility—or not interpolations at all but original passages poorly organized ("Introduction," xx, xxxi-xxxiv).

after Stephen's reign and the civil war.[29] Like others in his family, Richard worked his way through minor Church offices such as archdeacon and dean but was at heart a career administrator; unlike his father and great-uncle, he did not receive a bishopric until late in life.[30] Though Nigel's formal education in Laon likely benefited the family's reputation, Richard himself studied at a monastic school in Ely.[31] His *Dialogue* seems to suggest that his most important education came from the exchequer and the mentorship of Roger, Nigel, and other important men, and his text offers his views of contemporary education and intellectual culture. He may have had a post as a chief clerk in the king's writing office before taking on the role of Treasurer, but the treasurership may have been his first governmental position.[32] After some time on the job, he penned the text broadly considered to be "the first administrative manual of medieval Europe," dedicated to Henry II and perhaps also requested by the king.[33]

The most important features of the *Dialogue* for our purposes include the care Richard takes to celebrate the exchequer as a body independent from the king while still stressing its close alignment to the king's interests, person, and authority. The *Dialogue*'s contents reveal an author coming to terms with his bureau's development, and what this means for its operations as well as the broader trajectory of its employees. The treatise's dialogue format also reveals

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[29] Richardson, "Richard fitz Neal," 161-66; Amt, "Introduction," xiv-xx.
[30] Richard's lackluster career, despite his long tenure as Treasurer—his father Nigel seems to have paid for the position—leads Amt to evaluate him as "capable but apparently not brilliant, even somewhat pedestrian" ("Introduction," xvi-xvii). Richard became bishop of London late in 1189, after the monarch he loyally served, Henry II, had already died.
[31] Ibid., xiv.
[32] Ibid., xv. Not only did his father pay for Richard's entry into royal service, he also furnished him with his first clerical position, that of archdeacon of Ely, Nigel's bishopric (xvi).
[33] Milliman, "Games and Governance," 67.

Richard's thought process regarding the nature of an administrative identity and the transmission of specialized knowledge for an exchequer official. His is a rare sort of authorship and a rare sort of text, a "mirror for administrators" that links the identity of administrative personnel closely to the purposes they serve, the texts they produce, and the routines they carry out. It isn't fully certain whether Henry II or another high official asked Richard to write, but even if Richard acted on orders and not individual initiative, we must ask what social and political pressures motivated the production of a bureaucratic manual at this point in time. Civil servants like Richard and his extended family appear in the *Dialogue* as a breed different from contemporaries like Walter Map, Peter Blois and Gerald of Wales who were at heart Church servants and who approached secular government service as important rungs on a ladder to heaven. These men were ambitious, but conceived of their roles at court—and the role of secular government in medieval society—as spiritual tools serving a greater good. Richard casts himself as a different, even opposed, category of civil servant, one for whom Church offices are a remunerative honor but a means to an end more than a spiritual goal. Such a clerk "was first and foremost a royal official,"[34] and the *Dialogue* initiates a textual tradition authorizing careerist clergy within the royal administration by virtue of their secular expertise and skills.

Richard takes for granted in the *Dialogue*'s preface a notion that other twelfth-century authorities like John of Salisbury argued at length, that it befits clergy to labor for the royal government. The text's starting point is God's ultimate

[34] Amt, "Introduction," xvi.

power; since God endows all spheres, "It is perfectly proper, and suitable even for clerics, to serve kings, who surpass all others, and also other secular authorities" (3).[35] John of Salisbury and his ilk engaged in similar logic about the complementary places of Church and state in the service of God, but were apt to assert unequivocally that a cleric's service at court is ultimately for the purpose of glorifying God. In contrast the *Dialogue* prioritizes how civil servants can work towards the king's aggrandizement: "Worldly authorities should be served not only by maintaining the dignities that demonstrate the glory of kingship, but also by conserving the worldly wealth that accrues to rulers because of their rank" (3). The English king has a direct relationship with God, and God has put his full trust in secular rulers who "stand or fall by divine, not human, judgement" (3). The *Dialogue*'s king is answerable only to God, his "conscienc[e]…in God's hands" (3). Henry II does not need advisors to protect him from courtly predators because he "is not deceived by false wisdom or concealed foolishness" (89). This is a far cry from John of Salisbury's insistence that educated clergy exist to offer Christian counsel to a king—acting as vital mediators between king and God—as the kingdom described and served by Richard's text does not require a clerical bulwark against Satan. Instead its "security depends on its wealth" and thus its governance requires not only active ministers with "fortitude" and "prudence" but also the wheel-greasing effect of wealth (3). Money is the prince's prime currency for both political power and heavenly reward; modern princes must rely not on sage counsellors but on "those deeds whereby they gain a heavenly reward for a

[35] I will use parenthetical citations of the *Dialogue* throughout this section, quoting from Amt's translation.

temporal price" (5). Richard regularly repeats the reminder that the work of the exchequer is done "for the king's advantage" or "interest," not under the auspices of a divine boss.[36] The key to Henry II's good governance, we learn here, is his wisdom regarding his expenditures in both war and peacetime, "spending the appropriate sums for the place, time, and person" (5).

In order to spend appropriately, Henry needs a flock of able administrators to safeguard his monetary keys to heaven. We find throughout the *Dialogue* the notion that exchequer administrators exist not for learned advice-giving but for putting competent specialized expertise to active use. Richard writes this treatise and dedicates it to Henry, he tells us, specifically because he has observed the monarch in action and the great concern Henry expresses over exchequer procedures. As it stands, Henry must send "wise counsellors" to the acting exchequer president for consultation (5), who no doubt must in turn call on undersecretaries and clerks for an accounting of the exchequer's goings-on. Such concern and royal oversight is a good thing, Richard tells us (5), drawing on the old claim of a prince's need for an education. But Richard stresses the business nature of Henry's preparation, "the strength of his mind in managing his affairs. For from the very beginning of his reign, he directed his whole mind towards this" (113-15). This specificity regarding Henry's purview, and his apprehensiveness about a financial body distant from him, draws attention to what is unique regarding this king's informational needs—his sophisticated administrative machinery—and to his need for responsible administrators to run

[36] Such phrases appear on pp. 13, 21, 31, 43, 59, 67.

the exchequer both because it does not regularly convene before the king and because it must be in order at all times to accommodate this sporadic royal probe. The king's oversight routine evokes the en vogue sage cleric, the "wise counsellor," who seems old-fashioned in the context of business communication. This sage-centered communication procedure, Richard seems to suggest, is cumbersome and unreliable. His own manual might offer the king a ready tool for instruction in the manifold actions of his exchequer, if not updates specific to a recent audit.

In describing the important traits of exchequer workers, Richard stresses their long tenures, suggesting that many employees worked at this department for a long time gathering expertise and experience. At least, Richard wished to create this image for the department. His own character in the dialogue, Magister, labeled his interlocutor, Discipulus, as a longterm employee, calling him "meticulous," so well-informed in his job that there is "no mystery" about it remaining. Richard trusts in exchequer standards enough that he is willing to assume that "the same must be true of the others" who work there (7). Employees are diligent, such as the treasurer's scribe, who "watches all the officials under him carefully, and nothing escapes him" (13). Thomas Brown was selected to copy roll excerpts for the king because of his "faithfulness and discretion" (53). Recently-deceased Chief Justiciar Robert de Beaumont, earl of Leicester, was "a prudent man, well educated, and experienced in legal matters" (89). Chancery scribes display "care, labour, and zeal" and copy documents "with zealous and industrious discernment" (49). They also follow rules strictly and "no

one is free to act outside the established rules" (11). Unlike sage administrators who praised clergy's spiritual wisdom, Richard's descriptions emphasize practical qualities. Richard of Ilchester's career is perhaps most representative of expectations: currently he sits to the right of the justiciar and oversees the pipe roll, having received this honored position because "when he served a little lower in the king's court, he showed himself dutiful and constant in his loyalty and industry in the king's business and in accounts and the writing of rolls and writs" (41). As an institution, the exchequer is powerful and unassailable because it is "strengthened by the authority of great men…whose shrewdness keeps the whole realm secure…so that no one can break its laws or dare to resist them," and "no one can contradict a record or a judgement made there" (21). Officials in this department have numeracy skills but more importantly they habitually confront "weighty matters" and "complex questions" regarding procedures and so "its multifarious judgements…[are] considered the more important expertise of the exchequer" (23). Like sage administrators these employees must be able to think through new situations, but it is clear from the *Dialogue* that, during exchequer sessions at least, they serve in specific capacities performing defined tasks. The exchequer is a lawmaking body (23), and Richard gives the impression of its personnel's perfection erecting a defensive wall for the king and realm, with no mention of spiritual defense.

Richard repeatedly stresses how exacting and challenging exchequer jobs were. The tally-cutter's job is "not so easily done" because of its complexity and need to pay careful attention to deficits and additions (33). The task of moving

counters around the exchequer board is "complicated and difficult…because other jobs are done by the tongue or by the hand or by both. But in this one the tongue, the hand, the eyes, and the mind all work tirelessly" (37). The calculator "must be careful not to let his hand get ahead of his tongue, or vice versa" (37). The job of chancellor's clerk "requires almost endless work" (41) and he is so busy he doesn't get a break during a session—"his work is infinite and the most burdensome after the treasurer's" (53).[37] It becomes clear from the second half of the *Dialogue* especially that Richard's experience has taught him how to handle idiosyncratic situations that would be difficult to systematically log in a law or administrative textbook. For instance, a long section on escheats and purprestures comprises many clauses beginning with "but if this" or "but if that," listing the seemingly endless permutations the exchequer must manage (139-47). Richard is able to produce examples to illustrate complex legal theories and how they impact different situations, such as all the problems that can arise when a person pledges money to the crown but defaults (179-87). Richard, as Magister, recounts a story from his own life about how he once served as a proxy for his father, Bishop of Ely, in front of the exchequer when the latter was ill and the bishopric's finances were under review. Richard narrates how he skillfully recognized that his father had been falsely charged for assarts when he should have been exempted, and was able to have the problem corrected. He goes on

[37] Though Richard seems to take seriously his message about the exchequer's important and difficult work, we do get a glimpse of his bureaucratic humor here as he allowed the other speaker a joke: the work of copying and correcting documents is so tedious and demanding that "Argus [the many-eyed mythical beast] would be more useful here than Polyphemus" (53). Discipulus has a few other pointed one-liners that Richard might have found more appropriate to be voiced by the younger exchequer colleague.

to say that the anecdotes he has used to discuss the development of baronial assart exemptions—including the one starring himself—“concern judicious men whose actions are prudent and founded on reason” (91).

From his opening sentences, Richard has stressed that the exchequer was a body separate physically from the king, staffed with proficient men who can be trusted to operate in this way. Still, Richard works to insist upon the lines of communication and ties binding together king and administration, including his own text. These ties took the form of people, ideas, and parchment that moved back and forth. Richard bolsters the importance of the exchequer to the king by repeating how some officials, such as the chancellor and clerk of the constabulary, must sometimes be absent as they traveled with the king on important business (31, 53). In this way the exchequer proceedings and king are detached by only one degree, these officials serving as direct conduits. The king’s name is regularly invoked as the purpose for the office’s very existence, reinforcing the king’s omnipresence in administration. Though the aforementioned “wise counsellors” may surround the king, Richard offers his own version of socio-political hierarchy in which the exchequer unsurprisingly finds pride of place. Its leader, the chief justiciar, is the “first in the realm after the king” (23), “entrusted with responsibility for the whole kingdom, indeed for the king’s heart” (25). Richard goes on to quote Matthew 6:21—“where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”—as if to rewrite the maxim as, “where your treasury official is, there will your heart be also.” The need for textual communication in the form of a manual underscores the exchequer’s physical distance from the

king, yet we have here an assertion that administrators need not travel with the king to be close to him as the king's heart remains always with them, locked up in a treasury lockbox alongside the silver and muniments. Richard likens the exchequer's inviolability to the king's own court, and notes that its authority is not independent but undergirded by the "royal image," impressed in the royal seal (21). In fact, the treasurer and exchequer personnel had access to a copy of the royal seal which "has exactly the same image and inscription as the seal that travels with the court, so that its authority is clearly equal to the other" (97).

Though the *Dialogue*'s preface has offered a reason for its composition—Richard fitz Nigel is filling an observed need, helping the king—there is more to be said about the author's motives and intended audience. The faux dialogue format in particular will shed light on the text's meaning, its relationship to other administrative literature, and the author's thoughts about bureaucratic community and identity. Like often happens with utilitarian texts that can be mined for historical detail—in this case the operation of the twelfth-century Exchequer—the *Dialogue*'s rhetorical elements are typically overlooked or criticized. Such criticism appears particularly undeserved when one considers that this work was the first of its kind in England. The text's early editors called Richard's prose "clumsy," and Emilie Amt's introduction to her recent translation of the *Dialogue* evaluates the attempt as "pedestrian" and "muddled," in part because the text's characters are "inconsistent."[38] Amt claims that Richard set out to write an

[38] Amt, "Introduction," xvii-xviii. She quotes an evaluation of A. Hughes, C. G. Crump, and C. Johnson that appeared in their edition of 1902.

introductory manual for beginners, but misses his target.[39] We could hardly blame the author for imperfectly breaking down the basics as a novice would need, since Richard had no model for this sort of textbook. Yet I think it inaccurate to claim this was Richard's intention, as he more than once marks out the intended recipient of his lessons as an employee already largely proficient in exchequer procedure. The interlocutor Discipulus who begs Richard's narrator for a lesson, has as we have seen "sat at the exchequer for a long time, and…[is] meticulous about it" (7). Discipulus therefore does not need an introductory lesson, nor does he ask for one for novice colleagues.[40] His intention is that the Master write down his "vast knowledge of the exchequer…before it dies with" him, "humble things" yes but those that will benefit current employees who have not been able to master the mass of details as well as Fitz Nigel himself has (7).

Richard's motive is significant because it aids an understanding of what genre he thought he was writing, and indeed inventing. If he did not succeed at "executi[ng]…an elementary handbook of procedure," as Amt says (xviii), this is likely because such a handbook did not exist at the time nor did Richard necessarily think one was required. Richard himself draws attention to the novelty he has undertaken: "I have done what I could without a guide or example:

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[39] Ibid., xvii.

[40] Discipulus does admittedly ask some rudimentary questions, but I think this is a sign of Richard's rough grasp of his methodology rather than a signal that complete beginners could profit from this text. On the other hand, basic questions sometimes lead Magister to divulge "the more excellent, more useful…and more mysterious" details, as he puts it, and so the questioner is thus advancing topics more so than asking true questions about the basics (*Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 101). Discipulus's imperfect characterization does not, in the end, give the impression that exchequer scribes are unknowledgeable, and as I will discuss below, Richard puts much praise of the student in the mouth of his narrator, insisting that his question-asking ability is a sign of knowledge rather than the lack if it.

for I have laid my axe to wild and untouched woodland" (193). There was no precedent for an administrative manual, and anyway Richard imagined himself not initiating a novice scribe but archiving the sum of his accumulated knowledge so that it would benefit colleagues already sufficiently practiced as to be able to take on the "greater matters" of their department (5).[41] Much in the way of the author's intentions can be gained from study of the text's format, a fictional didactic dialogue between two exchequer colleagues. It is likely not by accident that England's first administrative manual took on the dialogue form, odd though the choice might initially seem. As its modern readers point out, a simple listing of job titles and duties would suffice "if his only purpose was to describe the mechanical operations of the exchequer." [42] Some easy answers suggest themselves. Dialogue serves an immediate purpose of adding interest, in the form of conversational asides and colorful personality traits, to what might otherwise be a treatise even bureaucrats would find dry. An inexperienced writer may also have chosen the device because of the contemporary popularity of the textual dialogue in many genres like consolation, instruction, or advice.[43]

It is possible that Richard determined on this format because it was familiar, then, and thus a safe refuge for a writer unpracticed in such an extended

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[41] His editors have pointed out that Richard displays knowledge suggesting he read Justinian's *Insititutes* and accessed the *Digest* through a compendium, and may have copied from the *Leges Edwardi Confessoris* and *Leis Willelmi* (Amt, "Introduction," xvii and *Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 97n131, both referencing the text's 1902 editors). Hudson sees no evidence that Richard necessarily read or copied from any English law texts, though he notes that such law texts typically mixed practical with historical content and thus Richard's knowledge of them may have served as an inspiration or precedent ("Perceptions of the Past," 76-7, 83-6).
[42] Milliman, "Games and Governance," 69. Milliman argues that the dialogue form is a component in Richard's game metaphor, in which exchequer practice is like a game of chess. This metaphor appears on page 11 of the *Dialogue*.
[43] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 102.

writing task. There is evidence throughout the text that Richard was uncomfortable with, though dedicated to, the mission he has undertaken. As Amt points out it would take a certain amount of confidence to take on this task,[44] but Richard's lack of confidence in structuring a long text shows in the choice of using a verbal exchange which allows for an irregular organization, forgiving of a lack of sophisticated pre-planning. The interjecting student provides a sort of elementary rubric as his questions bring up related issues that the narrator promises to cover later. Richard's attempts to make the conversation lifelike are jejune, though Magister's repeated praise of Discipulus's memory and perspicacity reveal the author's desire to ease rough topic transitions. Magister's narration also occasionally slips between referring to himself as writing and speaking, showing Richard is not secure in his understanding of his task—of what it means to record and describe occupational duties in a way others could utilize.[45] This fiction may also have felt more comfortable to Richard because administrative personnel of his station did not routinely write such texts. They might write much, including writs and rolls, and spend much time double- and triple-checking these products for accuracy.[46] But the bulk of an exchequer administrator's work was done orally, and although Richard makes a strong case for the need for his wisdom to be recorded, it may have felt a strange flexing of authority to "write the book" on this subject. Oral communication and textualized utterance more precisely performed exchequer discourse, even as Richard

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[44] Amt, "Introduction," xvii.
[45] For example p. 121.
[46] Magister details the redundant systems of oversight and supervision of the rolls on pp. 25-9, 47-9, 107, 129. The significance of passages on roll creation will be discussed below.

recognized the need to record knowledge textually.

This recording is by necessity on parchment, but Richard writes in what was still very much an oral world, and pervading the *Dialogue* is a sense of the importance of verbal exchanges. The dialogic fiction makes the text performative—Richard textualizes his performance of what must have been a typical semi-official duty of the administrator, that of training and overseeing office subordinates. As he writes himself performing a duty, penning the *Dialogue* becomes not extraneous but part and parcel of his job, and such a literary fiction may have been how Richard could conceptualize of a treatise given that the writing he habitually carried out was one of official documents. This conversation between colleagues reveals two important aspects of how administrative knowledge is being conceptualized near the turn of the thirteenth century. First, Richard's decision to cast his treatise as a dialogue reveals to us that he felt the need to legitimize and explain why he was writing and what purpose his text serves.[47] Richard must show why a text describing exchequer work is necessary, given that its employees already know their jobs well, as he himself posits. As his two characters continue their somewhat plodding verbal exchange, Richard is working out a new genre, laying out its scope and target audience. He feels a need to produce this sort of text, but is at pains at how to express why. The Discipulus, a fellow exchequer employee, claims that the text is needed for some somewhat obscure reasons pulled from Scripture; the gist is that total

[47] Hudson recognizes this characteristic need of early administrative manuals to "justify…their concentration on practice rather than ideals," on "day-to-day matters" ("Perceptions of the Past," 77-8).

enlightenment might be beyond the average hired scribe (7). Uncomfortable with this, the author-narrator, Magister, determines that his audience is in fact men so "busy with great things" that they cannot be expected to hold smaller details in their minds and thus a gentle reminder in the form of a reference text is called for.[48] Thus we have Richard exploring the boundaries of a genre that "teaches" and "explains" (7) to men already involved in an administrative career, to men who relied on their expertise yet did not have a vocabulary through which to express their social value or institutional role.

Rhetorically, the fiction opens up an imaginary space in which an interlocutor prompts a narrator to speak and thus write, offering a textual legitimation for the text's own existence, however contrived. Richard claims to write not out of a misplaced pride in his knowledge, but because another has alerted him to the terrible risk the kingdom is running by not recording its stock of administrative knowledge (7). Richard is anxious about loss, concerned that accumulated information may be lost as personnel retires or dies, as we know happened to an extent during the civil war accompanying Stephen's reign which immediately preceded Richard's administrative career.[49] Richard stresses more than once the procedure regarding mistakes in the pipe roll, that "there should be

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[48] He later notes that the pipe roll exists for the same reason, because the barons need access to temporary data even before accounts are finalized after the Michaelmas exchequer meeting, and "there are so many of these things that it would be hard to remember them if they were not written down" (*Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 111).

[49] Richard tells this story in the *Dialogue*, that Nigel of Ely, "when the illustrious King Henry II had repeatedly asked him, restored the knowledge of the exchequer that had been almost entirely lost during the many years of civil war, and revived the whose order of its procedures (77).

no erasures" (47).[50] Here is the second important observation about how administrators conceived of their occupational knowledge. Discipulus rouses Magister by reminding him that that "both knowledge, and treasure, if hidden, are useless" (7). Up to this point royal administration materialized on a rather ad hoc basis, the king relying on noblemen and well-regarded courtiers to fill positions. As governance became more complex, not only were more men required to fulfill duties, but it was increasingly important for department heads to themselves be experienced and trained in their field. Richard's *Dialogue* examines administrators' need for reliable training and passing-on of knowledge, preventing wisdom from being lost or "hidden." His own book demonstrates that occult skill and procedure best serves the king when it becomes disseminated and public. People are already gossiping about Richard—Discipulus comes to him because of the "vast knowledge of the exchequer which people say" he has (7)—but now it is appropriate to convert this knowledge from private thought and semi-private talk to public record. This systematizing and institutionalizing is what Henry II's current, dissatisfactory approach to keeping himself updated on exchequer procedures is lacking.

As a means of justifying his authorship of a text that will aid Henry's administration, Richard casts his own position, treasurer, in flattering terms. He does not name himself, but claims the treasurer is "responsible for every single

[50] Magister also treats mistakes on summonses on 113. Here, the anxiety is more that another party, namely a sheriff, might take advantage of a document with errors by taking control over its contents, a control that only exchequer personnel are allowed. A fresh summons with no errors must be drawn up so that its bearer cannot "easily delete, change, or reduce whatever he wished, since there is no copy in the barons' possession" (113). In this case, the two conversants discuss erasure at length rather than simply noting the procedural convention, as if Richard wants to be sure that the need for this practice is clear.

thing that is done there, because he will have to give an account of all of them if need be" (27). His supervision of the roll is perhaps his most important task, but it is not just the corrections he makes to his scribe's work that reveal his significance. He determines what will appear in the record: "he dictates the words to be written in his roll…and from his roll they are then copied into other rolls" (43).[51] His own scribe, whose hand does the actual copying, has no control over the contents (47). Richard can be certain that his efforts will persist, because "so great is the authority of his roll that no one is permitted to challenge or change it" except the king (43). Even his mistakes cannot be erased (47). Not one roll but three proliferate from this act of dictation, as the chancellor's scribe copies "word for word" (49) while another scribe copies excerpts exactingly (27, 53).[52] We see that Richard is practiced in using rolls as evidence of the diligence and success of an administrator, including his great-uncle Roger, who "excelled in the knowledge of the exchequer, so that it is utterly clear from the rolls of that time that it flourished greatly under him" (65). Richard's voice is preserved in the pipe rolls and through the *Dialogue*—doubly so when Magister provides a script spoken between treasurer and sheriffs during an exchequer audit (127). Richard effectively quotes himself as he speaks in his official capacity, a strategy he does not use for other exchequer roles.

Richard's handling of a delicate textual situation—why Henry II has appointed Richard of Ilchester, Bishop of Winchester to oversee Fitz Nigel's

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[51] Similarly on page 131: the treasurer must receive sheriffs' copies of write "so that he…may provide the right words for writing in his roll. For he, as has been said, prescribes, and the others, who do the writing, copy down what he says."
[52] Amt says this third copy might be an early memoranda roll (Ibid., 27n42).

production of the pipe rolls—reveals the degree to which this administrative manual is also the author's means of self-expression and introspection. Richard describes not just the man's job duties but defends himself against this perceived slight.[53] Discipulus remarks regarding Ilchester's placement next to the Treasurer that "this seems to detract from [the Treasurer's] dignity, because his integrity is not completely trusted in all things" (43). Magister offers a formulaic and respectful answer about the dignity of great men, and moves on to an extended description of the treasurer's own weighty duties. Yet before this episode, Discipulus has previously interrupted the lesson ("stop writing for a moment, so that I can say something") to comment on the symbolism utilized at the exchequer. Like with an abacus, a penny counter can stand in for larger currency; and so can a man take on different guises as he rides the waves of fate.[54] This is a transparent disquisition on "new men," one of whom Richard of Ilchester was commonly considered to be,[55] and it is after this interruption that Discipulus returns Magister to the subject of the Bishop of Winchester whom Richard has already covered in turn but about whom the student wishes more discussion. Richard skillfully metamorphoses this instead into a plug for his book the *Tricolumpnis*, an historical treatise he claims he has written, but which is no

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[53] This passage reads as humorous and frank more so than earnestly defensive: "the treasurer is distracted by so many and such great cares and responsibilities in everything that it is understandable that sometimes, in such great work, sleep steals over him. Besides, in human affairs scarcely anything is perfect all the time" (41).
[54] "[A]ny common man, who is a human being and cannot be anything else, can, when worldly honors are heaped on him at the will of the president [chief justiciar], rise from the depths to the highest position, and then, because fortune's law holds true, he is thrust back to the bottom, and remains what he was, even though it seemed that dignity and status had transformed him" (39).
[55] Turner, *Men Raised*, 143.

longer extant (41).[56] His own literary pursuits stand as a sort of defense, bolstering his credentials and experience in the face of Henry's implicit critique about his duties in the placing of Ilchester next to him in the exchequer. He insists the *Tricolumpnis* "could be useful to posterity" (41), much as his pipe roll is intended to be. Here is also a reminder that great men survive because of preservation in text—even King Henry himself fell back on his "enormous fame" (43); Richard has also recorded and immortalized Ilchester in the *Tricolumpnis*, but can just as easily erase him. It is at this point Discipulus raises his objection to the Treasurer's diminished dignity, and Richard rises above. Following this episode is the description of the treasurer's position, which as we have seen stresses Richard's great work and immortalized voice.

Richard also advertises his experience and prestige by dropping the names of important men, including past treasurers, in the process modeling his own training and offering a pattern for an administrative educational ideal. As the dialogue performs Richard's instructional role at the exchequer, it calls attention to the on-the-job training entry-level personnel might receive. Magister tells Discipulus after a recital of tally stick use that he "will learn all these things more

[56] Richard tells us the *Tricolumpnis* recorded English history under Henry II, including church matters, Henry's deeds, and "various public and private matters, including legal judgements" (*Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 41). It may not have been a true treatise but rather Richard's register, perhaps less systematic than he lets on, and thus not providing him with significant experience formulating a lengthy treatise (41n56; Hudson, "Perceptions of the Past," 79). Both Amt and Hudson cite the *Dialogue*'s 1902 editors for this evaluation. Placing categories of historical information in separate columns reflects an exchequer man's experience with making sense of data by placing counters on an exchequer board in prescribed patterns and formatting credits and debits in a pipe roll. Hudson reminds that regardless of whether the history ever appeared as a 'published' work Richard's thought process reveals "interpretive decisions, for example about which affairs concerned the church, which the king" that help us understand an administrator's viewpoint and broader bureaucratic culture ("Perceptions of the Past," 80). The fact that Richard desired to record his observations sheds light on his reasons for entering into the *Dialogue* and writing about his world.

easily by seeing them than by hearing about them" (37).[57] Of course "hearing about them" here means reading about them, or listening to a lecture without an active demonstration during an exchequer session. If a vital component of an exchequer scribe's work is experiential training, on the counting-house floor rather than in the classroom, the dialogue format comes closest to Richard's comfort zone as he considers how exchequer practice can be conveyed textually. This is another reason to consider the *Dialogue* a reference for seasoned exchequer employees rather than a textbook for novices. After all Richard himself received his initial instruction from mentors, not reading about his profession from a book, and he narrates the exchanges he had with these mentors. He stresses especially his relationship to his father and great-uncle, two weighty figures in English administrative history. Roger of Salisbury appears in a historical view of the assay. After eulogizing him, unnamed, in enough detail to make his identity clear, Richard makes his point: "From the overflowing of his knowledge have I received, as an inheritance, the little that I know….he has left behind memories that are a monument to his most noble mind" (65). To a degree, the history of the exchequer as Richard writes it is a history of his own family.[58] For instance, it was Roger who realized coins must be tested for weight and purity, the payoff of a long digression about the history of blanching farms (67). Richard's interaction with his father Nigel was more active, as he narrates a

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[57] Magister likewise says the format for escheats and purprestures "will be clearer to you if you see it than from a verbal description, however detailed" (141).
[58] Hudson makes the case for Richard's deep concern for history, and how the exchequer at this time often resembled a small family business, and the author of the *Dialogue* the latest member of that family" ("Perceptions of the Past," 90-1).

situation in which Richard had a pressing question about writ terminology and "for that reason I once accosted the bishop of Ely on the matter, by far the most experienced man in this office" (77). When Discipulus in turn asks the same question of Magister (75) we see the exchequer transmission of knowledge in action, and as Richard says "the glory of the teacher is in the proficiency of the student" (67).[59] Magister recounts his association with chief justiciar Robert de Beaumont, which anecdote is also an opportunity both for Richard to demonstrate his deep knowledge of baronial exemptions and to showcase Nigel of Ely wisely advocating a course of action to the barony and helping two factions negotiate (89). Finally, Magister recalls receiving wisdom from Henry of Blois, namely the composition of Domesday Book (97-9).

Writing down knowledge is vital, but so is two colleagues' ready exchange of ideas, and Magister's discussions with these men and his willing engagement when Discipulus burst in upon him illustrates this. Exchequer work is necessarily social because no one employee can perform each task nor can they operate without sheriffs reporting on revenue figures from the counties. Magister's expertise—and Discipulus's proficiency—is indispensable, but more important is colleagues' ready cooperation. The dialogue's question-and-answer form allows curiosity to drive discussion. The Socratic method lends this text an atmosphere quite different from that of the *Policraticus* or *Metalogicon* which lecture, preach and persuade. Like a true collaboration, Magister gives his interlocutor some

[59] Elsewhere Magister finds opportunities to compliment himself in the guise of praising his student: "I seem to have given you weapons to defeat me, for you draw inferences from what has been said and attack me with an array of questions" (145).

control over their discussion, asking which topics he would like covered (25) and pausing so that the student may take his turn and speak (39).[60] Sometimes Magister offers his student a chance to work out the reason for a policy himself, such as the practice of recopying any summonses containing errors to prevent forgery (113). Richard mimics the extemporaneous speech of conversing colleagues by having Magister hedge about his answers: "I have cited these, which occurred to me at the moment as being the most common, as examples" (127); "so these are the things that occur to me at the moment…" (135). Among the various exchanges occurring during an exchequer session Richard describes the treasurer's duty "to cooperate with his superiors in all important matters and to be aware of everything that happens" (43). For example, though the pipe roll usually cannot be altered once written, the chancellor or his clerk might "politely" point out mistakes or corrections (43). Exchequer barons also consult on "controversial questions" rather than any one member having unilateral authority (69).

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[60] Milliman characterizes the exchange as Magister "skipping around from topic to topic at the request of his fictional disciple," and takes this as evidence a chess-like verbal parry, the two combatants in competition ("Games and Governance," 69-70). Although Milliman's interpretation usefully underscores "the human elements of what is too often mistaken for impersonal bureaucracy" (71), and Richard's intention to teach readers about the social interactions vital to exchequer business (70, 77), I think it inaccurate to characterize the speakers as competitive. Discipulus does not make demands so much as he responds to statements Magister has made that he would like more detail about. Richard showcases two bright minds reacting to one another towards a common goal, where neither "wins." Milliman argues that the overall effect of both the dialogue and the text's descriptions of the treasurer's actions is that Richard appears as a game master with an edge up on sheriffs and king alike: "Richard's text is a rulebook to teach his readers how to play the game, not how to win it. To give away all the mysteries of the Exchequer would undermine Richard's position" (85). Yet far from having this guile, Richard freely offers the "mysteries": "you should pay careful attention to what I am about to say, because the higher knowledge of the exchequer consists of these things" (*Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 119). Viewing the *Dialogue* as competition risks obscuring the cooperation Richard wishes to model and advocate for.

Magister sometimes notes that there are differing viewpoints regarding certain matters, such as whether the treasurer is responsible for all money recorded in the pipe roll even if it is not yet present in the treasury (11) or what "cess" is (47). Magister lays out points currently under debate by administrators who disagree about facts or the history behind certain procedures, and notes when it is his own opinion he gives. Thus this format allows for extended theorizing about topics, which is the only true way to be sure to preserve the author's store of knowledge; a faithful recording of only established procedure would lack this.[61] Richard even admits when he does not know an answer, insisting that in the face of a particularly difficult question he shall not be "embarrassed to say, 'I don't know, but let's consult those who are wiser'" (9).[62] Discipulus notes later on that "ever since I was a child I've known that a sensible person should ask for explanations rather than suffer in ignorance," showing that

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[61] Richard reflects at length on why the exchequer is so named, for instance (11), and its origins (21) and the reasons behind certain procedures like the blanch farm (21). Magister at times does not simply answer a question but addresses why it is important, such as when he reacts to Discipulus's concern about wording of documents that refer to a king's writ of remittance that doesn't actually exist. He says: "you're right to be bothered. It bothered me for a long time too, and I don't think the reason is well known even now" (77). Magister opens a long passage about post-Conquest administration by admitting it is not germane to the conversation, or the exchequer: "Though it's not part of what I owe you in the contract I originally undertook, I'm willing to throw in what I've heard from the natives themselves about these matters, for free" (83). Regarding baronial exemptions from assarts, Magister takes us through the positions of an argument with phrases like "those who have first-hand experience of the exchequer of long ago say that…" (87); "I agree with them, with this qualification…" (87); "now, although this reasoning is astute and seems to some nearly conclusive, one can argue against it on the grounds that…" (87); and "likewise, the authority of ancient custom and use, which should be respected, is against the above argument" (89). Magister lays out his position about the differing guilt clergy and laypersons carry for usury and why he disagrees with Discipulus, though admits that this is a thorny issue "that has stumped even the experts so far" (149). In one case regarding queen's payments, "you will have to be patient about this, because the matter is not yet decided, and the answer is still up in the air. Indeed, the queen's side is litigating this with the debtors, and the case is still being judged" (185).

[62] For example Magister doesn't know why the treasury doorkeeper is unpaid, but offers some potential reasons (19); asked about the smelting process, he answers "I'm not certain, because I have never studied these matters" (61).

there is no dishonor in turning to a colleague for assistance; there is no posturing here (93). In this way the conversational interludes are important not only in their content (as they act as rubrics making connections between subjects and allowing contemplation), but in how they shape the relationship between the two men. Magister responds positively to Discipulus' queries how one would expect of two colleagues. He says at one point "I was right to call you meticulous" (11) and another "I see that you know something of these matters" (13).[63] He encourages Discipulus to disagree, ask for further information, or display surprise or misgivings about what he hears. Furthermore, the student at times approves of and agrees with what he hears, confirming his master is correct ("these things seem necessary, too," 155 and "I see that this doesn't happen without a reason," 153), as if the one colleague is checking the other and corroborating a solution in the matter of deliberating exchequer officials. Thus Richard sees himself not only setting out established rules and regulations, but also offering the sort of advice a seasoned exchequer employee will have collected. The ultimate effect of this back-and-forth is the certainty that text cannot replace expert counsellor or functionary, because it is the personal element that makes an exchequer employee effective and valuable to the king. After all, Richard is able to write this

[63] For another example, Discipulus asks a quite rudimentary question about the exchequer's twice-yearly meetings, and the only value of this input seems to be the opportunity it offers Magister to praise the man's diligence in asking the right questions and noticing when there has been an omission (109-111). Discipulus does at times appear as a straw man, a convenient foil who can raise issues Richard wishes to argue against or explain. For instance when Magister is discussing gifts to judicial officials: "when someone offers the king a certain amount for justice concerning some estate or revenue of his—not to ensure that justice is done—lest you flare up and say that we sell justice for money—but rather to have it done without delay" (181). For a writer not proficient in argument strategies like raising potential objections and addressing them, and interlocutor is a handy device.

text because he is a sort of walking archive, relying on his "poor memory" to compose the *Dialogue* (191). The text becomes an extension of himself, not just a detached, institutional tool.[64]

Richard understands that the act of recording law is important and powerful, a sort of lawmaking of its own due to the fact such a recording prevents loss and backsliding.[65] He says of his father Nigel's work early in Henry II's reign that "this wise man sensibly believed it better to write down for posterity the laws established from ancient times than to let his silence cause new ones to be invented. For in seeking money the modern age has hardly created more moderate laws than earlier times" (77). Likewise he addresses the act of law recording during the Domesday survey. William the Conqueror "decided, in order to keep misdeeds from being given free reign again, to bring the conquered populace under a written code of laws" (97). Domesday Book, significantly, was "written in plain words" ("verbis communibus"), allowing the masses to understand it and so "be content" (97). Richard's own *Dialogus* is written "with plain speech and simple words" ("rusticano sermone et communibus…verbis," 9), a style which is central to his textual project, to making his own readers content.

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[64] Magister also compliments Discipulus on his prodigious memory throughout the treatise. Clearly, Richard does not think that a reference handbook can make skilled clerks obsolete. Hopefully contemporary readers did not recognize what historians do now, that Richard's memory was not quite up to the challenge and he got some details wrong about developments in exchequer procedure (Richardson, "Richard fitz Neal," 331-33). Milliman's investigation of Richard's gaming metaphor comes to a similar conclusion: "An administrative manual is no substitute for an able administrator" ("Games and Governance," 86). Milliman evaluates modern historians' adoption of the concept of medieval administration as a "machine" and argues that Richard and his contemporaries did not think this way, reflecting instead on the need for human application of governance (64-5, 85-6).

[65] Antonia Gransden mentions the twelfth-century tendency to record existing law in *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 269. See also Hudson, "Perceptions of the Past," for "a more general concern at Henry II's court concerning the importance of written law" (95n7).

Domesday is much like the pipe rolls in that it is an ultimate authority whose "word cannot be denied," to be consulted when related disputes arise (99).[66] Likening his work to the masterpiece of Domesday shows the importance Richard places on exchequer officials as memory-keepers—which was part of Richard's official job as Treasurer—but also of the connection he wishes to establish between himself or the exchequer and the king. Just before his history of Domesday, Richard has told his readers about the close association between Domesday Book and the royal seal, which are kept together in the treasury as "companions" ("comes"), "inseparable" ("individuus") (97). Not only does the exchequer have use of an identical royal seal, but this seal's mate has its counterpart in the official rolls and unofficial treatise Richard writes. We can see Richard finding for himself a textual tradition, a precedent, which he did not have when he set out. He wants for the *Dialogus* the same respect Domesday receives, yet the latter's idiosyncrasy might also be reassuring given the novelty of Richard's mission.

Richard and his colleagues were experiencing a period of transition, one in which a recording of exchequer knowledge was considered important, yet the *Dialogue*'s author continued to hold suspicions and prejudices against book learning. Specifically, Richard took a stance against the expediency of institutional learning in the schools, dominated as it was by texts—and texts of a

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[66] When Nigel of Ely defended the ancient right of exchequer barons' exemption from assart payments, "the pipe roll from the time of [Henry I]…was brought in as more valid evidence in the case…as happens in doubtful cases" (*Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 89). Similarly, "writs of allowance or pardon are stored…not to be produced again unless some controversy occurs about them" (51).

theological or philosophical, rather than utilitarian, bent. As Richard thinks through his purposes for writing, his introductory passages express information about exchequer personnel that he considered important, including their socio-intellectual context. Besides the typical modesty claims to “an unskilled pen” (5) and “plain speech” (9), Magister makes it clear his text cannot contain any “subtle distinctions or discovery of interesting novelties” (7) like we know were so common in twelfth-century books of marvels and mirrors for princes. If the point is not yet clear, Discipulus confirms what Richard’s readers want: “Those who like novelties…and who want to chase after subtle distinctions, have Aristotle and Plato to listen to. You are going to write about useful things, not subtle ones” (9). Richard explicitly counters his text to more scholarly works like those of court criticism by the sage administrators, to treatises that offer political philosophy more than they do actionable advice about running a chancery or treasury. One can find advice to a prince in the *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus*, for instance, but what one really finds in John of Salisbury’s canon is a reflection on how Aristotle fits in to medieval philosophy.

Richard adds a final salvo from the mouth of Discipulus: not only do “writers in the liberal arts” rely on linguistic opacity to hide their limited knowledge, but they do so in order that “the arts will seem more difficult” (9). Richard further comments on a schoolman’s inability to expound clearly and instructionally on governance when he states that “you could hardly understand any of these matters if I did not call them by their usual names, but insisted on an elegant mode of speech or made-up names” (69). Philosophers invent aureate

terms and thus obscure the doing of practical business or governance. Richard's task is, then, very much outside of the liberal arts tradition and the tradition of the learned mirror-for-princes currently in vogue. Conceptually, Richard is not only limiting the scope of his text (there will be no amusing anecdotes or miracle stories interwoven here) but claiming that governance is itself a science distinct from the intellectual world that its practitioners have conventionally sprung from. Son of a bishop he may be, but Richard fitz Nigel advocates in these statements an occupational hierarchy enshrining secular work as a stepping-stone for success. He notes that the barons of the exchequer are king's confidants, yet he stresses that it is their official work in the financial department and not their curial counsel that creates and safeguards common law (21-23).[67] Richard desires clarity of language not because his audience is ill-educated, but because here the line of genre is drawn that will separate his administrative ideology from other court groups in order to claim a bureaucratic identity.

What little has been said about Richard's criticism of rhetoricians has implied that he follows John of Salisbury in denouncing the latter's "Cornificians," or scholastics who neglect grammatical training and move too quickly onto logic. Commentators thus typically interpret Richard alongside his contemporaries at the court of Henry II "performing variations on the themes…which were familiar to their circle," namely that scholastics and *moderni* master academic subjects only

[67] He says of Richard of Ilchester, Bishop of Winchester, that "he is a great man and his occupations should be great as well" and that "being so important he is busy with many matters," including overseeing the pipe roll's production (41).

superficially and hide their ignorance within aureate logical language.[68] In his study of monetization and commercialization in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* and the *Dialogue of the Exchequer,* Nederman argues that the two texts appear quite different on the surface but ultimately advocate the same principles: money can be helpful to a king and kingdom, but must be carefully controlled to avoid avarice among the powerful, and morality must guide the actions of king and administrator.[69] Clanchy also examines the work of John, Richard, and Peter of Blois and determines that Richard largely follows along the prevailing view that logic-obsessed scholastics' language was not appropriate for practical writing.[70] Hudson mentions *Metalogicon* as he explains that "contempt for intellectual subtlety" was not uncommon at this age, and stresses Richard's avowal to avoid novelties.[71] John was perhaps the most outspoken critic at the time of pseudo-intellectuals, and so it stands to reason that Richard, who became Treasurer the year after John's two largest works appeared in 1159, the *Policraticus* and *Metalogicon*, would know of them to some degree. Richard's claims are superficially similar to John's, using important buzzwords such as the divide between "subtilia" and "utilia" and the claim that other writers use wordplay to "avoid seeming to know too little about many things" (9).[72]

On their own, these statements might be an elementary attempt by a man

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[68] Michael Clanchy, "*Moderni* in Education and Government in England," *Speculum* 50 (1975): 678.
[69] Cary Nederman, "The Origins of 'Policy': Fiscal Administration and Economic Principles in Later Twelfth-Century England," in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West, 1100-1540*, ed. Constant J. Mews and others (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 151, 167.
[70] Clanchy, "*Moderni*," 677-8.
[71] Hudson, "Perceptions of the Past," 78n15.
[72] Clanchy discusses the conventional distinction between the subtle and useful, and *Metalogicon*'s role in popularizing this notion in the twelfth century, in "*Moderni*," 671, 675, 678.

without advanced continental training to engage with a commonplace discourse maintained among Westminster administrators and literati. If it suited him to be fashionable, Richard might try to mimic the prologues of these exemplars, their modesty tropes, their claims about the importance of writing, their specific censure of enemies. But a close reading of Richard's criticisms suggests mockery more so than mimicry, and there is a teasing sarcasm, if not contempt, in Richard's comments about his own writing style and the book he produces that appear to respond in a critical way to John's prefatory material. Nederman also recognizes an undercurrent of criticism in the *Dialogue* aimed at John of Salisbury's "idealism," but does not pursue it, instead focusing on their shared moral-economic ethos.[73] John makes a blunt yet passionate assessment of royal servants and their inherent mischievousness, pointing specifically to taxmen's rapaciousness and greed and judges' proclivity toward taking bribes. He speaks of the likelihood that access to money will lead them to indulge in self-interest over the public or king's welfare.[74] Bureaucratic avarice means that "the dishonesty of court officials is so well known that it is in vain for a suitor to place his trust in the testimony of his conscience…without the intervention of a bribe."[75] John urges the king to oversee administrators to keep them honest; because "it is impossible to seek justice and money at one and the same time," officials without close supervision will fail to carry out their jobs properly and justice will

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[73] Nederman, "Origins of 'Policy,'" 151.
[74] Nederman discusses John's criticisms in ibid., 152, 155-60. He refers to Books 4-6 of the *Policraticus* for passages critical of administrators, but especially 4.5, 5.9-11, 5.15-17, and 6.1.
[75] Nederman quotes this passage from *Policraticus* 5.9 and discusses John's vision of the king's relationship with his ministers (ibid., 155-60). *Policraticus* Books 5-6 cover royal regulation of servants, and 5.10 treats bribes.

suffer.[76] No doubt Richard took offense to this denigration of courtiers and administrators, especially as a finance official who had deep knowledge of the truth of the exchequer's diligence and loyalty.

Richard's emphatic discussions of exchequer officials' dedication to the king's advantage, discussed above, might spring from his resentment towards John's imagining of the king requiring a suspicious and antagonistic attitude toward administrators. Richard maintains that all exchequer employees are in their nature loyal and dedicated to their work, keeping the king's welfare always in mind. Far from tending towards self-interest, Richard and his colleagues have a respectful if not collegial relationship with their king. Within the prologue to *Policraticus* John of Salisbury opines that kings and other luminaries would not exist if not for the preserving qualities of writers: "therefore, there is no better counsel to those who seek glory than to be worthy of the greatest thanks of men of letters and of scribes."[77] If John was asking for the attention and patronage of Becket and even Henry II by issuing vague warnings about various types of threatening persons at court, Richard in turn presents the news that exchequer employees certainly have received their thanks from the monarch: "Henry II always makes a special effort to increase the honour of those who serve him, knowing full well that benefits bestowed on his followers will secure the glory of his name with titles of immortal fame" (95). John's advice won't go very far with a monarch who already recognizes his servants' competence and allegiance. John might "regret that at the moment almost twelve years have been squandered,

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[76] Nederman quotes this passage from *Policraticus* 5.9 in ibid.,155.
[77] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 3.

despite excessive training for a different life" because of time spent at court, but Richard dwells on how his own training—much of it having happened in the very environs that John dismisses—has prepared him perfectly for this bureaucratic life for which he has received ample reward.[78] Regarding bribes, an important topic for John, when Richard discusses the practice of suitors paying money to king or judges before a court case, he insists that such payments are not bribes but a conventional means of ensuring functionaries receive an income that will keep justice expeditious (181). When Magister pre-empts Discipulus's presumptive accusation about the Crown "sell[ing] justice for money" (181), we might imagine Richard having John's statements or something similar in mind.

Richard's moments of humbly averring to be a poor writer also reflect possible satire of similar moments in John's prologues. John attacked rhetors whose embellished jargon hid more than it elucidated, and claimed his own prose lacked "the eloquence that is known to please."[79] His treatises overflow with "uncultured language," supposedly, and "that my utterance is unpolished is proved by its very style."[80] Yet John certainly had command of an ornate writing style, and had earned his reputation as one of the greatest composers of the twelfth century long before modern historians began commenting on it. To a reader, especially one like Richard without an advanced degree and limited ability to distinguish literary styles in the texts he reads, such condemnations of aureation from a pen like John's may have appeared hypocritical. Given the

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[78] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 4.
[79] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 5.
[80] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 5; *Metalogicon* (Hall), Prologue, 121.

obvious learning of contemporary writers at or within the orbit of Henry II's court, Richard might have realized that any attempt of his would suffer from comparison, and so he makes a joke about John's modesty claims within his own. When Discipulus dismisses potential critics of Magister's speech by offering a parable from the Book of John, "'He who is without sin' in his own writings may 'cast the first stone'" (71), Richard might be recommending to John and his ilk that they take another look at their own prose before condemning the puffed-up language of Cornificians. Richard promises that he will truly be hiding no ignorance or mistruths, and his simple style will serve as guarantor. Richard has real reason to worry about how his book will be received, while to a reader of this practical text with knowledge of other contemporary writing, it is John who comes across as crass with his modesty statements. John does the very thing Richard warns about twice—coin neologisms—with the very titles of his texts: "As it has undertaken the defence of logic, my book is entitled *Metalogicon*."[81] *Metalogicon*, *Policraticus*, and *Entheticus* were all so named out of John's desire to craft a Latinate title drawing from Greek.[82] The opening to the *Dialogue*'s second book might also be a satirical reference to *Policraticus*'s proem, which celebrates the "pleasurable…pursuit of letters."[83] John later apologizes that his text will sound "plebeian," like the "shrill sound upon rustic pipes."[84] Magister opens his book by

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[81] *Metalogicon* (Hall), Prologue, 120. Richard's Discipulus asks Magister to "avoid made-up words…so that your basic instructions would not be complicated by strange new words" (*Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 69-71); earlier he says "while it's fine to invent new expressions, please don't be embarrassed to use the conventional names of things, so that unfamiliar words don't produce new difficulties" (9).
[82] Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 43-4, 51.
[83] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 3.
[84] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 5.

speaking at length on “the pleasant work of learning” and how finding learning to be a burden will lead to spiritual decay (103-5). Worried by Discipulus’s silence, Magister cries: “I was afraid your long silence meant you were about to burst out laughing at my rough style, or that perhaps you were quietly figuring out how you could extract yourself from the conversation” (105).

In *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus*’s prologues John excuses his lack of polish by dramatizing the great amount of work he is faced with and how difficult it is to find time to write. He is kept from his task by “those affairs of court by which I am distracted to the extent that one is allowed hardly any time to write.”[85] While writing *Metalogicon*,

> “I was scarcely able to spare from my necessary occupations more than the time allotted to refreshment and sleep, since…there devolves upon me the responsibility for ecclesiastical cases throughout the whole of Britain. In addition, responsibility for the management of the household, and the trifling avocations of the court, excluded study. Almost all of my attention was taken up by interruptions from friends.”[86]

Richard’s avowals of his own busyness with the “the important business of the exchequer” (53) throughout the *Dialogue* may not have been inspired entirely by John, but one cannot help but notice that though Richard is also very preoccupied, this entire text is premised on the fact that he like John was interrupted and gladly took the time to indulge the friend and come to his aid. To Richard, administration is necessarily the work of responding to interruption, and writing is not a chore but integral to his duties—however novel the treatise-writing task might be. Instead of parroting John’s insistence in *Metalogicon* that

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[85] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 7.
[86] *Metalogicon* (Hall), Prologue, 121.

Cornificians seem to produce intricate and learned logical arguments yet are in reality under-educated, Richard's line about practitioners of the liberal arts wishing that "the arts will seem more difficult" (9) might be a jab against John's assertion throughout his text that grammar is actually difficult if done properly.

Beyond seeming hypocritical by couching complaints about scholastics within his own ornamented phrases, John of Salisbury's writing may have seemed to Richard to epitomize the "obscure language" that clouds didactic writing.[87] Richard received his education at a monastic school in Ely, and may not have been inclined or qualified to distinguish between new and old traditions of Continental education. And if he did, John's own writing sought to number him among modern logicians, so as to better make his case for the proper education of logicians, as we have seen.[88] It stands to reason that Richard viewed John as emblematic of the sort of problem an exchequer official may have believed royal government to be facing, namely improper and insufficiently-informed governance advice. Though a longtime ecclesiastical administrator John did little directly for the central government. Historians believe Richard's statements about clergy working for the king are direct references to Becket's predicament,[89] and if this is the case, he may have taken issue with Becket's abrupt removal from court and royal administration when he became archbishop. After all, Richard celebrates the fact that the exchequer board convenes together "the kingdom's greater and more prudent men of both the church and the court" (23), and he

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[87] *Dialogus de Scaccario* (Amt), 9; Nederman, "Origins of 'Policy,'" 151.
[88] See Chapter 2.
[89] This was the stance of the *Dialogue*'s 1902 editors (see *Dialogus de Scaccario* [Amt], 5n12 and Hudson, "Perceptions of the Past," 83n47).

would have known that John's *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus* were seemingly intended to influence Becket away from court. Under the *Dialogue*'s paradigm clergy could be an important asset to the central administration, and there was no reason to lose this asset when personnel received ecclesiastical promotion. Richard may have seen the older practice of clergy employed at court and the newer phenomenon of school graduates flooding into administrative positions as one in the same, equally disruptive of established traditions of service like his own family's.

Though historians have come to recognize in John a conservative force who affected support for Aristotelian logic in order to convince the next generation of scholars of the importance of studying grammar and rhetoric,[90] John's proclamations in his prologues may offer an indication of what Richard actually knew about him. *Metalogicon* purports to be an exposition on Aristotle, and Richard may not have been educated enough to recognize that John was not actually as thoroughly versed in Aristotelian logic as other contemporaries and offered little new on this subject.[91] John targets new learning and scholasticism, yet states in *Metalogicon*'s prologue that he defends them both: "With the schoolmen I ought to have won favour already, for what they are…I defend with all the advocacy at my command." Regarding logic, he hopes others will bolster his own argumentation "and sway the judge in his official capacity to

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[90] Stephen Jaeger says of John that his mental universe was the past age, and although he was sometimes in the middle of "the affairs and conflicts of his own time, he thought, felt, and wrote in modes that were outdated" ("John of Salisbury," 500). See also Jaeger, "Pessimism in the Twelfth-Century 'Renaissance,'" *Speculum* 78 (2003): 1151-83.
[91] Jaeger, "Pessimism," 1170; Rodney Thomson, "John of Salisbury and William of Malmesbury: Currents in Twelfth-Century Humanism," in Wilks, *World of John of Salisbury*, 118-19.

bring in a verdict for the logicians."[92] Regarding *moderni,* he has "no hesitation in preferring [them] to the ancients."[93] If Richard was aware of and concurred with the current of clerical thought that distrusted scholasticism and *moderni*, an uncareful reading of John's texts—or at least the first few folia—may have led Richard to see *Metalogicon* and *Policraticus* as prime examples of an inflated expression of political advice with no real bearing on governance.[94] John might very well have come across to a less-educated reader as akin to his own nemesis, Abelard, whose *Sic et Non* seemed to place knowledge and truth on the foundation of quicksand.[95] We have seen the extent of Richard's concern for accuracy and clarity in documents, and can imagine his distaste for lengthy prologues that find a dozen different ways to express the author's purpose. Richard does not follow John in censuring novelties, as Hudson claims, but despairs that novelties are so commonly the subject of available books. Richard suggests that because novelties are so common in writing, it may not be appropriate for him to pen something quite different, "about these things that we perceive with the physical senses"—namely, "useful things" (7, 9). John's *Policraticus* weds a critique of frivolities to political commentary by insisting that

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[92] *Metalogicon* (Hall), Prologue, 120.
[93] *Metalogicon* (Hall), Prologue, 122.
[94] Milliman states that "Richard was self-consciously and proudly a traditionalist and not a "modern" in part because attention to the exchequer's history and traditions revealed the important role of his own family ("Games and Governance," 67). Richardson's characterization of Fitz Nigel's personality and career hints that he was not an especially accomplished scholar nor well-connected politically: "While his father lived Richard seems to have been completely overshadowed officially; and…there is nothing to suggest that he had any marked force of character or that at any period in his career, civil or ecclesiastical, he was of any political consequence….he was no great churchman and his episcopate was in no way remarkable" ("Richard fitz Neal," 166). Amt makes a similar evaluation ("Introduction," xv).
[95] See Clanchy, "*Moderni*," 677 for attitudes toward Abelard.

an avoidance of them is essential to any practitioner of governance or law. Yet, one can't help noticing alongside Richard that his text overflows with the *nugae* he wishes to declaim against. It was also men like John, Peter of Blois, and Walter Map who were writing the mirrors for princes at the time, rather than John's "Cornificians," that might have struck Richard during his treasurership as missing the mark of what was a real need for practical writing. Richard draws genre lines and situates his text by showing how it does not participate in the typical political theory of the time.

Regarding both Richard's satirization of John's writing style and his feelings on changes in government, two odd references in *Dialogue of the Exchequer* to the author's "detractor" might also be a subtle reference to John's organizing of his prologues around his need to respond to his enemy. *Metalogicon* opens with John opining the inevitability of receiving criticism from his "detractors," and then declaring that he is writing the current text as a response to his "rival."[96] *Policraticus* likewise draws battle lines between himself (accompanied by all wise philosophers) and detractors and enemies who "will not…be quiet" unless he lays down his case effectively in textual form.[97] Richard's references to an unnamed detractor are rather mysterious, and he interrupts Book 1 of his *Dialogue* to call them out for enviously "tear[ing him] to pieces" (69). He returns to these detractors at the end of the text, saying they mock him for his authorial inadequacies (193). It is unclear whether these were enemies in reality or just in principal, but Magister insists that the detractors

[96] *Metalogicon* (Hall), Prologue, 119, 120-1.
[97] *Policraticus* (Nederman), Prologue, 6-7.

question the very existence of a text like the *Dialogue*. As fictional characters, these antagonists may be the school-trained administrators Magister and Discipulus criticize for being caught up in obscuring language. Such potential readers cause Magister to be "afraid to write a book" about practical matters, because it might be beneath readers' contempt (7). When Magister later interrupts his lesson to address the detractors, it is at this point that he repeats his defense of his plainspoken tone and calls out the detractors' "own writings" as if they are learned composers. But Richard may also have faced real opposition to his writing project. At the *Dialogue*'s end, Richard anticipates "my detractors" who will criticize his text "when, over time, many doubtful and unprecedented questions arise. And when no answers are found here for them or similar ones, they will begin to mock me, saying, 'This person began to build and could not finish it,' or did not know how to do so" (191-3). These passages may be a tongue-in-cheek evocation of John's rather grandiloquent tone in his prefaces, and they may also be an extension of Richard's thought process as he worked out his text's genre and purposes. The detractors—real or straw men—perhaps represented an administrative cadre suspicious of the move from memory to written record.

If Richard did define himself in opposition to clergy or laymen close to the king who did not have extensive practical administrative experience, it may in part have been because twelfth-century intellectuals typically considered that "education and professional training were different things," which was a principle

stretching back to ancient times.[98] In turn, graduates with legal training "claimed that their subject was superior to the traditional seven liberal arts because it had practical applications."[99] Though separated by a vast educational gulf, Richard may have sympathized with scholastics for the reason John despised them—they, like administrators who learned from family and on the job, received job training not a liberal arts background. On the other hand, devoted clerics were criticizing administrators for this reason—for instance Gerald of Wales dismissed Hubert Walter, an important administrative figure coming into his own around the time Richard fitz Nigel took a smaller role at the exchequer, for having as his "academy" the exchequer.[100] Very many school and university graduates in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries studied canon and civil law, and available evidence reveals that a large number of these men found employment in royal and seigneurial governments, including as the sort of private clerks that officials brought with them to exchequer sessions.[101] What set law masters apart from theologians was their immanent practicality, which even dissenters like John of Salisbury and Peter of Blois couldn't deny—as Clanchy points out, they both studied and practiced law for ecclesiastical clients.[102] But more and more, legal scholars were not pursuing a well-rounded course of study like John and Peter had, and they exemplified the perfunctory education that sage administrators scorned. John argued, in a text published the year before Richard fitz Nigel

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[98] Clanchy, "*Moderni*," 687.
[99] Ibid., 686.
[100] Clanchy, *Written Record*, 72-3.
[101] Clanchy, "*Moderni*," 681, 684-5; Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 103, 104.
[102] Clanchy, "*Moderni*," 682.

became Treasurer, that he who undermines the trivium "tears apart the bonds of human society," and he asks, "What authoritative control will there be in matters of belief or morals?"[103] Richard answers this question by penning a manual for a new sort of administrator, one whose fierce loyalty to his king and enrichment by a long line of inherited administrators' knowledge will create in them the "authoritative control" England needs in this new era of record-keeping.

Administrators' clerical identity is still important under Richard's paradigm, for exchequer personnel serve as the moral safeguards John asks for. In the *Dialogue* the exchequer takes on spiritual significance. Magister insists to his interlocutor that study of administrative procedures reveals "flowers of mystic meaning among the thistles of worldly matters. Indeed, holy mysteries can be found hiding not only in the things you have just noticed, but in the whole account of the exchequer" (39). In the vein of Domesday Book, Magister states that exchequer records are involved in the kingdom's final reckoning, that its personnel procedures "are symbols of the strict accounting that will be revealed when the books of all are opened and the door shut" (39). Discipulus's final question at the treatise's end requests Magister to explain what he meant, about how "the whole description of the exchequer conceals sacred truths that are to be revealed when the books of all are opened and the gates are closed" (191). Magister demurs, claiming there is too little time and his student is already over-burdened with information. In this way Richard suggests that close study of his manual will repay a reader who wishes to understand the position of finance

[103] *Metalogicon* (Hall), 1.1, 126-7.

officials in what has long been a personal form of kingship in England, under which paradigm a monarch and his barons represent moral governance and a manifestation of God's will. Richard wishes to ascribe to his administrative work meaning beyond a mere accounting of monies, and he sees the exchequer system as ensuring that "everyone's rights can be safeguarded…if its procedures are followed in all matters" (5). The secular accounting done at court or in Westminster's administrative departments not only works towards England or Henry II's heavenly reward, but the reward of all.

Richard casts business work as holy labor in much the same vein as the Benedictine Rule, urging industriousness on Discipulus to avoid dangerous idleness (105). Following this principle Richard describes his kinsmen Roger and Nigel as holy men. Roger of Salisbury initially came to Henry I's attention in his parish church, and "God's grace" led the king to bring this unknown into his court (65).[104] Richard comments: "You might say that in him was fulfilled what is written: 'The grace of the Holy Spirit knows no slow works'" (65, quoting Ambrose about Luke). This cleric is the fulfillment of a Christian king's need not only for a minister, but a quick and efficient minister. We also see Richard conceptualizing of God's plan manifesting in the working of governance. Nigel of Ely's "calling" intertwines his spiritual and administrative skills and duties, and his restructuring of law after civil war was akin to the work of "Ezra, the careful restorer of Scripture" (77). Here, administration and the development of administration—and perhaps by extension also the pipe roll and Richard's own text—are akin to

[104] For the early life of Roger, see B. R. Kemp, "Salisbury, Martin of (*d.* 1139)," in Matthew, Harrison, and Cannadine, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Scripture. Richard also draws attention to his own identity when he refers Discipulus to laymen to learn more about benefit of clergy, “so that I am not accused of making up laws and favouring men of my own sort” (187). Richard’s model administrators are clearly clergy, and benefit from this background. Yet Richard also does not shy away from affirming that royal service is what led to Church promotions. Roger of Salisbury became bishop because his royal service caused him to “[grow] in favour with prince and church and people” (65). We have already seen Richard’s description of Richard of Ilchester’s diligence “before he was promoted” to the see of Winchester (41). At this time Richard fitz Nigel had not yet received a bishop’s mitre of his own, but his idea of an ideal career progression for a bishop involves many years of loyal royal service in an involved administrative capacity. Unlike the men who wrote of sage administrators moving on to dedicated ecclesiastical work once they had honed their administrative skills in the secular sphere, Richard idealizes figures who remained in their official positions once made bishop. After his elevation to the see of Winchester in 1173, Richard of Ilchester continued to serve Henry, dying six months before his monarch. He advanced because of his usefulness to administrative business, and Church offices were his reward. The same can be said about Roger and Nigel. In this way, the *Dialogue* echoes the sentiments of one Continental legal scholar who studied *ars dictaminis* instead of liberal arts: “those who follow the science of *dictamen* come to kings, and by kings are made prelates of the church.”[105]

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[105] Clanchy, “*Moderni*,” 686, quoting a model student letter from Orleans.

Though one of Magister's lessons is that "I've told you what actually happens, not what perhaps ought to happen" (159), to an extent we see him prescribe ideals involving the perfection of administrative labor. Much like he outlines an administrative lineage that envisions himself benefitting from his forebears' experience and his own acolytes receiving his knowledge, Richard also constructs a lineage of ideal monarchs by extolling Henry II's ancestors and projecting forward: "long live his noble offspring, subject to their father and not unlike him, and, because they were born to rule over nations, may they learn from…their father's example" (117). Paired with an ideal succession of kings is an ideal succession of civil servants. Third, he envisions a textual lineage springing from his efforts, a means by which administrative manuals might grow and develop alongside English bureaucracy. Just as he recognizes his is a work without precedent, he imagines it becoming precedent for a line of further work: "I have laid my axe to wild and untouched woodland, cutting timber for royal buildings, to be planed by more skilful builders. And when a royal palace arises from that wood, he who started it shall deserve, if not the greatest thanks, at least the first" (191-3). Notably, the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* appeared alongside other manuals in the *Red Book of the Exchequer*, which exchequer clerk Alexander of Swerford compiled around 1230.[106] Richard's dearest wish, we can see, was fulfilled in the form of not only the afterlife of his own text but the development of an exchequer textual tradition, the "palace" situated on his foundations. Though a textual tradition can be more thorough than an individual

[106] Amt, "Introduction," xiv.

text, Richard still envisions his administrative world as one in which humans and their memories are indispensable. A network of bureaucrats transmitting their knowledge is key: “as far as explaining precisely the various questions that will come up over time, neither human strength nor even, perhaps, a human life will suffice. For systematic instruction, at least as we know it, cannot cover a miscellany of unusual cases” (191). The difficult work of the exchequer remains the informed debate and decision-making, not the treatise-writing.

The dialogue mechanism, then, proved continually useful to Richard as a means of asking what exchequer work *means*, what its ultimate purpose is, as he lists positions and procedures. As he wrote his *Dialogue* Richard contended with changes in English society and government, such as the proliferation of documents and the increasingly common employment of clergy and school graduates in secular administration. He wrote about what it meant to him to be an administrator in these changing times, a man who was also a member of other socio-cultural groups including the clergy and nobility. To Richard, “the exchequer operates by its own laws” (5), a department essential to government operations yet a discrete world whose internal hierarchy and transmitted instructional history belonged to personnel who could profit from it.[107] Even the upper exchequer was a world of its own, distinct from the lower “by their different duties” (4). Richard fitz Nigel takes ownership of a place in this world by writing himself into it—into the pipe rolls, into exchequer audits—and writing his inscription of the pipe rolls into his administrative manual. Richard writes himself

[107] Exchequer law trumps even such an atavistic law as the “laws of arithmetic” (37).

into a text, writes himself into the doing of current and future exchequer business, ensuring his continual presence in front of a reader. Each reading of the text revives the work of doing and the work of writing, its own official and archival task. The writing-down of wisdom and experience marks the conceptualization of an administrative occupational sphere possessing a textual authority. To this late twelfth-century administrator, duties determine the man, and Discipulus brags about his skill to "judge [men's] rank by their responsibilities" (25). In some ways, Richard's *Dialogue* reveals genuine uncertainty as to which duties are covered by whom and why, and how private households bleed into the public sphere.[108] But within his text, if not in real life, Richard seems sure of himself, of his administrative self: he is Treasurer, located at the exchequer board to the right of the chief justiciar, or one further seat over when the Bishop of Winchester attends. To his own right sits his clerk (27). All around him sit a dozen other officials each in his appropriate place. Situated in this way, Richard fixes his role in the upper exchequer chamber during a biannual audit, and seeks to ascertain his role in the broader administration and its changing culture with respect to this fixed point. Writing offers Richard a chance to participate in the formation of this unfolding society, recording not only the past but its future.

Legisperitus: The Emergence of Common-Law Texts

Following the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* was a succession into the thirteenth

[108] Regarding the treasury doorkeeper, for instance, Richard hypothesizes that he is unpaid because he performs this public duty as a private servant of an exchequer official and received wages thusly (19).

century of legal textbooks that served the growing ranks of legal scholars, judges, pleaders, attorneys, and their clerks (who were likely aspiring lawmen themselves). *Tractatus de legibus et consuetudinibus regni Angliae*, the treatise commonly referred to as *Glanvill*, is often considered with the *Dialogue* as the earliest examples of the "administrative manual."[109] It was written from 1187 to 1189, and is in general more practically-focused than the *Dialogue*, described as free from "the reminiscences of a retired statesman" and "literary pretensions" like we find in Fitz Nigel's text.[110] Yet it also was not an elementary textbook, and assumed a good deal of knowledge on the part of its readers. Turner might be right that "the increasing litigation of his decade made necessary some handbook to guide newcomers to the bench,"[111] but *Glanvill* remained a reference work rather than a substitute for formal or informal education—part of a process of determining what a judicial occupation was, before a textbook for this occupation could be conceived of. *Glanvill* appeared about a generation before law books began to flourish in the thirteenth century and was, much like the *Dialogue*, fairly unprecedented. Earlier legal texts in England like the *Leges Henrici Primi* and the *Leis Willelme* were different in that they laid out criminal law, while *Glanvill* is more interested in writs and other documents that drive civil litigation in the royal courts.[112] Historians view the *Dialogue* as a sort of model for it, though, as

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[109] Hudson, Perceptions of the Past," 77.
[110] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 99, 102. Hall's "Introduction" gives a more refined time of composition between 29 Nov 1187 and 6 July 1189, Henry II's death (xxxi).
[111] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 99-100.
[112] Hall, "Introduction," discusses previous law texts (xiii-xviii, xxxiii-xl) and provides an overview of *Glanvill*'s contents (xviii-xxvii) which reveals the extent to which the author supplemented his procedural guide with essays on substantive law. In Turner's words, "The work is preoccupied with procedure, although the author often drifts into discussions of substantive law" ("Author of

Glanvill's author seems to have been familiar with this text and possibly its author too. The *Glanvill*-author is more systematic than was Richard fitz Nigel, yet the earlier text's contents and function may have been a conceptual inspiration to assess an administrative department and its need for a handbook.[113] In the 1220s, *Glanvill* itself became a model when another royal justice embarked on a similar law text, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae*, or *Bracton*. Its author relied heavily on *Glanvill* for content, but he did not simply update this preceding text. *Glanvill*'s author was learned in Roman and canon law but the *Bracton*-author's organizational approach reflects the new generation's increased familiarity with civil law codes and their applicability to structuring common law.[114] This text was added to and revised until around 1256 and likely only circulated in the following decade, but both it and *Glanvill* continued to be the basis for new

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Glanvill," 100-1). Turner evaluates Anglo-Norman *ordines* and decretal collections as well, but neither of these could have been a true model for *Glanvill* (100-1).

[113] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 99, 101-2; Hall, "Introduction," xxxii, xxxvi, lix, lxi.

[114] Paul Brand, "The Age of Bracton," in *The History of English Law: Centenary Essays on Pollock and Maitland*, ed. John Hudson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 83. Contention continues as to the text's date and author, but Brand's argumentation appears the most sound. He summarizes previous evidence offered by *Bracton*'s editor Samuel Thorne and others and supplements with his own to show that most of the text was in place by 1236 while some passages suggest composition as far back as the late 1220s. It would be a stretch for Henry Bracton to have written the bulk, then, but the timing is right for him to have taken over the manuscript when Raleigh was promoted to Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1234 or when Raleigh became bishop in 1239. Material added after this point includes court cases overseen by Raleigh but mostly by Bracton, dating into the 1250s (65-79; idem, "The Date and Authorship of *Bracton*: A Response," *Journal of Legal History* 31 [2010]: 217-44). It is not known if anyone else saw or made use of the manuscript before Bracton's death in 1268, when it was found among his possessions, borrowed, and copied ("Age of Bracton," 74; "Date and Authorship," 241-2). *Bracton*'s author appears to have used Azo of Bologna's *Summa Institutionum*, a gloss on Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, as a model for organization and content. F. W. Maitland, ed. *Select Passages from the Works of Bracton and Azo* (London: Quaritch, 1895); Cary Nederman, "Bracton on Kingship Revisited," *History of Political Thought* 5 (1984): 72. Maitland had thought *Bracton*'s reliance on civil law was minimal, but editor Thorne describes the eventual process of discovering the author's intensive legal knowledge. Samuel E. Thorne, "Translator's Introduction," in *Bracton de Legibus et Consuetudinibus Anglie. Bracton on the Laws and Customs of England*, ed. George E. Woodbine, trans. and rev. Samuel E. Thorne (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1968-77), 1:xxxii.

law books into the next century.[115]

Glanvill and *Bracton* deal with common law procedure, the province of itinerant royal judges as well as the Exchequer of Pleas, the financial operations of which institutional body had been detailed in the *Dialogue of the Exchequer.* After the Common Bench and King's Bench eventually emerged, these court systems continued for a time to have overlapping jurisdictions, with justices often gaining experience in the lower courts before appointment to King's Bench, and all hearing civil trials relevant to material discussed in *Glanvill* and *Bracton*.

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[115] Over thirty *Glanvill* manuscripts are extant, dating from 1200 into the fourteenth century, and divide between alpha and beta versions that represent a major revision—of prose, more so than substance, though with attempts at rubrics to increase the text's utility (Hall, "Introduction," xl-xli, xlviii-xlix, lix-lxv). Later periods of revision seem to date to around 1230 and 1260, with continued variation in glossing, rubrication, and textual divisions, what Hall calls an "improving zeal" (xlix, lv). Another sign that there was "much interest in the treatise" was its copying into manuscripts with other texts, including chronicles and various legal materials, and including a few probably owned by chancery clerks (lv-lvii). Richardson, "Glanville Continued," *Law Quarterly Review* 54 (1938): 381-99 and Maitland, "Glanvill Revised," in *Collected Papers of Frederic William Maitland*, ed. H. A. L. Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 2:266-89 are two attempts to trace the afterlives of this text using manuscripts it appears in. Southern calls *Glanvill* "an extremely fluid text" and examines a manuscript that clearly belonged to the exchequer in the thirteenth century. "A Note on the Text of 'Glanville', De Legibus Consuetudinibus Regni Angliae," *English Historical Review* 65 (1950): 86. Around the middle of the thirteenth century, a Scottish writer used *Glanvill* as the basis of his *Regiam Maiestatem* (Hall, "Introduction," lx-lxi). *Bracton*'s author recognized the dual nature of *Glanvill*, the writ forms and procedures and the commentary on substantive law that its author does not seem to have planned on including, and the *Bracton*-author included both sorts of content with a clearer organization (lix). See Thorne, "Translator's Introduction," for the text's revision history. Copy and error patterns indicate that users, with their own priorities and perspectives, rather than professional copyists were creating manuscript copies; "the text was being continually revised and emended" (xv) and there are many examples of a manuscript following more than one exemplar, showing that multiple versions circulated among Westminster lawmen at once (xv). In the late 1200s "copies became plentiful" (xv) with around 50 extant today (xxiv). In the late thirteenth century *Fleta*'s author abridged *Bracton* and *Britton* drew on it heavily (Hall, "Introduction," lxi; Brand, "Date and Authorship, 236). Legal text preferences were changing, however, and although someone did translate *Glanvill* into French in the second half of the thirteenth century, by this point both Glanvill and Bracton were somewhat outdated and replaced by French texts of a different tenor (Hall, "Introduction," lviii, lxii). Hall claims *Glanvill* "was overshadowed and outdated by *Bracton*" (lxii) but Richardson argues that the former was always the more popular, that it "continued to be a useful book from the day it was written until well over a hundred years had passed, long after copies of *Bracton*, which should have superseded it, had been multiplied. I suspect…that *Bracton* was beyond the purse, as well as above the heads, of many who wanted a text-book of English law, and that the earlier and smaller book contented them, provided it were brought reasonably up to date" ("Glanville Continued," 381).

Together these texts represent a continued interest in and development of many of the currents first aired in the *Dialogue.* They champion the English king's God-given place as lawgiver, celebrate the hardworking civil servant's devotion to his king, set forth principles of education and collaboration for judicial personnel that foreground familial endowment, and defend the nature of an unwritten national law upheld by the minds and bodies of its protectors—common law practitioners. Though both texts take the name of a supposed author, authorship and date of composition are not certain. Anonymity is not an uncommon trait of medieval books due to either intention or historical loss, yet in the decades before and after the turn of the thirteenth century claims to authorship had become an "established norm," a "manifestation of a self-consciousness" important to Latin authors like William of Malmesbury and Gerald of Wales.[116] The authors' willingness to remain obscure, as well as users' desire to fix an author, can reveal the purposes or importance of the treatises and the law they record. Regarding the earlier *Glanvill* especially, it is significant both that a number of men in the final quarter of the twelfth century were relatively accomplished and capable enough to have potentially attempted such a production, and that the true author of such an unprecedented book could yet have gone unrecorded.[117] Examination of the prologues suggests, we shall see, their composers' priority to mark out the parameters of legal study and practice and the relationship between law and legal practitioner, and to foreground law and justice as impartial entities

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[116] David Rollo, *Glamorous Sorcery: Magic and Literacy in the High Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 115-16.
[117] Turner counts thirteen men just among royal judges who in the late 1180s were active enough to have had experience to potentially write a law book ("Author of *Glanvill*," 16).

served by individuals yet not relying on judicial personalities for their existence. Do ascriptions to Bracton and Glanvill reveal users' need to pair a respectable and renowned figure with a text, a discomfort with text standing alone without a named, undergirding authority?

Glanvill's ascription became canonical due to an incipit that Turner believes was added only in the thirteenth century.[118] It is important to note that this incipit does not name Glanvill as author but as justiciar at the time of writing, praising his reputation, fixing the text in the era when Henry II ruled and "justice was under the direction of the illustrious Rannulf Glanvill, the most learned of that time in the law and ancient customs of the realm."[119] Ranulf Glanvill was the most eminent jurist when *Glanvill* appeared, and his death in 1190 would have left him unable to deny authorship in the early thirteenth century yet left his reputation for growing—even founding—English common law alive enough to fix him as emblematic of common law's great period of institutional efflorescence.[120] His authorship was plausible, but the incipit's creator was more interested in labeling the treatise's utility rather than author. Its authority sprang from the milieu rather than identity of its creator, and its importance was that it captured law as it stood under Glanvill, a base line for lawmen practicing decades later. The incipit labeled not the author but the text's contents, then, using the former justiciar's name to vouch for the importance of the writ forms and commentaries

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[118] Ibid., 111; Hall, "Introduction," xlvii.
[119] *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*, ed. and trans. G. D. G. Hall, rev. Michael Clanchy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 1. Future references give English-language page numbers in this facing-page translation, and I will use parenthetical citations throughout this section.
[120] Roger of Howden's chronicle remarked on the justiciar "cuius sapientia conditae sunt leges subscriptae quas Anglicanas vocamus" (Turner, Author of *Glanvill*," 112).

contained inside. Not the composer himself but his justiciar was ultimately responsible for both the law as it existed, and the decisions judges under his direction made at trial. Thus we might see in the incipit an understanding of the law itself and not a legal text's author as being of paramount importance.

Henry de Bracton on the other hand did have a hand in his namesake's production, but this attribution had more to do with the fact the manuscript was in his possession upon his death in 1268 than any reputation he had for recording writs and procedures while he was alive. Bracton was significantly less eminent than the likely true author, William Raleigh, a judge whom Bracton had clerked for and inherited the manuscript from, but the circumstances of the text's discovery made its authorship a seeming fact and thus there was no need for its early users and copiers to seek further authority for it.[121] The attribution to Bracton was not an act of interpretation as was *Glanvill*'s naming, yet still served to fix the text in time. By the time of its dissemination, this text, initiated in the 1220s, was clearly out of date, and while earnest attempts were made to bring it up to date, such attempts are themselves evidence that English lawmen were quite aware of how impermanent law codes and praxis were. Though not epochal like Glanvill, Bracton's name anchored this treatise in a conceptual framework of legal and judicial development that was vital for users to evaluate potential anachronisms and inaccuracies in manuscripts. Historians see in these and other

[121] Brand, "Date and Authorship," discusses *Bracton*'s attribution to authorship by various manuscript lenders and borrowers (241-44). After Henry Bracton's death, Chancellor Robert Burnell, bishop of Wells where Bracton died as a canon, had acquired the book. Burnell purchased the book, obtaining it through commercial transaction rather than direct inheritance or gifting, because of its potential use to a civil servant (241).

contemporary legal texts a lack of the historical interest Richard fitz Nigel shows and a fashion for up-to-date references,[122] but even to those uninterested with common law's history, preserving the provenance of any given text through name labels prevented the users' need to unravel the lineage of the contents.

Though *Glanvill*'s authorship is uncertain, its contents and clues about authorship shed light on its consequence to legal development. Most scholars are in agreement that Ranulf de Glanvill was not its author, though other candidates were likewise justiciars and career administrators.[123] Some possible authors have been ruled out in part because, like Ranulf, their lack of sufficient formal education in civil and canon law is at odds with the learning displayed in the text. This uncertainty poses a challenge to any interpretation of the writer's motives, but even if the specific author or authors remain unknown, their characteristics and qualifications are apparent. Historians have advanced different possible identities for *Glanvill*'s author, including law student apprenticing at court, judge's clerk, royal judge, or retired civil servant, all of whom would have motive or access to legal documents, but the consensus is that only a practicing justice and not a trainee or secretary could have compiled the necessary information as well as comment on it to the extent the author does.[124] The author certainly had experience with English courts and exchequer

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[122] Pegues, "*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 551; Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 99.
[123] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 97, 102.
[124] Ibid., 98. Hall had argued that all the candidates whom historians consider were likely too busy with late-career business to find time to write a long book, and so it is possible that "all the attributions have been aimed too high and…the author was a lesser figure. We should, perhaps, be looking for a royal clerk, not necessarily a judge but certainly attending the royal court, possibly a man with some academic training behind him and with his main career yet to come"

operations, and resonances in *Glanvill* to civil and canon law texts, procedures, and terms testify to an extensive knowledge obtained from a cathedral school.[125] An old view posited that the author must be a cleric, in part because of lengthy sermons copied into the text that seemed to have been written by him, but laymen by this date also received the sort of education that would allow them to function as judicial and financial officials.[126] Three contemporaries have, alongside Ranulf Glanvill, received the most scrutiny, all of them sharing similarities that point to *Glanvill*'s author being an important figure in the English judiciary.

Glanvill himself was a layman who served intermittently as sheriff of Yorkshire and Lancashire in the 1160s-80s, as military leader, diplomat and ambassador, itinerant justice, and Chief Justiciar from 1180-89. He was responsible for counseling Henry II regarding judicial reforms, and oversaw the assimilation of some Roman civil law into England's common law.[127] He had a reputation as a reformer and powerful man with influence over the king, and an anecdote about him in Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* suggests he "had intellectual interest," but what can be discerned about his education indicates that

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("Introduction," xxxiii). Turner however concludes that the author must have been further along in his career, a judge during Glanvill's justiciarship ("Author of *Glanvill*, 102).

[125] Hall, "Introduction," xi, xiii, xxxvi, xxxix. For instance, civil law codes offered an example of how to organize a large body of material, and *Glanvill*'s prologue begins with words inspired by Justinian's *Institutes*; "the author shows a clarity of thought that hints at formal study of dialectic, as he makes distinctions in a fashion familiar to readers of scholastic treatises….showing the reader at each point in the proceedings the alternatives that are possible" (Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 104, 106).

[126] Clanchy, "Guide to Further Reading," in Hall and Clanchy, *Glanvill*, lxxxiv; Josiah Cox Russell, "Ranulf de Glanville," *Speculum* 45 (1970): 73; Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 109-10. To meet demand for knights to serve in provincial administration, more and more knighthoods were granted, and sons of this rank turned to civil service in higher numbers (105, 113).

[127] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 110-15; Russell, "Ranulf de Glanville," 76-8; Falls, "Glanville's Formative Years."

he probably did not know enough civil or canon law to have written the book.[128] Ranulf's nephew Hubert Walter also earned a remarkable reputation for learning and justice from his time as a clerk in the exchequer and as Chief Justiciar (1193-98) and Lord Chancellor (1199-1205). Like his uncle he attended the *curia regis* and acted as a royal advisor, but unlike Glanvill Hubert took orders and was elevated to a bishopric in 1189 and archbishopric in 1193. Still, he probably did not attend a cathedral school nor university and therefore was also likely unable to pen *Glanvill*.[129] A third possible author, layman Geoffrey Fitz Peter, was sheriff and then Chief Justiciar from 1198-1213, succeeding Hubert to this post; he was probably too early in his career to have written the treatise.[130] All three of these men were trained through apprenticeship rather than formally.[131] These men offer a similar outlook; Hubert, though an ecclesiastic, was probably not a career cleric at heart—one of those men, like Richard fitz Nigel had been, whom Clanchy categorizes as "put[ting] the interests of the king before those of the church."[132] The likely author, Turner argues, *did* receive a formal school education in civil and canon law, eyre and bench justice Godfrey de Lucy. Yet it is not known what subject he prioritized, and whether he finished a degree in law,

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[128] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 112-15; Clanchy, "*Moderni*," 674. Russell, "Ranulf de Glanville," details Glanvill's appearance in nine contemporary authors (69, 75-6). He strongly supports Glanvill's literary talents, believing that he wrote two other texts (a chronicle *The Conquest of Lisbon* and an "account of an East Anglian shiremoot" around midcentury and thus was a seasoned writer by the time he turned to writing a law book (69-72, 74). Turner doubts Glanvill wrote any of these ("Author of *Glanvill*," 112). There is evidence of Ranulf's father attending provincial courts with his own father, and perhaps he was an early resource for Ranulf to start learning about law and procedure (110; Falls, "Glanville's Formative Years," 316-18).
[129] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 113-14. Hubert grew up in his uncle's household, and so benefitted from a young age from a sort of apprenticeship to the justiciar, which contemporary descriptions of the man bear out (113).
[130] Ibid., 115.
[131] Ibid., 115-16.
[132] Clanchy, *Written Record*, 72.

theology or another field. Instead his experience as the son of a "pioneering" justiciar (Richard de Lucy), as a landowner, as an episcopal administrator at Winchester, and as a judge serving for a time under Ranulf Glanvill, assured he had enough firsthand legal experience to write a handbook of common law writs.[133]

Familiarity with written laws from an education in canon and Roman law may have given the *Glanvill*-author special impetus to record his knowledge about English common law procedure. Though this text appeared only a decade after Richard fitz Nigel's, there is an apparent discomfort here with the unwritten nature of common law that had not appeared in the earlier text. Richard drew attention to acts of law recording as a means of authorizing his own act of inscription, but the *Glanvill*-author is somewhat defensive of the legitimacy of laws as yet unwritten. It cannot be the case, he argues, that writing has more authority than kings or judges (2).[134] He insists that it is "not absurd" to call custom law, stressing that these customs draw authority from long unproblematic use and the endorsement of magnates and kings (2). English law is inherently problem-solving in nature, responding to actual needs, "promulgated about problems settled in council," and thus firmly grounded in reason. The text is adamant that English laws "had their origin in reason" (2) and theorizes that they remain unwritten only because scribes are not skilled enough to tackle the job of

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[133] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 98-9, 116-19. Godfrey seems to have stopped work on his text in 1189 when he was elevated to a bishopric, though he did continue to serve as a royal judge (99, 116). Details of judges' educations are not fully known, but only three of Henry II's judges are recorded with the title "Magister" suggesting school or university degrees (116-17).
[134] Turner reminds that the Becket conflict had stirred up problems with the unwritten nature of English law (Ibid., 103).

enrolling them all, and because of the law's own complex nature (3). Unwritten laws can be unruly ones, but he will with his treatise impose some order—not by recording laws, but "general rules frequently observed in court" (3). Such a procedural guide will be "very useful for most people and highly necessary to aid the memory" (3). Whereas Richard fitz Nigel had needed to justify writing his text, the *Glanvill*-author justifies *not* writing all that there is to write. Richard's text makes clear his awareness of change and new procedure, but perhaps a royal judge like de Lucy or the other potential authors of *Glanvill* faced more forcefully than did Richard the administrative transition to recording and referencing documents. Perhaps by the 1180s the existence of written records of not only past events like court cases but recurring events like summonses and writ requests, had made the act of recording seem so commonplace that far from justifying the writing-down of already-known procedures, such men were suddenly faced with the enormity of material requiring documentation. Clerks, lawmen and judges like the *Glanvill*-author had likely already been habitually collecting writs for personal registers, and as these documents accumulated, the need to make sense of them demanded attention.[135]

The lawmen actively collecting, recording, classifying, and ordering the

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[135] Ibid., 101; Hall, "Introduction," xxxiv; Richardson, "Richard fitz Neal," 336n2; Richardson, "Glanville Continued," 381. The so-called "Bracton's Note Book," Additional MS. 12269, which contains around 2000 plea roll transcripts dating to 1217-40, seems to represent such a collecting effort but it is not certain what the purpose of the collection was nor how it may have contributed to the production of *Bracton* as a preparatory stage (Brand, "Age of Bracton," 79-83). Henry Bracton did have plea rolls from William Raleigh and Martin Pattishall's court cases in his possession, which he resented having to give up (79); it stands to reason that judges' clerks might have commonly borrowed rolls to copy for their and associates' reference. Such productions can offer evidence of legal training by indicating how apprenticeship worked, whence knowledge came from, and how clerks practiced their duties including enrollment (81). Varied access to official records was already shaping professionalization.

mass of common law knowledge were, *Glanvill* declares, protectors of king and realm. Much like the *Dialogue* claimed for financial officials, in *Glanvill*'s prologue we find an emerging argument that the English king surrounds himself with "those of his subjects most learned in the laws" (2). The king "is guided by the laws and customs of the realm" (2) and therefore must be guided by lawmen; these lawmen in turn must be "prompt," "wise," "sober," and "clear-sighted" (2). Like Fitz Nigel did for the taxation department, this author defends the probity of judicial officials: "his Highness's court is so impartial that no judge there is so shameless or audacious as to presume to turn aside at all from the path of justice or to digress in any respect from the way of truth" (2). But it is not enough to practice law or procedure; the king requires at his side those who beat back the forces of chaos with parchment and pen. It is "the ignorance of scribes" who fail to tame "the confused multiplicity of those same laws and rules" (3) who stand between the king and complete order. "In our time," the author opines, a full recording is not feasible, but men like him are working to serve their king by systematizing and scrutinizing law, and transmitting their proficiency to subsequent generations in such a way that in future times the work may theoretically be completed. This outlook is one manifestation of the author's experience with scholastic methods in the schools.[136] Law writers worked out their genre and format to be easily added to or altered as the law changed, as opposed to the less systematic order of rambling mirrors-for-princes or the moral thread behind theological and philosophical texts.

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[136] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 104, 106.

To the author, legal knowledge is a rare skill requiring royal protection and cultivation, because as things stand the law demands an experienced and capable wrangler. The *Glanvill*-author reveals some dissatisfaction with the state of English administrative personnel, in particular scribes' shortcomings, and given his own presumed education, one might assume that he is being critical of administrative officials who had not received extensive formal training in law or the liberal arts. As we have seen, schoolmen were entering English government in large numbers in the second half of the twelfth century, but many administrative employees in the chancery, exchequer, and judiciary trained through experience as junior clerks, like Fitz Nigel or Hubert Walter. *Glanvill*'s author includes a statement on his methodology similar to Fitz Nigel's, except that he claims his simple language is a choice rather than a necessity: "I have decided to put into writing at least a small part of these general rules, adopting intentionally a commonplace style and words used in court in order to provide knowledge of them for those who are not versed in this kind of inelegant language" (3).[137] Given what we know of the author's occupational context, it is not likely that this is a subtle criticism of under-educated colleagues, a sly parody of Richard's modesty statement or a criticism of the "inelegance" of court procedure. Rather, this author seems genuinely concerned to promote the development of administrative skills, and also to defend the worth of practical writing. Here is an admission that formal education in schools that teach Roman or canon law does not adequately prepare an attorney, clerk, or judge for "words

[137] Historians have typically taken this statement at face value, accepting that the *Glanvill*-author was capable of writing in a more ornamented style (See Russell, "Ranulf de Glanville," 75).

used in court," and thus school graduates must accustom themselves to legal jargon with this instructional text so that they can function during court proceedings. Earlier the author has told us that not only must royal advisers pair great legal learning with upright characters that "excel all others," but lawmen stand out due to their "eloquence" (2). Not all professional administrators, he seems to be saying, have opted to forego the schools, and law study does not lack the rhetorical training that theology or philosophy teaches. Yet English common law is unique and therefore calls for more than school-taught eloquence; it requires thorough knowledge of the language of custom.

Even if less interested in history, *Glanvill* is similar to the *Dialogue* in its references to important administrative figures to establish lines of succession that have wrought the custom so important to English law. The names of important judicial figures appear including Ranulf Glanvill, Hubert Walter, and Richard de Lucy, all justiciars, and Bench or eyre judges William Bassett, Robert of Wheatfield, Hugh Bardolf, and Osbert fitz Hervey.[138] These men were all practicing in some form or other during the time of *Glanvill*'s composition, except for Richard de Lucy, but he was the father of the likely main author, Godfrey de Lucy.[139] Godfrey learned much from Glanvill who succeeded his father as justiciar, and served alongside the other named judges.[140] Not only procedure

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[138] See Hall, "Introduction," xliii-xlvii. Alternatively, not William Bassett but another with the same initials may be at issue here, but the other candidates had similar careers (xlv). To Hall, there is no reason to think that name citations, which sometimes appear only in manuscript margins, were not original to the author, but it is also possible that another early user familiar enough with the judiciary to place names with judgements initiated the practice of labeling them.
[139] Ibid., xlvi.
[140] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 116. Glanvill brought a number of his *familiares* into the *curia regis* late in Henry II's reign (114).

mattered to the *Glanvill*-author but also the men who practiced law, who performed the actions of selecting, copying, and presenting writs and arguing and deciding cases at different points in their career. Names circulated in manuscripts along with the case law, fixing case precedent in time and associating it with the persons who made judicial decisions. Like with the *Dialogue* we have in this text an understanding of transmission and inheritance in which the personal aspect of lawmaking still matters when it serves to endorse the legitimacy of certain precedent, as a judge's high reputation ensures his decisions are in accord with established law. Texts and textualized knowledge cannot stand outside the individuals who remember and proclaim that knowledge, however impersonal the law itself is. Clanchy argues that as much as manuscript evidence shows regular updating and revision of *Glanvill* to maintain its utility, a text could never be up-to-date enough for "day-to-day business," and so legal advisors, judges, pleaders, and attorneys sourced current information from "the talk of colleagues."[141]

In fact, such talk may have constituted *Glanvill* entirely. Historians have suggested that this text may have had multiple writers. Though Turner puts forward his candidate, de Lucy, for the authorship of *Glanvill* he also considers that many royal justices during Glanvill's justiciarship may have been "contributors to the treatise." At the very least, if they did not write sections of *Glanvill* then members of this cadre including "colleagues who were longtime companions of Henry II" likely inspired and advised the writer, and the text

[141] Clanchy, "Guide to Further Reading," lxxvi.

emerged from "discussion among judges."[142] Some instances when *Glanvill*'s author names judges occur because authorities disagreed, and he wishes to record the dialogic nature of justice.[143] The body of justices in the late 1180s, collected by Glanvill, who worked near each other in Westminster and travelled together on eyre, conceivably "formed a tightly bound little band of colleagues and friends" whose unofficial discussions may be mirrored in *Glanvill*'s textual citations.[144] Such consultation is one means of sharing wisdom to ensure decisions are impartial. *Glanvill*'s practical nature as a semi-official production, an authoritative reference not representing any one judicial actor's position, made its authorship less important than its utility, but it may initially have been anonymous also if its early users thought it unnecessary to label with an author's name a text jointly authored and circulated among those co-creators.

Bracton likewise had multiple authorship, though a more sequential than collaborative one. Henry de Bracton (or Bratton), contributor and reviser, was clerk to William Raleigh at the court *coram rege* by 1238 and possibly at the Common Bench before this time.[145] Though some still argue that he was the chief author and wrote primarily in the 1250s, it is more likely that Raleigh began

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[142] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 99, 119.
[143] See Ibid., 104, and Hall, "Introduction," xliii, xliv-xlv for these instances.
[144] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 120. Statute collections and writ registers of a later period sometimes came about through a similar process of multiple authorship, though of more anonymous contributions. Maitland described these registers as "organic," and said of a chancery-owned register known as *Registrum Brevium* which was added to from the twelfth through sixteenth centuries that "to ask for its date would be like asking for the date of one of our great cathedrals" ("The History of the Register of Original Writs," in Fisher, *Collected Papers*, 2:112. Some suggest that the text of *Glanvill* that came down to us was an unfinished draft (Hall, "Introduction," xxxiii; Russell, "Ranulf de Glanville," 70). If so, it is significant that an official circulated a work-in-progress for peer feedback.
[145] Paul Brand, "Bratton, Henry of (*d.* 1268)," in Matthew, Harrison, and Cannadine, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

the text in the 1220s and handed it off to his clerk in the later 1230s after his promotion to Chief Justice of the King's Bench and assumption of a bishopric increased his own work load. Bracton then inserted his own analyses of points of law and added discussions of new writ forms and examples from his own cases and more of Raleigh's. *Bracton*'s translator Samuel Thorne, however, suggests that there may have been participation by other of Raleigh's co-justices or clerks, making the text a true compilation of contemporary lawmen.[146] If the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* fictionalized a productive conversation between colleagues, and also recounted stories of such conversations in history, then these two subsequent administrative productions may have put such a method into practice through their "collective authorship."[147] By necessity rather than choice a lawbook writer used plea rolls he had to hand, and so many of the court cases selected to represent writ forms in *Bracton* hail from either Raleigh or the judge he clerked for, Martin of Pattishall.[148] Yet the impact of this generational perspective was clear to Bracton, who emphasized the handing down of wisdom from one judge to another by laying claim to a long legal heritage. He set out in his text to educate fellow legal experts by "examining diligently…the ancient judgments of

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[146] Thorne, "Translator's Introduction," 3:xxxvi (see Turner's commentary, "Author of Glanvill," 119, and Brand, "Age of Bracton," 73-4, 76-7 for a review of evidence suggesting that at least two writers and possibly more composed portions of the text). Brand provides an overview of Maitland's original argument about Bracton's total authorship and J. L. Barton's support of this interpretation, as well as Brand's own support of Thorne's ideas about the stages of authorship ("Age of Bracton," "Date and Authorship").
[147] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 99.
[148] Martin of Pattishall was himself a clerk of Simon of Pattishall, who served on the bench while Hubert Walter was justiciar, thus connecting this text with the age of *Glanvill* (Hall, "Introduction," xxxiv; Brand, "Date and Authorship," 243).

just men," a heritage only ancient enough to comprise his two forebears (19).[149] The *Constitutio Domus Regis* and *Dialogue of the Exchequer* each demonstrate an awareness of and interest in the membership of an administrative circle, but among the judiciary we can more firmly identify bureaucratic culture and community witnessed by or even partially constituted by textual production. Royal justices embodied the modern pursuit of justice through textual means, and the recording of their collective knowledge and experience further signified their relationship to an institutionalized identity—in an institution relying increasingly on text, and texts that record speech acts.

Precedent, established law, and judicial impartiality were even more important for *Bracton* than they had been for *Glanvill*. Unwritten laws were vulnerable to manipulation, as were laws or procedures unknown to an under-trained judge or any official who did not adequately search through textual records. A multiplicity of "local customs…where it will always be necessary to learn what the custom of the place is" (19) results in a need for especially experienced and capable administrators, but these administrators must take care to systematize and standardize as much as possible. *Bracton* is uncomfortable with the possibility of judges making unsuitable or even unlawful decisions accidentally or maliciously, because in this formative period law cannot yet be disembodied from lawmen. This need for authoritative figures to safeguard law explains in part their continued presence in law books, textually preserving links

[149] Brand identifies this passage as one added by Bracton to Raleigh's original prologue ("Age of Bracton," 77). *Placita Corone*, *Casus Placitorum*, and *Brevia Placitata*, other thirteenth-century law tracts, also named judges (Pegues, *Clericus* in Legal Administration," 552).

between trials and the officials who adjudicated them. Collaboration is vital to *Bracton*, which urges readers to "correct and amend" anything inaccurate or out-of-date in the text (20). In itself this sort of statement is not an uncommon request in a medieval text accompanying a modesty statement about the author's shortcomings, and may be just a rhetorical flourish. But as the author has chosen to add it after enumerating the meager written law tradition he has received—namely, the exemplar *Glanvill*, and Justinian's corpus—it is valuable to take it at face value. This author is even more concerned than his forebears about the fate of a text that does not remain up-to-date, that ceases to accurately represent judicial procedures. He is anxious about legal practice, desiring that practitioners be capable and not misled by inaccuracies in outmoded textbooks. Extant manuscripts do show evidence of users following this direction and laboring to make their copies as useful and up-to-date as possible.

Bracton's prologue is more explicit than *Glanvill*'s about the text's purpose, with Bracton's own material especially serious about the state of legal education. This prologue presents a more moralized and theorized approach to law and justice. While Glanvill "contains no moral precepts" and is not "concerned to distinguish between law and justice,"[150] *Bracton* does just that, systematically defining categories including law, custom, justice, *ius*, rights, jurisprudence, equity, private and natural law, civil law, and the *ius gentium* (22-7). This author is more comfortable with his task than were Richard fitz Nigel or the *Glanvill*-author and had more facility organizing the treatise and understanding its

[150] Clanchy, "Guide to Further Reading," lxxiii, lxxviii.

purposes and uses, and *Bracton* reflects greater structural influence of civil law texts than *Glanvill*.[151] The prologue methodically relates the book's "matter" and "utility," the author's "intention," and "the end served," finding subtle distinctions among these categories and sure of them from the beginning, unlike Richard fitz Nigel who figured out his motives and the text's utility as he wrote. *Glanvill's* prologue had stated its didactic purpose, but *Bracton*'s author is much more detailed, seemingly having spent much time contemplating the state of education and legal practice in his day.[152] He tells us this, in fact, claiming to have "work[ed] long into the night watches…examining diligently…[the] legal judgments" at his disposal in order to work out patterns and discern principles (19). This approach is quite different from that of Fitz Nigel, who depicts himself speaking ex tempore with a colleague, relying entirely on what he could immediately recollect. The *Bracton*-author explains that he works not only from his own experience but has collected relevant documents, a practice that historians assume other lawmen also performed, but here the author specifically tells his readers that he relies upon a documentary record created by his forebears—a documentary record that

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[151] Bracton was comparatively inexperienced, never serving as judge in the Common Bench (it is not certain whether he clerked for Raleigh in this court) and serving in the King's Bench for only a short while (see Brand, "Age of Bracton," 88-9), but Raleigh also does not seem to have had a law degree or comparative education. Richardson makes the case that the text's author (he at the time is under the impression it is Henry Bracton) must have been school-educated to have this extensive knowledge of civil law. "Azo, Drogheda, and Bracton," *English Historical Review* 59 (1944): 40-2. Maitland argued that the Italian Azo's glosses on Justinian's legal corpus, the *Summa Institutionum*, were the *Bracton*-author's "prototype" (Nederman, "Bracton on Kingship," 72) and many passages influenced by civil law have been discovered throughout the text in an organic way that suggests great familiarity and an ability to make plastic connections between civil and common law (Thorne, "Translator's Introduction," 1:xxviii-xxxvi).

[152] The prologue contains material identified as from the pen of both Raleigh and Bracton, and for this reason the text is a bit disorderly with some sentiments repeated. Later additions by Bracton seem to be more vehement regarding the incompetence of judicial officials, whereas statements likely by Raleigh took a more measured approach to the education of his peers (Brand, "Age of Bracton," 77).

has reached such proportions that his own important contribution of determining what is “worthy of note” and “putting it in the form of titles and paragraphs” is what will ensure that the knowledge is “preserved to posterity forever” (19). Only such an ordered recording can increase the honor and income of lawmen who guarantee that “peace and justice may be preserved in the realm,” an intended benefit of the text (20).

The text’s “matter” is an immediate one, “the judgments and the cases that daily arise and come to pass in the realm of England,” and the author’s learning goals for his readers are specific and reflect his own careful study:

> “The intention of the author is to treat of such matters and to instruct and teach all who desire to be taught what action lies and what writ…[and] how and by what procedure, by suing and proving, defending and excepting…suits and pleas are decided according to English laws and customs…and [the art] of preparing records and enrollments” (20).

This list is more explicit than any counterpart in the *Dialogue* or *Glanvill*, which suggests the educational system for legal practitioners or administrators in general had reached a more developed point. *Bracton*’s author reveals his own facility in the use of texts as well as all lawmen’s need of this skill when he advises readers how one must approach this or any other text, evaluating its purpose, contents, use, “and the division of learning into which it falls” (20). If Fitz Nigel imagined King Henry turning to the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* for particulars about taxation procedures, here fifty or more years later a lawman understands textual usage in a very different way. A book is not picked up casually and examined at length or in its entirety for instruction, but the nature of its contents must be readily comprehensible and accessible to a user requiring

specific information. To a degree, *Bracton*'s rigorous organization makes it more of a reference work than the *Dialogue* or even *Glanvill* could be, as the first work might conceivably be read cover to cover as an advanced course in administrative or legal practices, and the latter's organization was less intuitive than *Bracton*.[153] *Bracton*'s greater coherence ensures the completeness of an answer regarding any point of law, placing related topics closer together more reliably than did these other texts, and including a more developed rubrication to refer readers to connected sections.[154] Many levels of readers can stand to learn from Bracton: "The general intention is to treat of law that the unskilled may be made expert, the expert more expert, the bad good and the good better…" (20). Yet the emphasis here is the "unskilled" and the "bad" practitioners—passages likely by Bracton specify that the treatise is not simply educational but intended to counteract inaccurate knowledge and supplement the lax legal education of some practitioners "so that those who err may be instructed and set right and those who obstinately do otherwise punished" (20).

Such a project is necessary because, according to the author, England's justice system is filled with officials who are not performing their jobs well. "If no one else" will take up the burden, our author will, "to instruct the lesser judges" (19). England's developing common law has seen changes to education and the demographics of practitioners, but to *Bracton*'s judgment "laws and customs are

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[153] Thorne explains that a law code's organization could not be systematic so much as "practical," as no "simple logical arrangement" of a complex code is possible but a practiced judge will know which subjects relate most to one another ("Translator's Introduction," 1:xliv).
[154] It is not certain Raleigh or Bracton provided the rubrics, yet all extant manuscripts contain them (George E. Woodbine, "Preface," in Woodbine and Thorne, *Bracton*, 2:xi).

often misapplied by the unwise and unlearned who ascend the judgment seat before they have learned the laws and stand amid doubts and the confusion of opinions, and frequently subverted by the greater [judges] who decide cases according to their own will rather than by the authority of the laws" (19). Common law, still unwritten, has been deemed by some experts to be overly-influenced by the personal elements involved in adjudication. As more registers and formularies and rolls record precedent and hem in law practice, it is more possible to turn to texts as a repository for wisdom and less necessary for judges to use their own independent reasoning. It is not necessarily that Raleigh or Bracton distrusted a majority of their colleagues, but that they wanted to advocate for a paradigm of justice that prioritized precedent and thus ensured no bias or mistake. Incompetent judges did not offer fleeting judgments—their actions risked becoming permanent as they became captured and archived in rolls, registers, and procedural treatises. Previous administrative manuals had recognized the need to deal with new situations, and *Bracton* advocates a particular methodology: when "new and unusual matters arise which have not before been seen in the realm" they ought to be evaluated by the closest precedent ("if like matters arise let them be decided by like"). But when a situation "is difficult and unclear" and no relevant cases are available a council of judges ought to determine the matter, not just the presiding justice on the case (21). Magnates and lawmen might make the law, but the law is bigger than them, and it is presumptuous for any judge to rely "on their own knowledge, as though nothing connected with the law were beyond their competence," and fail to seek

advice. *Bracton* insists that "it [is not] discreditable to be in doubt as to individual cases" and the most "becoming and…lawyer-like" action is to "take counsel rather than to determine anything rashly" (21). Well-trained as the ideal judicial force might be, each practitioner must rely on the collective experience, knowledge, and wisdom, and not avoid consultation out of fear of appearing in need.

It is vital for lawmen to seek truth because the practice of law approaches godliness, and faulty jurisprudence will be punished on the final Judgment Day:

> Let no one, unwise and unlearned, presume to ascend the seat of judgment, which is like unto the throne of God….let each one take care for himself lest, by judging perversely and against the laws, because of prayer or price, for the advantage of a temporary and insignificant gain, he dare to bring upon himself sorrow and lamentation everlasting (21).

Bracton reminds that judges will themselves be judged, but throughout the prologue language of heavenly justice furthers the notion that earthly judges themselves are performing godly work. Richard fitz Nigel had repeatedly insisted on exchequer administrators' loyalty to the king's interests and *Glanvill*'s author demonstrated himself to be an admirer of Henry II, anxious that government departments operate effectively so that the king may "successfully perform his office."[155] The English king is not absent from *Bracton*'s prologue, but he appears more as one performer among many than as the ultimate source of legal authority or figurehead for justice. Here kings do not create law so much as they approve the laws created by men designated for that purpose. *Glanvill* had commented broadly on the lawmaking process involving councils, magnates, and

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[155] *Glanvill* (Hall), 1.

kings, but what it comes down to for him is the maxim that "what pleases the prince has the force of law"—kings require loyal and wise lawmen to enact and protect but not necessarily to generate.[156] As with other subjects, *Bracton*'s prologue treats lawmaking at greater length and specificity. The king's role is almost an afterthought: common law stems from "whatever has been rightly decided and approved with the counsel and consent of the magnates and the general agreement of the res publica, the authority of the king or prince having first been added thereto" (19). The involvement of "those who use" the law—judges and attorneys—is the key to their development and vitality, and it is these men who "approve" law through "their consent"; to alter established law requires "the common consent of all those by whose counsel and consent they were promulgated" (21). If there is any doubt about the importance of judicial administrators and advisors as lawmakers, *Bracton* states that a wise judge will effectively "rule in the realm and sit in the royal chamber, on the very seat of the king, on the throne of God, so to speak…in the place of the king, as though in the place of Jesus Christ, since the king is God's vicar" (20). God and his earthly representative the English king are the ultimate source of law, but those who practice and uphold law metonymically play the role of king by sharing in this legal authority.

Bracton's eclipsing of the distance between official and king, or between official and God, signifies a thirteenth-century administrator's worldview. Like Fitz Nigel's exchequer operating on the authority of the king but without the king's

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[156] *Glanvill* (Hall), 2.

necessary presence, royal law courts—in Westminster, on eyre, and in county assizes—required a degree of independence from the king's presence or pronouncement. The *Dialogue* sought in various ways to position a royal specter among the functionaries around the exchequer table, as I argued above, as a means of attaching royal authority to an autonomous administrative department. *Bracton* envisions this transfer of or sharing in royal authority differently, stressing the inherent power of those trained in law to control and shape the experience of justice in the realm. Peter Haidu explains that "making present the powers of an absent king demonstrates the separability of king and power."[157] A generation after Fitz Nigel served as Treasurer, this separability had come to make clear the physical distance of the king from his departments, rather than his closeness. If royal power can exist dissociated from monarch, then lawmen can wield this power independent from any direct relationship to the king's person. But what he cannot act independently from are the law itself, as promulgated in statute and precedent-books, and his colleagues whose talk and texts tie him to a legal matrix which ensures lawful and precedented judicial decisions. If in *Glanvill*'s worldview lawmen were the most essential royal servants because they put governance into order, then for *Bracton*'s creators lawmen are essential because they not only order but generate this law, which a king oversees and approves through his sovereignty. This chapter's epigraph states that justice happens—"the law is given effect"—not when the king expresses his will, but

[157] Peter Haidu, *The Subject Medieval/Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 183. Milliman quotes this passage in "Games and Governance," 85n102.

"through…men pre-eminent in the doing of justice" (26). *Bracton* has made clear how important was the competence of lawmen, how important their adherence to the rule of law which certainly exists even if unwritten, because the law itself is meaningless "if there are none to administer it" (26).

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If the school-trained author of the "Conflictus inter Deum et Diabolum" felt that the law courts protected mankind's salvation—for the time being, at least—England's legal writers came to insist that common-law judges and lawyers exercised the power to not only oversee but create the legal matrix that protects the people, king, and kingdom. Richard fitz Nigel and the *Glanvill*-author assert the king's need for men with practical knowledge, whose tax-assessing or justice-dispensing were more vital to the kingdom's well-being than spiritual advising yet whose proper functioning ensured harmony between heavenly and temporal standards of justice. Between *Dialogue of the Exchequer* and *Bracton*, we see administrative writers gaining more experience with writing and organizing, controlling their subject matter more proficiently as administrative operations came more and more to rely on making and using recordings. Yet we can also see the weight of writing pressing down on these text writers and users. Henry Bracton's revisions to the manuscript he inherited from his mentor William Raleigh stop in 1256, which fact Brand uses to argue for Bracton not being the text's original author. Bracton had just retired from the judiciary, and now had more free time than ever (he did not die until 1268). But instead of using this time to indulge in the archiving of his wisdom and experience, Bracton went silent.

Brand attributes this silence to a reviser "despair[ing] of the possibility of bringing up to date or even properly revising the work of another author or authors whose main work had been done several decades earlier."[158] A historian arguing for Bracton's total authorship makes a similar argument, invoking "the difficulty of his self-imposed task" as a reason for giving up.[159]

An explanation for giving up, then, but what about an explanation for writing? Beyond the clear need for formularies and handbooks for an ever-increasing number of writs and procedures, Turner suggests that a critical mass of writs may have stimulated a collector to "impose upon the raw data"; to the bureaucratic mind, no mass of documents can go unprocessed and unstudied.[160] In other words, once a document repository, however personal and incomplete, existed, the *Glanvill*-author's unprecedented step to compose a handbook for these documents was a smaller one. One writes what one knows, and yet it becomes clear in *Dialogue of the Exchequer* and *Glanvill* that law authors did not necessarily wait until their understandings of their occupational identities and textual purposes were fully formed but instead used the writing process to think through procedures' many dimensions. Determining where to place commentary on a writ or principle that touches on many different topics, for instance, forces a greater comprehension of law's interconnections than one may have when he habitually restricts himself to considering whatever facets relate to a case at hand. Textual composition represents a new skill that medieval administrators

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[158] Brand, "Date and Authorship," 244.
[159] John Barton, "The Authorship of *Bracton*: Again," *Journal of Legal History* 30 (2009): 172.
[160] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 101.

were mastering, a new method of viewing and systematizing a still-growing government world. But viewing the development of handbooks from accreted documents and knowledge as organic also belies what has often been recognized as the ambitious gumption of renowned administrators who reform governance and even govern in a king's absence—who take radical steps to solve problems before they reach crippling proportions. Was administrative manual composition a matter of course, a practical necessity and a natural outcome of highly literate men and the bureaucratic employment of school graduates?

The nature of bureaucratic evolution meant that writing sometimes moved beyond representing what already happened into the territory of establishing what will or ought to happen, but our text writers were not themselves reformers. They were not often pioneers but more often the aides or subordinates of the architects whose performance of duties itself created or concretized law and policy. Richard fitz Nigel could not fill the footsteps of the family who purchased his treasurership, Roger of Salisbury ("Henry I's right-hand man in all matters administrative") and Nigel of Ely (brought by Henry II "out of his retirement…to restore the exchequer to its former efficiency").[161] *Glanvill*'s overseer and inspiration, Ranulf Glanvill, ushered in another period of reform, but Godfrey de Lucy was not so eminent.[162] He (and any other fellow judges or clerks who

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[161] Amt, "Introduction," xiv-xviii. See Green, *England under Henry I*, 38-50, 216 for the notion that Roger of Salisbury may have instated important changes while regent, like weighing shrieval farms, and sending out eyres.

[162] Falls, "Glanville's Formative Years," 313. Turner characterizes the period of *Glanvill*'s writing as one when common law's "first and most creative phase was ending" ("Author of *Glanvill,*" 99).

contributed to the text) responded to growth and reform, but did not drive it themselves. Fitz Nigel began to write just after the sweeping reforms of 1166-77, and Turner believes *Glanvill*'s writer came from the generation entering court as clerks to these reformers who would thus have been much impressed by this activity.[163] William Raleigh might break this pattern, but his phase as an influential reformer came after he handed his manuscript off to Henry Bracton, and his own inspiration came from the work of his mentor, Martin of Pattishall who oversaw the emergence of the Common Bench as an independent institution. Hubert Walter's justiciarship in the 1190s had also been a time of great reform, one factor eventually leading to occasional administrative purges in the next century. However innovative he was, it must be remembered that Raleigh did not live to see the dissemination of his text, and so his conception of revolutionizing legal practice through text was limited. On one hand, times of law reform might invigorate civil servants and thus inspire heartened textual expression. On the other hand, routinization, increasingly present from the last decade of Henry II's reign, "when it was becoming possible to impose some pattern on the writs and pleadings,"[164] may have furthered administrative anxiety. An anxiety to keep up, with the work load and the shifting knowledge. If Richard fitz Nigel's exchequer clerks required a reference work to help limit the information that must be kept immediately accessible in their memories, Henry Bracton was faced with the realization that not only were there limits to the

[163] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 98. Russell characterizes *Glanvill*'s author at one point as "excited over the improvement of procedure" regrading an assize ("Ranulf de Glanville," 71).
[164] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 98-9.

human memory, but there were also worrisome limits to documentation and one's capacity to record.

It is important to remember that one key piece of evidence in determining Godfrey de Lucy's authorship of *Glanvill* was that "unlike the other candidates, Godfrey was not so deluged with administrative responsibilities that he had no time free for reflection and writing."[165] Writing could go hand in hand with administrative duties, as Richard fitz Nigel seems to represent in his discourse on enrollment, but it was also an enormous labor in addition to official duties. The cataloguing efforts of *Glanvill*, *Bracton*, and document collections like Bracton's Note-Book or early writ registers and Year Books have been celebrated as massive organization efforts on the part of scribes with limited time and resources. Maitland praises Bracton, for example, for his work of selecting cases to write up in a notebook, then his work of sorting through the notebook and still more through plea rolls in his possession to fix on certain cases perfect for illustrating his needs in *Bracton*.[166] Lawyers and judges certainly turned to texts to help them with cases. Yet Bracton's scribal labor is not of a sort appropriate to the court room, and the use of even a carefully indexed and rubricated textbook could prove too cumbersome for a pleader devising a court strategy or a judge needing to recall precedents to mind. The very many manifestations of rubric, heading, and marginal gloss in *Glanvill* manuscripts and the repeated attempts to revise *Glanvill* or *Bracton* or write a new text altogether which incorporated these

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[165] Ibid., 118-19. Hall, "Introduction," summarizes the overwhelming duties keeping the other candidates from writing (xxxiii).
[166] See Brand, "Age of Bracton," 79-83.

earlier treatises reveal not simply the great utility of these tomes and their users' happy desire to keep them current, but also the inestimable labor that such updatings required.[167] The "Conflictus" may have "strengthen[ed] for the audience the validity of man-made laws,"[168] but *Glanvill and Bracton* were more cautious, recognizing that both the men and the making must be carefully regulated to maintain justice. Justice stems from the following of rules, and these authors practiced law in a system where "the technicality prevalent in courts….would have made litigation hazardous" due to the same procedural errors that lost the Devil his court case.[169] This mindset necessitated for composers like Raleigh and de Lucy a conceptual reaching-out to their peers for the sake of standardization and order but also prevention of mistakes. Unwritten laws are worrisome, and it is the province of bureaucrats to worry.

Southern suspected when he undertook a study of *Glanvill*'s alpha text for the purposes of establishing its appearance before the beta version, that he would "get a little nearer to the mind of the author," and "traces will be found of the personalities who were making legal history in the second half of Henry II's reign."[170] By examining a succession of administrative and judicial texts we can see patterns of these personalities, as they coalesce into a bureaucratic culture. This culture was one of both hope and anxiety, emphasizing collaboration as a means of inscribing and practicing law as well as preparing a man for a

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[167] Hall's introduction to *Glanvill* describes the idiosyncratic nature of *Glanvill* manuscripts, which combine versions in such ways that it sometimes seems copyists turned to multiple other copies in order to fix on a best text or organizational system (xl-lxii).
[168] Marx, "Literature of Law," 65.
[169] Palmer, "Legal Profession," 134.
[170] Southern, "Text of 'Glanville,'" 81.

successful administrative career. Some English administrators graduated from schools and universities, and these might have been the ones most comfortable with writing texts; at least, the primary author of *Glanvill*, Godfrey de Lucy, was one of very few contemporary royal judges with higher education. Richardson assumed *Bracton*'s learning meant its author must have been to Oxford, yet this may turn out to be circular logic. Regardless education or at least educational source does not seem to be a dividing line for administrators, nor does status as cleric or layman. What tension we see in these texts takes the form of criticism of unprepared functionaries: Fitz Nigel regretted that Henry II had appointed men to look over his shoulder to correct his work, and *Glanvill* and *Bracton* decry sloppy scribes and judges respectively. Of course, this appraisal may be cover for attacks on personal enemies or detested categories, perhaps involving traditional discord between "new men" and old. Yet it remains significant that such attack is encoded in the language of administrative occupation and competence. Utility and skill are paramount, and administrative texts reveal the extent to which these traits were integral to the identity of English bureaucrats.

In the period covered by this chapter, administrative departments evolved as their duties "were clearly becoming more and more the responsibility of a defined group." [171] This group was defined in part against "warriors" and "aristocrats," two classes themselves engaging in self-definition at the time,[172] but one reason group definition became urgent around the turn of the thirteenth century was that these groups were ceasing to exist or at least losing traditional

[171] Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 226.
[172] Turner, "New Administrative Class," 117.

coherency. The call for administrators pulled sons of knightly and noble families into the bureaucratic orbit, while there still remained the traditional track of advancement through government and ecclesiastical positions via closeness to the king. Even if discord between baron and bureaucrat has been exaggerated by historians, the development of English bureaucracy was accompanied at all times by public debate over who by rights may access and advise the king. Legislation like Magna Carta and subsequent doctrinal limitations to the monarch's power, and the eventual emergence of Parliament, complicated this debate but did not lessen its intensity. The acceptance of lawmen as one group of potential royal advisors was an important development in the era of Fitz Nigel, *Glanvill*, and *Bracton*. The lyrics of the Song of Lewes, composed to celebrate the 1264 victory of the English barons, showcase the two paths this thirteenth-century author saw for men who would advise the king. The author, seemingly a friar and possibly Adam Marsh, who had friends among both Henry III and Simon de Montfort's camps, describes the ideal administrator and councilor: men "whose faith is lively, who have read the decretals, or have becomingly taught theology."[173] In other words, this administrator might have studied canon law or theology. Sage administrators, still active into the thirteenth century, had contended that clerical training equipped them to be the best candidates for administrative positions. Study of canon law was still a clerical pursuit, yet at this time the taking of minor orders was less likely to render a felt affiliation with the Church. During the thirteenth century it become commonplace for clerks in

[173] Quoted in Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 179.

certain occupations to avoid ecclesiastical advancement and operate much like their lay counterparts.[174] Study of theology may have trained and refined a bureaucratic mind, but those clergy in administration, like Richard fitz Nigel, Godfrey de Lucy and William Raleigh were not painting themselves as theologians but as masters of practical knowledge and skill. They claimed to offer a sort of counsel—legal opinion—different from other learned opinions that a king might need in that it follows logic and precedent to an extreme degree.

These skills became ever more specialized as a cause and result of departments moving away from court and the specialization of departmental purviews, a process that we have seen was accompanied by a conceptual and textual redefining of the administration's situatedness with respect to royal power. Clerks in any given department, such as chancery or exchequer, were increasingly unlikely to seek employment in other departments, and spent their careers gaining facility with their duties.[175] Text production may be seen as a by-product of specialization, motivated by a desire to prove one's proficiency and facilitated by substantial experience. Those who devised and controlled new writ forms and procedures wrote about their sense of responsibility toward their new duties. Though moving out of court was a slow process, "one may consider works such as the *Dialogus* as precursors of greater self-consciousness of belonging to a particular section of government.….linked to such developments is the emergence of views which seem to be peculiarly those of administrators, or

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[174] Pegues, "*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 556-8; Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 170.
[175] Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 224-8; Pegues," *Clericus* in Legal Administration." For the decline of the omnicompetent administrator and rise of the specialist, see Harding, *Thirteenth Century*, 161; Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*, 118; Heiser, "Justiciars of Richard I," 227, 231.

at least members of the royal household."[176] Richard fitz Nigel saw himself writing a book for a king's use, or at least justified his writing act in this traditional way, addressing and dedicating to a king. But *Glanvill* and *Bracton*'s authors wrote for their fellow lawman, men like Hubert Walter whom Gerald of Wales denigrated in this chapter's epigraph for being educated and raised through the exchequer rather than a school. This criticism calls into starker relief the position of contemporary sage administrators.[177]

We find in *Dialogue of the Exchequer* and *Glanvill* a slight authorial ineptness, an uncertainty, a hesitation, the very shortcomings which Gerald found lacking in Hubert Walter's education and career. Hubert and his guardian Ranulf de Glanvill were the two most knowledgeable men on common law at their time,[178] and Gerald, a writer of traditional mirrors-for-princes, may have worried that the utility of practical men was outpacing his own—he criticized Hubert's poor Latin in particular. In light of clergy like Gerald it is all the more significant to recognize that it was by no means a matter of course for any given generation's literate men to author literature. Men like Fitz Nigel had to overcome hurdles to get their writing out, least not their own uncertainty about their purposes and genre. Even Raleigh and Bracton, creators of one of the most comprehensive and well-ordered (and well-needed) law texts of their time, held onto the sole existing manuscript while they lived, perhaps still uncertain, despite

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[176] Hudson, "Perceptions of the Past," 91n86.
[177] For Gerald's views on Hubert, see Clanchy, *Written Record*, 72-3 and Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 113-14. Gerald was likely smarting from losing a bishopric to Hubert, and thus explicitly argued that Hubert's sort of administrative experience was not best preparation for the episcopate.
[178] Turner, "Author of *Glanvill*," 114.

all its prologue claims, what this artifact was they had created. Richard imagined an enthusiastic exchequer colleague bursting upon him and demanding instructional conversation, perhaps, because like Peter of Blois he felt pressures not to write. He imagines encouragement from a fictional character in a position similar to his own, trying, in his amateurish way, to compose a justification for an act of writing that was novel in its day. This collegial exchange is his excuse for writing as well as the subject of the writing, but in thirteenth-century legal texts we see judicial officials whose job description requires collegial exchange penning manuals inspired by and capturing such exchange. These texts serve self-interest, advertising one's own skillset, but they also seek to define, analyze, and champion their authors' group membership and defend their right to serve as repositories of wisdom and offer advice to kings. Elements central to these texts—socio-economic class, education, occupational proficiency, peer networks—are principles administrators were thinking about, as the building blocks of their occupations and personal identities.

4
Extra Curiam Regis: Administrative Secularization and Professionalization, 1350-1430

> I know a man…subjected to constant assaults of disease, not however beyond what he can endure, who rejoices that the lascivity of the flesh has been crushed, the spirit aroused and strengthened in the knowledge of God….His sole desire was that he might retain control of soul and body and not be drawn away from his activities by the violence of disease
>
> —John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*

> [I]f I nat the way of reson holde,
> Folwe me nat
>
> —Thomas Hoccleve, *Regiment of Princes*

A well-known component of the 1381 Peasants Revolt was the targeting of royal officials and lawmen and burning of caches of documents, born from a desire to erase unjust laws by eliminating the parchments in which they were recorded and the men who created and understood them. These actions are not just an indication of the low respect in which lawyers were held in the later Middle Ages, or the fear and suspicion unlearned peasants had of the power of those skilled in letters and litigation. For these rebels, lawmen and law texts embodied law to an extent not previously conceived of in medieval England. They thought—at least, according to contemporary monastic chronicler Thomas Walsingham—that killing "most of the judiciary" would ensure "the laws of the land would have no validity in the future." Anyone deemed a prospective lawyer must be killed to prevent in the future "the knowledge to write down things old or new" and thus the

reinstatement of a legal system disadvantageous to the masses.[1] It was only when "the memorials of the past had been wiped out" and "all those who were learned in the law or connected with the law and its administration" were eliminated that the common people would be free from a burdensome legal system and could set a new paradigm free from ecclesiastical and administrative middle men, in which the everyman had access to his king.[2] This wild plan did not come to pass, though lawmen did die in 1381, and Walsingham tells us "it was dangerous to be recognized as a priest, but much more dangerous if you were found with an inkpot by your side. Such people rarely or never escaped the rebels' hands."[3] Literate men were targeted because of public dissatisfaction with corrupt legal practices and archived wrongdoings, harmed—critically—because of an elision of scribe, document, and government.

One quarter of a century later, Privy Seal scribe Thomas Hoccleve makes a comical poetic reference to himself wearing a marker of his occupation, not an inkpot but a bag used to carry pens.[4] Though possession of writing paraphernalia could no longer earn one a death sentence, Hoccleve's poetry reveals that bureaucrats still felt the heavy burden of responsibility for dispensing law and

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[1] Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham (1376-1422)*, ed. and trans. David Preest (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2005), 132, 147.
[2] Walsingham, *Chronica Maiora* (Preest), 122, 128.
[3] Walsingham, *Chronica Maiora* (Preest), 147. For studies of the rebels' attitude toward bureaucracy and contemporary slander against civil servants see J. R. Maddicott, "Poems of Social Protest in Early Fourteenth-Century England," in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1986), 130-144; John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 236-56; and Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
[4] The joke comes from the various levels of meaning possible in the title of his poem *La male regle* from c. 1405. Tolmie explains that a "male" can be a pen case, both a phallic symbol and a "sign of clerical literacy" ("Professional," 357).

administration, and ran other material, psychological, and spiritual risks. He wrote of urban morale in the first quarter of the fifteenth century that the “prees” of London and Westminster crowds oppressed and turned on him an overwhelming and maddening "straunge countinaunce,” an effect reminiscent of the 1381 attacks on urban literati.[5] Administrative writers had long contended that civil service was dangerous to the soul, a danger expressed for instance by Peter of Blois who worried his secular reading and writing distracted from religious pursuits. The act of writing was also a central concern of Hoccleve’s works,[6] and he recorded the pressures he faced to cease writing as well as his purposes for persevering with the pen despite its debilitating effects. For Hoccleve, unlike for Peter, it was not a question of indulging in profane literature, for vernacular worldly texts had become the lifeblood of the English administrator, himself increasingly likely to be a layman. Hoccleve’s poetic ruminations on the nature of composition in both its official and extra-official forms also offered commentary on the unique and challenging Lancastrian-era political arena. His so-called autobiographical poems, written over the course of his career, describe a

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[5] *My Complaint*, in ‘*My Compleinte' and Other Poems*, ed. Roger Ellis (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), lines 70, 73. Future references to this poem will cite line numbers from this edition.

[6] Critical work examining Hoccleve’s meta-commentary on the penning of poetry include Manfred Markus, "Truth, Fiction and Metafiction in 15th-Century English Literature, Particularly in Lydgate and Hoccleve," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 8 (1983): 117-39; John Burrow, "Hoccleve's *Series*: Experience and Books," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1984), 259-73; Greetham, "Self-Referential Artifacts"; James Simpson, "Madness and Texts: Hoccleve's *Series*," in *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen (London: King's College Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1991), 15-29; Albrecht Classen, "The Autobiographical Voice of Thomas Hoccleve," *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 228 (1991): 299-310; David Mills, "The Voices of Thomas Hoccleve," in *Essays on Thomas Hoccleve*, ed. Catherine Batt (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 85-107; Hickey, "Doubting Thomas," 56-77; David Watt, "'I this book shal make': Hoccleve's Self-Publication and Book Production," *Leeds Studies in English* 34 (2003): 133-160; Tolmie, “Professional,” 343.

perceived failure in Lancastrian governance deeper than the problems of censorship and strict royal oversight concomitant with a return to personal rule which many critics point to in the poetry of Hoccleve and contemporaries.[7] Within a socio-political matrix of suspicion and upward mobility some administratively-trained men like Hoccleve turned to the production of literature, responding to a twofold burden.

At their most immediate level, many of Hoccleve's poems are about money. His autobiographical pieces as well as a handful of petitionary works suggest that the overriding worry of a late-medieval bureaucrat was solvency. The root of the money problem, and its solution, was patronage. Professional secularization had led to an increase in opportunities for laymen in government who could receive wages in the form of annuities or irregular gifts rather than payment through ecclesiastical benefices, but these wages often found themselves in arrears.[8] Administrators' relationship to the king was increasingly viewed along patronage lines as employee subsistence and loyalty turned away from the Church and towards the royal court, and patronage features in late

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[7] Poems with seemingly autobiographical details include *La male regle* from 1405, the prologue to the *Regiment of Princes* from 1410-11, and the *Series* written 1419-21 and itself comprised of five poems, including *My Complaint*, *Dialogue with a Friend*, and translations of three well-known pieces. All appear in Ellis' *'My Compleinte' and Other Poems* excepting the *Regiment* which has been edited by Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1999). Future references to these poems cite line numbers from these editions. For the controversial issue of autobiography in the Middle Ages, two good starting places are John Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry in the Middle Ages: The Case of Thomas Hoccleve," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 63 (1982): 389-412 and Jerome Mitchell, "The Autobiographical Element in Hoccleve," *Modern Language Quarterly* 28 (1967): 269-84.

[8] Ralph A. Griffiths, "Bureaucracy and the State in the Later Middle Ages," in *Prosopographie et genèse de l'Etat moderne*, ed. Francoise Autrand (Paris: Ecole Normale Supérieure de jeunes filles, 1986), 62; Pegues, "*Clericus* in Legal Administration," 531, 550; Brown, "Privy Seal Clerks," 268-9; Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 108; Christine Carpenter and Olivier Matteoni, "Offices and Officers," in *Government and Political Life in England and France, c. 1300-c. 1500*, ed. Christopher David Fletcher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 98.

medieval literature as a source of both livelihood and complaint for administrators and poets.[9] Hoccleve may have exaggerated how hard royal favors were to live on, and how often payments were late. But his anxiety over the "daily drudgery" does not seem to be affected, and "probably reflects the common complaints of the men at the bottom of the administrative ladder."[10] Patronage networks were one component of the greater possible social mobility for working-class professionals, yet as a game to be played by competitors, the search for benefactors in the heavily partisan and shifting political environment of late medieval England could be deadly for those who played ineffectively or chose the wrong patriarch. Like Richard fitz Nigel had, Hoccleve reimagines the exchequer as a chess match, but while the *Dialogue*'s game board ensures rule following and just results, Hoccleve's teaches only that a public man must be

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[9] The infusion of laymen left the administration "dependent squarely on the crown's patronage," and support from royal and noble patrons was still vital in obtaining administrative jobs—sometimes more so than education or competency (Griffiths, "Bureaucracy and the State," 61, 63; Carpenter and Matteoni, "Offices and Officers," 88-92). Beyond the aristocracy poets like Hoccleve or Lydgate "sought more varied patronage" including administrative officials, urban figures, and titled nobles. Paul Strohm, "Hoccleve, Lydgate and the Lancastrian Court," in *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 640-1. Andrew Galloway discusses Adam and Thomas Usk's patronage problems, including how "their multiple causes and patrons tended to conflict with one another" and the "delicate balance…between signal success and utter destruction" experienced by later medieval poets. "Private Selves and the Intellectual Marketplace in Late Fourteenth-Century England: The Case of Two Usks," *New Literary History* 28 (1997): 294. One scene in the *Regiment* has an interlocutor asking Hoccleve whether his patrons cannot intervene in the case of his late annuity, but the poet responds: "The world is nat swich now, my fadir deere,/ As yee han seen. Farwel, freendly maneere!" (1796-97). Commercial language in *male regle* contrasts royal scribes to prostitutes, who reliably receive their dues; whereas "Hoccleve's nebulous court patronage…is virtually worthless" (Tolmie, "Professional," 368). His religious poetry also "express[es] a recurrent concern that such mediators, like the patrons for whom one searched at court, were as likely to be missing as present at the time of need" (Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*,134).

[10] Brown, "Privy Seal Clerks," 269-272. Mitchell judges Hoccleve's financial complaints to be literary convention because "he was paid semiannually and…with some degree of regularity" a sum quite fair for a Privy Seal employee ("Autobiographical Element," 271).

wary.[11] In an era of political executions, administrators begin to feel constrained by an imperative to please or enrich a king, especially when annuities did not appear on schedule. Hoccleve describes Privy Seal employees as still firmly rooted in a context of *adulatio* and favor-seeking, without the benefit of true proximity to the king.[12] Like many contemporaries, he spent his career in one office, waiting and working "a longo tempore," in the words of an official document granting him a small sum after his first dozen years of service.[13] But subsistence required strategies beyond dedication, and petitionary poems were popular at this time, revealing a frustration felt by administrators who were not receiving their fair pay for services rendered. Beyond reminding kings or other benefactors of pay owed, these poems might offer literary services in exchange for deeper patronage.[14] Literary productions showcased political skills valuable to any patron interested in the manipulation of language, and indispensability better ensured payment.

Second, Hoccleve diagnoses a communication breakdown inherent to bureaucratic overgrowth, a collapse of efficiency threatening to overcome the best efforts of administrative personnel. Government had by this time become bulky and unwieldy, the product of accretion rather than logical adaptation and

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[11] See *Dialogue of the Exchequer* (Amt), 11 and Hoccleve's *Regiment* lines 2115-2128. Although these lines are explicitly about chess, editor Blyth notes that the poet intends to imply his message is also about the exchequer (*Regiment* p. 219-20). Tolmie evaluates these lines for their implicit threat to the king's or future king's secrecy in "The *Prive Scilence* of Thomas Hoccleve," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 22 (2000): 298-300.
[12] Turner, "Definition of *Curialis*," 13.
[13] Brown, "Privy Seal Clerks," 263; Carpenter and Matteoni, "Offices and Officers," 90.
[14] John Burrow, "The Poet as Petitioner," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 3 (1981): 61-75; Gwilym Dodd and Sophie Petit-Renaud, "Grace and Favour: The Petition and Its Mechanisms," in Fletcher, *Government and Political Life*, 240-78.

modification. Inefficiencies proliferated, especially in the secretarial departments, whose movement “out of court” resulted in redundancies, “delay, unnecessary duplication…and obfuscation. Government decisions had to be processed through larger webs of bureaucracy and were recorded in ways which were both longwinded and misleading."[15] The secretarial departments had enjoyed a closer relationship to England’s kings due to their nature as the producers of letters within the royal orbit, yet pressures of growth drove their successive establishment out of court. Communications among these offices constituted an indirect mechanism for moving the government machinery. The administration was getting in the way of itself, the multiplication of document forms and document-issuing departments congesting official discourse. The Privy Seal for which Hoccleve worked had originally been established to bypass the ponderous mechanisms of chancery and exchequer, yet his bureaucratic experience may have been one of excess perceived as unnecessariness.[16]

In the early fifteenth century scribe Hoccleve found himself pushed to the margins and displaced from his department’s eponymous function: that of being privy to the king’s private spaces and providing confidential counsel and other services. As with the finance bureau and common law courts, as secretarial offices moved out of court their employees reported to their own overseers rather

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[15] Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery,” 50, 58. Problems with one department spilled over into the others, and so chancery inefficiencies led to “convoluted and confusing practices at the exchequer” (62).

[16] Tolmie remarks on the Privy Seal’s “institutional indirection” which Hoccleve may have found “dehumanizing” and “alienating,” though familiarity also leads him to “reproduce its tendency toward stepped or tiered communication” in his poems (“*Prive Scilence*,” 289-90); see also Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 25-6, 181-82.

than the king, and lost "intimate contact with the lord's household."[17] The administrative arm was becoming independently influential, but the position of individual scribes was precarious. Once the king's solution to the problem of an overburdened chancery, the Privy Seal became a middleman, communicating instructions to the chancery or exchequer which had the real power to send out letters of command.[18] Each in turn the secretarial departments had been "at the centre of the king's personal rule,"[19] but as their employees ceased to take direct orders from him they might have felt a loss of patronage or importance that previous generations had gained from doing the king's bidding. Away from king and court, bureaucracy had largely lost its advisory capacity. These offices moved from the "private sphere of the royal authority" into the public sphere, where they had responsibilities to a nation rather than simply to a king.[20] Public poetry respects this broad national responsibility, but also seeks to re-establish a closer influence between scribal employee and monarch. Such personnel continued to be the heart of functional government, but were replaced in the king's retinue by other sorts of *familiares* to provide advice and companionship. Realistically, kings could not concern themselves with day-to-day business like writs and legal suits, the ephemera of kingship, and as the numerous peddlers of this ephemera, scribes themselves became less important; yet political writers

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[17] Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 47. See also Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 15-18. Judith Ferster also discusses manuscripts of the *Secretum Secretorum* tradition which emphasize scribes as confidants and sources of knowledge about the realm, in *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 137 and passim.
[18] Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 63.
[19] Ibid., 50.
[20] Tout, *Administrative History*, 1:20.

engaged in rhetoric envisioning a king's close association with the routine praxis of governance, relying upon the administration's guardians as special advisors.

England's longstanding public discourse over who may advise a king received new life in an era that had witnessed uprisings of peasant actors who violently asserted themselves as kings' counsellors in replacement of the traditional ranks of *familiares.* The contested category of "new men" was also swelling into a quite multifarious group incorporating urban and gentry members alongside university graduates and scions of administrative families—and its traditional contention with the baronage over the right to advise the king had become rather institutionalized in the form of Parliament's houses of Commons and Lords. Writers like Hoccleve who entered administration at this time were quite aware of the contested sources of advice advanced on numerous fronts. Whatever spin Hoccleve and others may have engaged in, politicized literary discourse and the advice trope allows Hoccleve to identify a solution to bureaucratic problems which are also regnal and personal problems. If Richard fitz Nigel emphasized exchequer personnel's skills at auditing, computing, recording, and decision-making; and if *Glanvill* and *Bracton* stressed skilled lawmen's vitality to the king as preservers and generators of law; then the special merit of England's secretarial departments was *talk*. Personnel in the writing departments were experts on talk and communication, textual but also oral.[21]

[21] In their introduction to a volume on transgressive speech, Thelma Fenster and Daniel Smail state that "from the later Middle Ages onward, the positive social and legal functions of talk were progressively handed over to the largely male professional classes, consisting of bureaucrats, state officials, bankers, lawyers, and notaries." "Introduction," in *"Fama": The Politics of Talk and*

Congestion within the government machinery impeded communication, into and out of the court. The answer to a cumbersome administration, and the private needs of a king to communicate and promote his image and agenda, was employees like Hoccleve, masters of communication, experts in expression, clarification, and conveyance of information. Even better was the administrator who wrote poetry, as poets are expert at using language to obscure and clarify, subtly praise or upbraid.

Royal recognition that appearance and representation could be an important tool of social control had already led Henry IV to engage propagandists before Hoccleve entered administrative service. The decades before and after the turn of the fifteenth century were a time of especial pressure on civil servants, courtiers, and public pundits, not least on those men who filled all three of these roles. Lancastrian kings had special reason to employ the old literary trope of a wise king seeking and heeding council, repeatedly set to work against public outcry at costly wars and oppressive social policies. A drive to legitimize a usurping dynasty increased rather than lessened an imperative to remain in the public gaze, aided by propagandistic literature and the enfranchisement of court poets as well as the management of more marginal literate figures.[22] Hoccleve

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Reputation in Medieval Europe, ed. Daniel Smail and Thelma Fenster (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 10.

[22] The shadow of usurpation hung over the Lancastrian kings, and Henry IV faced not only rebellions but the need to excuse his reliance on measures like gift-giving that he and his father had criticized Richard II for (Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 139-47). Henry IV and Henry VI especially relied heavily on their councils for reasons like illness, and so “advice to the king was actually a matter of great importance” in public discussions and literature (2-3). Mirrors for princes were always symbols that kings were “receptive to sage counsel” rather than genuine “books of instruction.” Derek Pearsall, "Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*: The Poetics of Royal Self-Representation," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 386. For more on Lancastrian political problems see Paul

appears to have served such a purpose for the Prince of Wales as he prepared to succeed to the throne as Henry V, and the poet may have even been viewed as "proto-laureate" between the years 1409-15.[23] But the argument of this

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Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and "Lancastrian Court," 142-43 and passim. See Pearsall, "Royal Self-Representation," 386-410 for a discussion of Lancastrian patronization of vernacular literature.

[23] Strohm, *Empty Throne*, 181. In the final years of Henry IV's reign it was especially politically beneficial for Prince Henry to seem an advice-receiver and he may have solicited the *Regiment* for this reason. Hoccleve wrote a "cluster of poems on public themes addressed to Henry" between c.1409/10-1415/16 (Strohm, "Lancastrian Court," 643; John Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve* [Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1994], 17-18). The *Regiment* was his most successful poem and for a time after its publication Hoccleve received his annuity consistently and earned new commissions (Seymour, "Manuscripts," 255-8; Pearsall, "Royal Self-Representation," 410). Bobby Meyer-Lee explores Hoccleve's laureateship in one chapter of his *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), "Thomas Hoccleve, Beggar Laureate" (88-123). Many publications have questioned whether Hoccleve or other writers sincerely supported the Lancastrian program. Pearsall traces the close relationship between the *Regiment* and Prince Henry's posturing, and reads the poem as a vehicle for the prince's rather than the poet's self-representation. Hoccleve may have received a direct commission from the future Henry V, but also wrote in response to the prince's "unspoken wishes" as they percolated through the Privy Seal ("Royal Self-Representation," 393-4). Likewise, he addressed manuscript copies to men Prince Henry had need to ally with (396). Larry Scanlon argues that Hoccleve's *Regiment* makes a case for Prince Henry's right to rule in "The King's Two Voices: Narrative and Power in Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*," in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380-1530*, ed. Lee Patterson (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 232-3; and in idem, *Narrative, Authority and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 301-2. Strohm recognizes in later medieval literature a "complex complicity" with the government demonstrated by a heavy inclusion of themes relevant to the Lancastrian position, such as "profound doubt and unease," "guilty concealment," and "fitful hope of definitive self-legitimation" (*Empty Throne,* 141-2) He reads Hoccleve's tone as that of "the wholehearted ally determined in no respect to offend" who "*tr[ies]* to be as complicit as possible with every aspect of the Lancastrian programme" ("Lancastrian Court," 657, 659). Ferster however warns that all mirrors for princes mix "deference and criticism" (*Fictions of Advice*, 3, 44-54, 67-88, 104, 160) while Sebastian Langdell discovers such criticism in the *Series* which expresses Hoccleve's frustration with censorship and its effect of constraining poetic agency and eliminating the enjoyment of writing. "'What World Is This? How Vndirstande Am I?': A Reappraisal of Poetic Authority in Thomas Hoccleve's *Series*," *Medium Aevum* 78 (2009): 281. Likewise James Simpson's Hoccleve is critical of an unsupportive government that leaves him "nobody's man." "Nobody's Man: Thomas Hoccleve's *Regement*," in *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Julia Boffey and Pamela King (London: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1995), 149-80. To Tolmie Hoccleve takes royal criticism much further, encoding poetic reminders that a king's powers are "conditional" and rely in part on his subjects' good will ("*Prive Scilence*," 284, 296-300). Henry may have stopped patronizing Hoccleve a few years into his reign because he was not sufficiently "docile." John Bowers, "Thomas Hoccleve and the Politics of Tradition," *Chaucer Review* 36 (2002): 363-4. It's worth noting in this context that Hoccleve's madness is dated to 1415/16, right when his heyday of addressing work to the new king came to an end, and perhaps right around when it was becoming clear to him that he had lost Henry's good will.

chapter is not about possible propagandistic content of Hoccleve's poetry, but about the nuanced way he used politicized discourse to construct an identity for himself and his colleagues by idealizing the dual qualifications of the poet-administrator. As advisors, poets can tell the difference between advantageous and destructive language, distinguish truth from lies, and safeguard a king's education and reputation in much the same way administrators were already entrusted with official documents and communiques. Secretarial scribes were responsible for conveying the king's will through letters and directives, and poetry offers a supplementary communicative strategy—especially for Lancastrian kings concerned with the profitable and threatening potentials of language.

Hoccleve makes his case by establishing the king's dangerous position within a court beset by all sorts of troubles but specifically those of discourse—sins of the tongue, such as flattery, gossip, false counsel, and blasphemy. This is itself an old literary commonplace, and we have seen twelfth-century court critics conveying similar arguments. Like clerical sages defending their place at court, Hoccleve's poetry also places him in rhetorical proximity to the king as advisor, though his design is to advise from a distance. Helen Barr and Kate Ward-Perkins show how the notion that "integrity of speech depends on its divorce from centres of power" emerged from fourteenth-century experiments with poetic voices that must "be strategic in order to be heard" and effectively counter malicious court speech.[24] Hoccleve turns his marginalized position into his

[24] "'Spekyng for one's sustenance': The Rhetoric of Counsel in Mum and the Sothsegger, Skelton's Bowge of Court, and Elyot's Pasquil the Playne," in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 251, 256.

greatest strength, depicting how networks of mobile documents and poems deftly controlled by an administrator-poet could overcome the web of sinful speech within which a well-meaning king may be caught. Hoccleve's administrator-poet is a recorder, reproducer, and transmitter of language and wisdom, immune to courtly intrigues because remote, a flexible advisor and bearer of the king's word present at nodal points of communication outside the royal court. Like a telephone operator, such a man can be vital as a connecting point yet not physically in the room. Hoccleve wishes to ensure his royal and noble patrons (or prospective patrons) that his literature will serve as a reliable communicative and political interface. In this way much of his poetry is every bit the counterpart of the theoretical and practical treatises of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries featured in previous chapters, though Hoccleve targets his advice at the holistic nature of the administrator's mission and not simply the operations of the Privy Seal. He did also produce a set of document models known as the *Formulary*, a more proper treatise for the doing of secretarial work, as well as a mirror-for-princes, the *Regiment of Princes*.[25]

Yet both these texts incorporate personal details to a degree unique for their genres, contributing to a corpus that is at once governance manual and mirror-for-magistrates, using autobiography to map out the administrator's utility in a potentially paralyzing world in which literate men are caught between literary censorship and bureaucratic excesses and uncertain of their place or their duty to write. This chapter will explore the purposes and functions of Hoccleve's

[25] Hoccleve's *Formulary* is British Library Additional MS 24062, edited by Elan-Jean Young Bentley as "The Formulary of Thomas Hoccleve" (PhD diss., Emory University, 1965).

autobiographical details, first arguing that his preoccupation with speech acts underpins his assertion of an administrator-poet's facility with language and the ill effects of misinformed, malicious, or deceptive language. His own material and bodily woes, culminating in mental illness, illustrate England's bureaucratic shortcomings and the poet's vision of reform. This reform implicates bureaucratic culture and identity, and as Hoccleve defines himself he shows how central occupation and colleagues are to his identity and functioning and how bureaucrats offer to Lancastrian kings the ultimate royal counsellor. The focus of the remainder of the chapter is how Hoccleve shaped the reputation of Chaucer into one not of a literary forebear but more specifically as the origin for a lineage of poet-counsellors. Recognition of Hoccleve's independence from Chaucer allows an evaluation of the former's canny politicking and the degree to which he viewed the two halves of his occupation—scribe and poet—as a joint effort geared toward personal aggrandizement and the advancement of administrative professions.

A Longo Tempore

Among all the courtly sins of the tongue Hoccleve catalogues, the worst of all might be silence. This might seem surprising, because his poems emphasize the ill-effects of malicious speech that have long assailed him, as well as the debilitating results of long hours hunched over parchment writing. In a rhetorical turn not uncommon at the time, Hoccleve's personal problems paralleled those

he perceived in the English government.[26] He experienced the collapse of his own communication network, his voice silenced, distorted or lost among the static of proliferating Westminster documents and discourses. His poems are about himself to a degree unprecedented at the time, but they are specifically about language and interpersonal interactions and the ways these can become deficient or dangerous. The ultimate expression of such failed communication is madness and an uncontrollable tongue, which afflictions Hoccleve examines in his final work, the five-poem collection known as the *Series*. Yet in his earliest works and at the height of his sponsorship by the future Henry V, Hoccleve had already concerned himself with exploring the relationship between language and well-being and defended a program of speaking and writing, a self-revelation that serves self-assertion. Such a strategy is vital within a patronage system, as he says in his 1405 *Male regle:* "The prouerbe is, the doumb man no lond getith. / Whoso nat spekith...with neede is bete" (433-4). In the introduction, I asked why a man so averse to speaking and writing would increase his burden by penning poetry after his official work in the Privy Seal. Ethan Knapp considers this question and concludes that for Hoccleve, writing is a reminder of mortality, of ever-increasing bodily deterioration and the disappearance of a scribe into his work.[27] I argue, however, that Hoccleve labors to unite what language threatens to divide, which is not only a fractious and fractured mind but a community of administrators whose unity is threatened by patronage politics and accumulations

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[26] Strohm, “Lancastrian Court,” 644-5; Charles R. Blyth, “Thomas Hoccleve's Other Master,” *Mediaevalia* 16 (1993): 352-5.
[27] *Bureaucratic Muse*, 83-93.

of documentation that have begun to insulate and isolate rather than facilitate communication and expression. Speech and writing can be socially and psychologically therapeutic, maddening if uncontrolled but restorative if contained and mastered. Hoccleve offers a language of a surprising sort that can cut through obscuring bureaucratic clutter and restore lines of communication: gossip. Westminster, a city rife with “straunge countinaunces,” can become re-familiarized through a self-revelatory speech he models in his poetry.

Speech acts feature heavily in Hoccleve’s autobiographical poetry, and are closely tied to his revelations of personal details. Though critics have long praised Hoccleve's presentation of speech as his major area of poetic competency, and as a feature that heightens the feeling of autobiographical realism, analysis of this speech does not typically feature in evaluations of the poems’ purposes and functions.[28] Speech serves as both a stylistic device, including monologue, dialogue, and reported speech, but is also a primary topic. These poems, apologiae for administrators in difficult financial and social situations, tell the story of a beleaguered government employee whose troubles are decidedly linguistic in origin. The narrator’s life is one circumscribed by instances of flattery, gossip, and other malicious speech, his first experiences

[28] Many critics have noted Hoccleve's mastery of dialogue while disparaging his otherwise lackluster employment of a Chaucerian inheritance. For example, Ian Robinson marks "the success of his occasional creation of convincing speech in domestic situations.” *Chaucer's Prosody: A Study of the Middle English Verse Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 195-6. Derek Pearsall applauds his "gift for vivid, ready and revealing colloquial exchange" which "manages to communicate an ineradicable sense of personal reality.” *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 238, 237. One recent exception is Eleanor Johnson's *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which investigates monologue and dialogue in the *Series* to determine Hoccleve's relation to traditions of ethical literature in England (202-31).

coming when he was a young man working for the Privy Seal. He laments in *La male regle* that he ignored good advice and chose instead to listen to the "feyned wordes of plesance" (241) directed at him by his fellow tavern-goers, who flattered him into generosity. To his face they called him only "maistir" (201), which made him "larger of despense" (205). Boatmen and taverners spread the word that Hoccleve was easily deprived of coin (177-200), and he soon found himself immersed in a hotbed of gossip where drinking will "make [a] tonge speke of folk amis, / For in the cuppe seelden fownden is / Þat any wight his neighburgh commendith" (164-66). Flattery grew into libel against Hoccleve when his money ran out, harming his reputation so that "among an heep my name is now desteyned" (340). At the office Hoccleve faces scheming servants who lie to their masters and pocket money meant to pay scribes, slandering those who protest (*Regiment of Princes* 1499-1540). Tardy annuities and old age threaten to drive away company and comradeship just like spent wages had, as "they that han byfore knowen me, / Faylynge good, me faille wole also" (955-56).

But it is in his later *Series* that Hoccleve's troubles with language reach their zenith, and in which he most closely works out how language can be a means of solving problems that language created. Here, he describes the effects of a period of mental illness he suffered five years previously, which had caused him to babble madly and lose the trust of his colleagues.[29] Years later, he

[29] Hoccleve states in *Complaint* line 55 that he recovered on 1 November, five years prior to the poem's composition. Burrow dates the *Series* to 1419-21, placing the madness around 1414 (*Thomas Hoccleve*, 22, 26-29). Linne Mooney uses historical evidence to show that 1416 makes more sense for the recovery date. "Some New Light on Hoccleve," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 29 (2007): 301-8.

continues to struggle with this loss of trust. Midway through the *Complaint*, the opening 413-line poem, his frustrations over his diminished reputation reach a crisis point. He describes the lengths to which he went to appear mentally stable, even practicing sane behavior in front of a mirror:

> And in my chaumbre at home whanne þat I was
> Mysilfe aloone I in þis wise wrouȝt.
> I streite vnto my mirrour and my glas,
> To loke howe þat me of my chere þouȝt,
> If any othir were it than it ouȝt,
> For fain wolde I, if it not had bene riȝt,
> Amendid it to my kunnynge and myȝt.
>
> Many a saute made I to this mirrour,
> Thinking, 'If þat I looke in þis manere
> Amonge folke as I nowe do, noon errour
> Of suspecte look may in my face appere.
> This countinaunce, I am sure, and þis chere,
> If I it forthe vse, is nothing repreuable
> To hem þat han conceitis resonable.'
>
> (*Complaint* 155-68)

Gossip of his London peers has brought Hoccleve to these depths, peers who refuse to believe he has fully recovered. At this moment before the mirror, Hoccleve's narrator encounters the essential problem plaguing him these five long years: no one believes his speech is truthful, and thus he is locked into a cycle where there is nothing he can say, or write, or do to make people believe he is sane. The more he protests, the more absurd he appears. As both a government employee and poet, his voice is suspect. Yet talk he does, at length, throughout the *Series*, often in direct speech he purportedly uttered to others or himself. Hoccleve places himself into *La male regle*, the *Regiment* prologue, and the *Series* as a character who has much to say, but is worried about what to say, to whom to speak, whether to write, and whether his utterances will be believed

and respected.

Ultimately, the answer he comes to in each instance is to express himself and his monetary requirements by appealing to patrons. As he develops as a writer, his attitude towards the patronage relationship evolves, and his use of poetic speech acts intensifies into an intricate commentary on the nature of administrative communication. Hoccleve writes to participate in an administrative collective which he models as a gossip community, using speech of and about his poetic persona to explore the forces causing disunity among a caste which he sees holding the potential for greater harmony. Hoccleve, a man and an educated government employee, does not fit the demographic which scholars of medieval gossip typically examine.[30] Yet later-medieval bureaucratization and professionalization were making access to and use of official talk increasingly relevant, and as one of these professionals, Hoccleve engaged in communication for a living.[31] His poems show an awareness of the intersection between

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[30] Research focuses on transgressive speech as a means of resistance for marginalized or oppressed populations, especially women, for whom the ability "to speak and be heard" is integral to their status. Sandy Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues: Speech and Gender in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1. See Chris Wickham, "Gossip and Resistance among the Medieval Peasantry," *Past and Present* 160 (1998): 3-24; Karma Lochrie, *Covert Operations: The Medieval Uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 56-7; Sylvia Schein, "Used and Abused: Gossip in Medieval Society," in *Good Gossip*, ed. Robert F. Goodman and Aaron Ben-Ze'ev (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 150-51; Edwin Craun, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity in Medieval English Literature: Pastoral Rhetoric and the Deviant Speaker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-9.

[31] Knapp offers the most extended discussion of the relationship between Hoccleve's poetry and his major piece of professional work, his *Formulary*, a collection of document forms (*Bureaucratic Muse,* especially 17-43 and 159-84). Tolmie's "*Prive Scilence*" and "Professional" also understand Hoccleve's impulse to write literature as an outgrowth of bureaucratic training and the workplace environment and stresses, and similar work explores this facet of Chaucer's writing (see in particular Astell, "Division of Clerks," 32-60; Mead, "Subject of Bureaucracy," 39-66; and Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003]). Jannuzzi's study of the Flemish notary Galbert of Bruges'

occupational and personal utterance, and the dual functions of a gossip community that regulates members in and out of the workplace.[32] When Hoccleve's role in this communication broke down and he lost the ability to speak and presumably write with accuracy, he fell to the wayside. Like any disenfranchised person in medieval England, Hoccleve is concerned by matters of inclusion and exclusion, and harnessing the means by which he might augment his usefulness to the government. Late in life, addressing poems and praise to benefactors, who might themselves take action regarding his delayed wages or notify the appropriate functionary, seems to have become to Hoccleve a futile task, as roundabout a means of taking action as were his Privy Seal missives. I argue that Hoccleve aims in his poems to seize control over personal and public discourses which work at cross-purposes when not well-regulated. Just like a circumspect artful political adviser pulls strings behind the scenes, so Hoccleve demonstrates his control over public discourse not by an outright attack on sins of the tongue but by mastering his own sinful tongue. In the *Series*, the poet commandeers his reputation and his recovery narrative not by censuring gossip but by employing it, harnessing the transformative power of public discourse and its constructive capacity to counter public memories of his mad

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employment of his legal training to write his fact- and detail-oriented story of Charles the Good's death is also instructive ("Notary as Poet," 153-64).

[32] A shared technical lexicon and specialized knowledge characterize gossip communities, which for administrators typically means external perfection and the employment of "formulae" and "routine, restricted vocabulary." Max Gluckman, "Gossip and Scandal," *Current Anthropology* 4 (1963): 309. Ferster suggests Hoccleve "promotes mutual advice-giving among a universal brotherhood" (*Fictions of Advice*, 155), referencing *Regiment* lines 2486-2499 about each person owing another council and ministry.

ramblings and thus re-insert him into the correspondence of his colleagues.[33]

Self-revelation is one of Hoccleve's primary expository modes, and it often strikes readers as, in the subtly dismissive words of H. S. Bennett, "constant gossiping about himself."[34] Knapp echoes this sentiment when he describes Hoccleve's narrative voice as the "voice of the gossip" spreading "scandalous revelation[s]" about himself. Knapp considers this gossip self-effacing, allowing Hoccleve's poems—and his very occupation as a poet—to act as money-seeking petitions.[35] Accepting this humility trope at face value, however, belies the complex ways Hoccleve textually represents the voices of himself and others. What does it really mean to state that Hoccleve engages in gossip about himself? What does his fondness for self-revelation have to do with the frequent presence of direct discourse in the *Series*? As Hoccleve himself frames his problem in the *Complaint*, God has restored his wits, yet "blowe is ny oueral /

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[33] I use the term "gossip" throughout this paper for convenience's sake, with its broad modern meaning of "talk about people when they are not present…[that] reports behavior [and]...rests on evaluating reputations." Luise White, "Between Gluckman and Foucault: Historicizing Rumour and Gossip," *Social Dynamics* 20 (1994): 76. Various medieval terms categorized sins of the tongue, and Susan Phillips advocates for the Middle English "jangling" as the best medieval representation of what modern speakers mean by gossip, with "idle talk" as a synonym. *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 1. Other contemporary terms define transgressive speech acts even more specifically, such as "fama," talk that involved someone's reputation, or "scolding," a public insult or slander (Fenster and Smail, "Introduction," 4; Sandy Bardsley, "Sin, Speech, and Scolding in Late Medieval England," in Smail and Fenster, *Politics of Talk*, 154). I resist terms that connote idleness, because by their nature they subvert functional evaluations of this speech. I take Fenster and Smail's point that "gossip" likewise might have too many negative connotations to be useful to scholars ("Introduction," 8-10), but their proffered term "talk" is too broad to capture the ways in which Hoccleve saw the talk of passersby and his administrative colleagues as effective and purpose-driven.

[34] Bennett, *Chaucer*, 147. For details of Hoccleve's work at the Privy Seal see Mooney, "New Light," 392-40 and Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 20-9. See Matthew Clifton Brown "'Lo, heer the fourme;" Hoccleve's *Series*, *Formulary*, and Bureaucratic Textuality," *Exemplaria* 23 (2011): 27-49 for a discussion of the evidence and an alternative theory on the relationship between form, authority and agency.

[35] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 18-19, 28-9, 43.

The reuerse, wherþoruȝ moche is my mornynge, / Wiche causeth me thus syȝe in compleinynge" (257-9). False rumors occasion this complaint poem, itself a remedy in the form of accurate rumors. This is precisely how Hoccleve justifies the purpose of publishing the *Complaint* to his doubting Friend in the following poem, *Dialogue with a Friend*, an extended conversation about whether Hoccleve will speak out and write: just as knowledge of his mental illness had been "sprad...wide" (*Dialogue* 58), "so wolde I nowe vppon þat othir side / Wist were howe oure lorde Ihesu… / Releued hath me" (60-3). He desires to match the former widespread gossip with new gossip spread equally widely by disseminating the *Complaint,* a poem about the grace of a healing God. Seemingly powerless to speak or behave sanely, the poet recognizes the potential of the good word of others, convinced of his sanity, to circulate in his favor. If no one will believe his own insistences that he is healthy, perhaps they will believe rumors, which receive a sort of authorization from filtering through others' beliefs and opinions and which might prove he is worthy of association.[36] His earlier autobiographical poems similarly display the poet encouraging and participating in gossip, hoping to channel this means of spreading information about his own skills and financial need.

As we have seen from *La male* and *Regiment*, people had been gossiping about Hoccleve since long before his mental illness, exploiting his goodwill for

[36] Fenster and Smail describe how medieval law courts accepted rumor or hearsay as a form of evidence, because widespread knowledge of an event kept alive "eyewitness testimony" and was a sign of reliability: "People talked a great deal about selected facts, the ones they wanted known, and those facts, having been exposed to a validating procedure by talk, were then more clearly worthy of credence at law" ("Introduction," 3n5). Publicity imbues information with power, as "words...gain some yet undefined force by being shared with a larger public" (11). See also White, "Rumour and Gossip," 79 on the authority of rumors and overheard information.

money. At their simplest, claims to being preyed on by gossips elicit sympathy, which is in line with the general demands on readers' compassion in complaint poems. As an aging man Hoccleve recognizes himself a social outcast whose fortunes as poet and scribe rest on his ability to speak and write in a trustworthy voice to attract patrons. These poems respond to the position he found himself in as an under-performing career administrator and poet, and garner sympathy through a conventional tale of woes. Rather than denying his mistakes he seeks forgiveness for them, expecting that a show of regret and apology (and humor) will get him what he wants—his overdue wages, but also recognition and validation of his problems. Critics have suggested this posture is very much a fiction, as his wages were not so in arrears that he did not live the comfortable life of the professional classes. This is especially important if we remember that the *Regiment* appeared at the high point of his public career, when he had reason to expect further support from Henry V. Yet by creating a persona with these particular exaggerated complaints, Hoccleve represents the close connection between reputation and wellbeing. He knows that his reputation is constructed by others' talk, and that writing is one means of shaping this reputation toward his own ends. In Hoccleve's bureaucratic world, interpersonal relationships are mediated to a large degree by speech acts, the importance of which the poet emphasizes with his moralizations and whose mechanics he mimics textually. Simulating the sorts of social interactions crucial to a man with his public roles helps Hoccleve construct a persona constituted quite literally by speech whose own voice might be amplified through others' gossip.

Exaggerating the linguistically malicious atmosphere at court and his own victimization, then, serves rhetorically to expose the misspent youth he repents, because the moral warnings raise the opportunity to describe his own experiences, given as he reveals the content of the gossip and slander aimed at him. Such lessons are common to advice genres and poetry of lamentation or consolation, and it might at first strike readers that Hoccleve engages in traditional anti-gossip pastoral discourse.[37] Yet his claims also inflate his importance and assert his social relevance—he has not yet been fully forgotten. Damaging as others' unkind words may have been to the man, they are central to a mode of poetic authorization which insists the poet's name is on everyone's lips—even the *Regiment*'s Old Man "have herd or this men speke of thee" (1866).

By the time he wrote the *Series*, Hoccleve's deployment of textual gossip had grown sophisticated, positioning him as a perpetual man of interest. Just as the tavern-goers of *Male regle* gossiped about his prodigality-turned-poverty, Hoccleve remains the center of attention after his illness: people are always "talkinge this and þat of my siknesse" (*Complaint* 381), and "many oon" continue

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[37] Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*; Ferster, *Fictions of Advice,* 113. Books of *ars praedicandi* regard preaching as an antithesis to gossip, and literature often paints these two types of speech in binary terms. Mark D. Johnston, "The Treatment of Speech in Medieval Ethical and Courtesy Literature," *Rhetorica* 4 (1986), 21-46. Though historians and literary critics certainly recognize London and the royal court as hotbeds of transgressive speech, scholars of gossip say little about them. Phillips goes so far as to deny the court as a primary imaginary context for gossip (*Transforming Talk*, 8). Critics typically argue that writers and readers most strongly associated "idle talk" with preaching, exemplarity, and confession, because of the Biblical basis of warnings against gossip found in exegesis and pastoral manuals; Middle English poets used these associations to challenge pastoral expectations and authority. Edwin D. Craun, "Introduction: Marking Out Deviant Speech," in Edwin D. Craun, ed. *The Hands of the Tongue: Essays on Deviant Speech* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), x-xiii; idem, *Lies, Slander, and Obscenity*, 3-9; Schein, "Used and Abused," 140, 144-51.

to judge him wrongly (208). His infirmity "was so knowen to þe peple and kouth / That counseil was it noon… / Howe it wiþ me stood was in euery mannes mouþe" (43-5). In fact, when his Friend insists that everyone had already "forȝete" the madness and placed it "oute of mynde" (*Dialogue* 30), Hoccleve insists on publicizing the *Complaint* in order to keep the issue alive (24). Gossip is effective for this purpose because its very existence presupposes intrigue and interest, drawing in "listeners" who might otherwise not care about the man. Hoccleve facilitates this technique by making information about himself available for gossip. In the autobiographical poems he makes no attempt at privacy and is free with details about his life and adversity, providing more grist for the gossip mill. As Patricia Spacks defines it gossip is essentially a form of discourse that transforms private information into public knowledge.[38] Hoccleve wishes to control what information becomes public, "managing [his] *fama*" textually, just as his contemporaries routinely groomed their appearance and behavior in public.[39] Utterance converts to hearsay which readers might continue to spread.

Technically it might not be possible to gossip about oneself, theorists say, as gossip is inherently about another person. Instead Hoccleve's methodology is to manipulate others' thoughts and speech about him.[40] He does depict his own gossiping voice, though, and describe himself as a gossiper, offering himself as a model secret-sharer and establishing that he used to be a more active member

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[38] Spacks*, Gossip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 262.
[39] Fenster and Smail, "Introduction," 4. *Fama* means both a person's reputation and the talk that constructs it (2).
[40] Robert Goodman, "Introduction," in Goodman and Ben-Ze'ev, *Good Gossip*, 6; White, "Rumour and Gossip," 81-2.

of a gossip community. He discloses information not just about himself but about others in ways that resemble intimate tale-telling. He admits in *Male regle* to whispering about men in taverns out of fear of confrontation: "rownyngly I spak, nothyng on highte" (172). He slyly reports on two of his fellow Privy Seal scribes, the paralipsis of the second line emphasizing the mood of confabulation:

> Of two as looth I am seur kowde I towche.
> I dar nat seyn Prentys and Arondel
> Me countrefete, and in swich wach go ny me,
> But often they hir bed louen so wel
> Þat of the day it drawith ny the pryme
> Or they ryse vp. Nat tell I can the tyme
> What they to bedde goon, it is so late.
> O helthe, lord, thow seest hem in þat cryme,
> And yit thee looth is with hem to debate.
> (320-28)

Further paralipsis introduces racy subject matter, the "shaply" and "feir" women frequenting the tavern of whom Hoccleve "dar nat telle" (*Male regle* 138-9), intriguing readers while conveying the feeling of glimpsing someone's private life. Hoccleve's storytelling in *Male regle* and the *Regiment* returns persistently to matters of speech, recounting a speech act or marking out a passage as speech by calling it chatter, babble or raving. Regular digressions encourage the impression that he is speaking to auditors eagerly awaiting the conclusion of the tale.[41] Framing his complaints as confession allows Hoccleve to share personal

[41] See *Male regle* 160, 289-90, 337, and 393-4. Similarly, the *Regiment* prologue's Old Man speaks slanderously about lady Fortune, then recants his speech as prattling (1383), insisting it was only a "jape" (1395) distracting from the real matter at hand. Rhetorical gossip also appears in Chaucer, argues Phillips, where gossip is both a narrative subject and a storytelling technique: narrators' idle talk creates an intimate relationship with their audience, while allowing a poet to transform old stories into novelties and mediate his relationship with classic texts (*Transforming Talk*, 2-3, 79-80). Gossip's inherent qualities of "proliferation" and "distortion" build narrative momentum through periods of revelation and retreat, while the flexibility of this technique justifies gossip as a method of transferring authorized tales and not just idle talk (74-9, 82, 105, 115).

information seemingly confidentially. Frequent apostrophes, addressed in *Male regle* to the likes of Health, Flattery, or England's treasurer, Lord Furnival and in the *Regiment* to Chaucer, King Henry, and even Edward III, likewise conveys information to the audience only indirectly or secondhand as readers catch the speakers' words by “eavesdropping."

Though *Male regle* makes use of reported speech to imitate gossip, Hoccleve experiments with quotations of direct discourse and dialogue in the *Regiment* and *Series,* which devices further the impression of speech overheard as rumor. In the *Regiment* prologue this primarily takes the form of a conversation between the narrator and Old Man character, but throughout the treatise Hoccleve uses direct speech and dialogue as a standard storytelling device. The theme of the *Regiment* prologue is analogous to *Male regle*, where a frank and sometimes comic honesty about his intemperance solicits attention and patronage, though now the narrator relates his personal problems as a speech act within his exchange with the Old Man. This conversation is comparable to that between Thomas and the Friend in the later *Dialogue*, though the speech acts in this earlier poem are longer and less realistic.[42] If medieval contemporaries agreed with modern commentators, they may have judged

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Although I argue that Hoccleve likewise views gossip as potentially productive socially and narratively, he engages with this textual strategy very differently from Chaucer. Hoccleve is present as a narrator and character in his own poetry to a far greater extent than Chaucer, and uses gossip more straightforwardly in order to reveal information about himself rather than occlude it. For example, Chaucer's technique in the *House of Fame* of continually delaying the literary payout through paralipsis, and his technique in the *Canterbury Tales* of intensifying community familiarity through an extended "inside joke," are not strategies Hoccleve can afford to use because he is attempting to be transparent to readers not cryptic (see *Transforming Talk*, 78, 84, 94).

[42] Mitchell, "Autobiographical Element," 282.

Hoccleve's persona in *Male regle* to be uncompelling because of its reliance on conventional allegorical figures to describe the poet's mental world.[43] Dialogue creates a more lifelike narrator-character in the later works. Hoccleve has not experienced madness by this point, but he does claim to have been ill spiritually and bodily, and the conversation with the Old Man is a mechanism allowing the poet to textually confront an interlocutor with his story of misery and contrition.[44] This interaction has the potential to produce sympathy more effectively than had *Male regle* because here the narrator is a real person with real-world problems rather than the Everyman seeking spiritual solace.[45] Manfred Markus explains that later medieval writers like Hoccleve began using dialogue extensively in order to confront readers with direct utterances that they must interpret for themselves.[46] Thus when readers judge Hoccleve to be unfairly burdened by his woes, his assertions become true. Readers are rightly skeptical of the claims a poet might make when he is asking for money and sympathy in petitionary poems, but the Thomas of the *Regiment* prologue is a melancholic figure desperate to give vent to his troubles; readers have little reason to think he would be dishonest to an old man. After all, he would prefer to keep to himself and only

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[43] Stephen Kohl, "More than Virtues and Vices: Self-Analysis in Hoccleve's 'Autobiographies,'" *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 14 (1988): 117-18.

[44] In fact, the Old Man repeatedly encourages Hoccleve to speak up and share his story, insisting that his revelations are interesting and welcome (see *Regiment* 184, 232, 747, 814-15, 798, 814, 1030-1036, 1047, 1229, 1551, 1849-50, 1854-5). This prodding, like his claims of being gossiped about, projects the impression that Hoccleve's work is in demand.

[45] Kohl, "Virtues and Vices," 117-18.

[46] Markus, "Truth, Fiction and Metafiction in 15th-Century English Literature, Particularly in Lydgate and Hoccleve," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 8 (1983): 118-19. Thinkers had set aside the Augustinian conception of absolute truth and instead wished readers to evaluate truth and authority for themselves, using objective evidence such as narrative and speech acts which had the illusion of taking place without the interference of a storyteller (19). In other words, "voice gives narrative its strongest claim to be reproducing the real" (Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power*, 302).

begrudgingly gets drawn in to the conversation by this bystander who notices he is troubled.

In the *Series*, Hoccleve returns directly and unapologetically to material about his suffering, including the ill health of old age which led to madness. As his consistent moralizing makes clear gossip is always rife at court, but plagued Hoccleve especially after his mental illness, when others' talk compounded a difficult recovery. The illness had caused him to lose control of his speech faculty, which is a serious malady for a bureaucrat—the popular mirror for princes genre, with its descriptions of diligent counselors and meticulous secretaries, reveals the high standards to which government scribes were held.[47] Hoccleve's illness was short-lived, but its social effects persisted. After his recovery, former associates refuse to believe he has returned to his senses, or insist that madness will soon return:

> For manie a wiȝt aboute me dwelling
> Herde I me blame and putte in dispreisying.

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[47] Administrative manuals like *Bracton* and *Dialogue of the Exchequer* stress the need for accuracy in legal and financial copying. Hershey describes how a government document "demanded exactness in all its particulars" in order to hold up in court, and scribes had no room for error ("Justice and Bureaucracy," 838). It is for this reason that mirrors for princes set out strict criteria for a king's selection of scribes (Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, passim; Turner, *Men Raised*, 10-11). The perfection expected of documents necessarily spilled over into ideals for the behavior and appearance of their scribes. Stephen Jaeger describes how the humanist education of courtiers and administrators, acquired from cathedral schools into the twelfth century and thereafter from secular courts, emphasized *mores* or "manners." "Cathedral Schools and Humanist Learning, 950-1050," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 61 (1987), 574-5, 576, 608. This meant not only administrative skills but a rigid form of self-presentation, an "exterior perfection," because outer refinement was a reflection of interior worth and there existed a link between "good governance of the self and the state" (582, 585, 595-601). These concepts are also at the heart of Jaeger's more recent *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Hoccleve's readers would likely contrast his rumored "bukkissh" (animal-like) behavior with the "sedate and bookish" behavior usually expected of a Privy Seal employee (Hickey, "Doubting Thomas," 60; *Complaint* line 123).

> Thus spake manie oone and seide by me:
> 'Alþouȝ from him his siiknesse sauage
> Withdrawen and passed as for a time be,
> Resorte it wole, namely in suche age
> As he is of,' and thanne my visage
> Bigan to glowe for the woo and fere.
> Tho wordis, hem vnwar, cam to myn eere.
> 'Whanne passinge hete is,' quod þei, 'trustiþ this,
> Assaile him wole aȝein that maladie.'
> (*Complaint* 83-93)

The situation sets off a period of anxiety and insecurity during which Hoccleve is desperate to prove his health regained, yet no one will believe attestations about his wellness from his own mouth. All inevitably assume that any utterance of his is tinged by madness (141-5). Former acquaintances turn their heads away when they come across him in public and pretend they do not see him, in order to prevent these awkward encounters (76-7). Friends and colleagues whisper amongst themselves about Hoccleve's insanity, talking *about* him, rather than *with* him. Others' gossip soon paralyzes Hoccleve's own voice as he begins to avoid conversations out of fear his speech will seem mad (145). He is powerless to act, all the while listening to gossip without the ability to respond. He could not bring himself to stop listening to this hurtful talk, but "leide an eere ay to as I by wente, / And herde al" (134-5). An inability to verbally express himself—as though he "had lost [his] tunges keie" (144)—aggravates his frustrations. Persistent distance from associates on the city streets further excludes him and threatens to push him over the edge into madness once again. This is the fundamental difference between Hoccleve's plight in the *Series* and in the previous complaint poems. Whereas gossip has been negative in the past, it has been truthful, and textually advantageous. The madness theme of the *Series*

escalates his complaint oeuvre, perhaps because he had actually experienced madness, but perhaps because this motif allows the poet to intensify his victimization by gossip and thus his commentary on the fragility of reputation and a poet-administrator's solvency.[48]

Crucially, he emphasizes in the *Complaint* that the gossips are no longer accurate. His mode of self-revelation continues to encourage rumors, that he is sane and trustworthy. He seems to want his life to be an open book—literally as well as figuratively—to head off *false* rumors of his madness's continued effects. He is frustrated only that the gossips are not getting it right: "In hem putte I no defaute but oon. / That I was hool, þei not ne deme kowde" (288-9). He depicts some Privy Seal friends attempting to spread accurate gossip, as if giving instructions to readers:

> Axide han they ful oftesithe, and freined
> Of my felawis of the Priue Seel,
> And preied hem to telle hem wiþ herte vnfeined,
> Howe it stood with me, wethir yuel or wel.
> And they the sothe tolde hem euery del,
> But þei helden her wordis not but lees.
> (295-300)

Hoccleve has lost control over his *fama*, as inaccurate gossip eclipses his own speaking voice. If his voice is disabled, he has no utterances of his own to record in the *Complaint* as he had in the *Regiment* prologue, which fact he underscores by quoting a number of thoughts he has recently had about his predicament in

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[48] Classen argues that Hoccleve's poetry does not even become truly autobiographic or self-reflexive until his real-life madness makes self-analysis possible and necessary ("Autobiographical Voice," 310). As a literary trope, madness has this same effect of justifying and intensifying introspection as well as examining the relationship between self and world (see Hickey, "Doubting Thomas," 62).

lieu of speech.[49] These passages, much like quoted direct discourse, capture exactly what was going through his head, cogent sound bites that in better days the poet might like to hear repeated as rumor. These moments come after Hoccleve overhears gossip and his bottled-up thinking threatens to burst. Thoughts are his only possible reaction, prevented as he is by circumstances from voicing these responses in real life, his utmost goal, because any mistake ran the risk of further reinforcing damaging rumors: "'[I]f I in þis prees amys me gye, / To harme wole it me turne and to folie'" (*Complaint* 139-40).

Alongside his own internal monologue, he quotes others' gossip for objective scrutiny. Hoccleve does not try to silence his opponents, just as he freely admitted to rumors spread about him in *Male regle*. As he relates the cruel whispers overheard on the streets he allows gossips to describe his malady for the reader. One gossip says, "Full bukkissh is his brayn, wel may I trowe" (*Complaint* 123), and another, "[he] apt is in þe rowe / To site of hem that a resounles reed / Can ȝeue: no sadnesse is in his heed" (124-6). In this way readers, as they seem to overhear gossip, can know precisely what is said about the man from the speech of passers-by and acquaintances. Such comments offer proof of Hoccleve's plight, that he is not over-reacting—as we have seen, his own repeated assertions risk coming across as petulant or insane. When readers who, privy to seemingly real-life scenarios captured in text, see evidence of the actual criticism the poet encounters and imagine him reacting, they are more likely to take Hoccleve's side against the cruel gossips. As in the *Regiment*

[49] *Complaint* 135-40, 163-68, 169-75, 185-89, 190-93, and 274-80.

prologue the realism of speaking characters produces a more concrete identity for the gossips, allowing the poet's defensive claims of mental health to be more effective because they seem to respond to real persons not ones who exist in a potentially mad mind. When Hoccleve's tormentors speak for themselves, he can potentially answer them and have a voice beyond his internal one, countering the gossip with sane and cogent utterances.

During the course of the *Complaint* Hoccleve works his way toward a solution to his problem of a silenced and suspect voice. As it is, the gossip mill cannot work in his favor and revive his reputation. Responding, within readers' earshot, to inaccurate gossip will not be enough for Hoccleve as long as no one will believe his speech. Although good gossip can grease the wheels of his re-acceptance by colleagues, it is not enough in itself to prove sanity. When he practices sane behavior before a mirror, he realizes that putting his thought and actions on display for readers, who are welcome to observe his antics and scrutinize his language, cannot acquit him as it did in *Male regle* and the *Regiment* because transparency is not possible while his sanity is suspect. These endeavors can only come to naught, he soon admits, because a man's appearance and behavior are no adequate measure of his state of mind, which *must* be tested by speech because "by commvnynge is the beste assay" (*Complaint* 217).[50] "Communing" is a specific sort of speech—conversation—

[50] There was a general belief in the Middle Ages that madness would manifest itself outwardly, and lunatics were legally judged by behavioral observation and oral interview. Matthew Boyd Goldie, "Psychosomatic Illness and Identity in London, 1416-1421: Hoccleve's *Complaint* and *Dialogue with a Friend*," *Exemplaria* 11 (1998), 28; S. Harper, "By cowntynaunce it is not wist:

which Hoccleve is not able to participate in while he and his colleagues avoid each other. Stylistically, the *Complaint* disallows an “assay” because it presents not a completed dialogue but two groups of people speaking across each other. Hoccleve eavesdrops and then complains to readers, a very one-directional exchange of information. He must interrupt this process, recovering and presenting his own speaking voice. Once he has demonstrated the nature of his problem and its solution within the boundaries of the *Complaint*, he must engage with his former acquaintances, and the *Dialogue with a Friend* meets this end.

Critics recognize the *Complaint*’s mirror scene as Hoccleve’s emotional nadir, and though they disagree on whether he ever recovered, those who accept his recovery typically view the *Series* as a chronicle of his coming to terms with and then overcoming the illness’s fallout. They identify the Friend of the *Dialogue* as the agent of Hoccleve’s social recovery, because his own eventual trust endorses the poet’s sanity for readers.[51] Most interpret the Friend as a typical reader or a representative of the "society" whose acceptance Hoccleve needs, and in this way their conversation allows the poet to face his accusers and orally acquit himself of a charge of insanity.[52] But if nobody will believe anything he

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Thomas Hoccleve's *Complaint* and the Spectacularity of Madness in the Middle Ages," *History of Psychiatry* 8 (1997), 387-8.

[51] The logic here is that the *Dialogue* offers Hoccleve an opportunity to reason and prevail in a debate about his continued writing and publication; when he wins over his friend, who stands for a reading audience, readers will follow the friend's change of heart and believe Hoccleve sane and reasonable. For variations of this traditional argument see Mitchell, "Autobiographical Element," 282-83; Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry,” 404; Burrow, "Experience and Books," 260, 264; Kohl, "Virtues and Vices,” 124; Simpson, "Madness and Texts," 21; Classen, "Autobiographical Voice," 305-6; Hickey, "Doubting Thomas," 62-3; Goldie, "Illness and Identity, 44-51; Tolmie, "*Prive Scilence*," 307-8.

[52] Goldie says the Friend "embodies the society that has been such a problem for Hoccleve" ("Illness and Identity," 46). To Kohl, the Friend "[examines] the words of his friend with the critical attention a doctor would pay to his patient… [and] bases his judgment...on the impression he has

says, how can Hoccleve use speech to prove his sanity? What, exactly, is different in the *Dialogue* from the occasions when, in real life or in poetry, Hoccleve spoke and no one listened or understood? James Simpson concludes that the *Dialogue* authorizes the poet's speaking voice by constructing an "extra-textual" context, crafted to read as speech rather than text, which divorces the poet from any writing which could be read "diagnostically" for signs of madness.[53] Hoccleve defeats his Friend's reservations by contending that no author can be "completely knowable" to readers, because "privacy…[is] a necessary element in the relationship between audience and author."[54] If a reader (or auditor or interlocutor) is never able to wholly know and trust a speaker or composer's state of mind, it stands to reason that the Friend and other acquaintances' assumptions of Hoccleve's insanity are moot. Yet this extra-textual effect does not establish sanity, so much as a space for sanity to be an option; a skeptical reader will ignore this effect as he will have ignored Hoccleve's general poetic competence, including his use of rhyme, allusion, and irony, when he persists in suspecting Hoccleve's oral and textual productions. Far from expecting his audience to respect his privacy, Hoccleve has never been private, and quite to the contrary has used his autobiographical poetry to elide poet into narrator and character.[55]

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gained from their encounter" ("Virtues and Vices," 124). Burrow argues that Hoccleve placates the Friend through his "display of public spirit" during his diatribe against clipped coins, and again by promising moderation in his future work ("Experience and Books," 264).

[53] Simpson, "Madness and Texts," 19, 21-2.

[54] Ibid., 26.

[55] Writing in the first person was common enough in genres such as dream-visions, penitential lyrics, and confessional poetry, but Hoccleve conflates author with narrator and main character by naming his narrators variously "Thomas" and "Hoccleve." The *Regiment* narrator tells the Old

This latter dialogue is more poetically sophisticated than that in the *Regiment*, whose Old Man dominated his exchange with Thomas and preached of values like voluntary poverty which effectively undercut Hoccleve's grievances as petty.[56] That conversation offered him not an opportunity to debate logically and defend his complaints but simply to temporarily solve his bodily and financial problems by writing the *Regiment* for Prince Henry.[57] The Hoccleve narrating the *Series* no longer needs a wise old man to guide him to a state of repentance where he can be honest about his shortcomings and solicit sympathy and trust from readers. The Friend appears at first a similar guide, an advisor and sounding-board to calm the agitated poet, but Hoccleve subverts readers' expectations about the textual "assay" as he takes control of the conversation. The Friend claims to have "taastid" Hoccleve (*Dialogue* 485), but how exactly can a reader accept the poet's sanity in the *Dialogue* just because he eventually convinces his Friend? How is a reader, thrust into a contrived textual situation, supposed to evaluate the speaker's logic? I argue that Hoccleve demonstrates the sane working of his mind not by speaking rationally before a judge, but by revealing that others have been speaking irrationally—in this way he discredits attacks against his sanity by the gossips and the Friend who offers suspect advice. In order to set the record straight and construct "good gossip,"[58] Hoccleve

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Man he is called Hoccleve (1864) and that he works for the Privy Seal (802; he also names himself at 4360); the speaker of *Male regle* calls himself Hoccleve (352); and the *Dialogue*'s Friend calls the narrator both Hoccleve (3) and Thomas (10, 20, 25, 199, 203, 449, 749, 785).

[56] For example see *Regiment* 1055-57, 1814-22, and 1860-62.

[57] The Old Man insists that writing to Prince Henry will solve Hoccleve's problems, and gives him advice on how to do so (1832-1952).

[58] For this term see Goodman, "Introduction," 1-8. Recent research suggests that late-medieval writers understood the power of the spoken and written word for navigating the power politics of

resolves to seek “hem þat han conceitis resonable” to judge his case; his friend is not one of these reasonable judges, but instead parrots erroneous rumors and unsound judgement which Hoccleve is able to discredit as irrational through a program of characterizing destructive and constructive forms of discourse.

The weight of Hoccleve’s complaint throughout the *Series* is not self-defense, but a railing against his critics. This defiant attitude is often missed by commentators who focus on evidence within the *Complaint*, and in the mirror scene in particular, of Hoccleve's continued anxiety and melancholy. When Hoccleve appears to be uncertain whether he is "in [his] own cas...blinde alday"

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late Angevin and Lancastrian England. They considered poetic speech-acts contributions to public discourse, able to “transform” the world rather than simply represent it. David Coley, *The Wheel of Language: Representing Speech in Middle English Poetry, 1377-1422* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 5-15. Research in the past few decades has gone a long way towards rehabilitating the reputation of gossip, drawing on sociological and anthropological studies of the individual and collective benefits of rumors and hearsay. Max Gluckman's "Gossip and Scandal” is seminal, distilling and assembling the findings about gossip of other anthropologists. See also White's re-evaluation of Gluckman, "Rumour and Gossip," and Sally Yerkovich, "Gossiping as a Way of Speaking," *Journal of Communication* 27 (1977): 192-96. The essays in *Good Gossip,* ed. Goodman and Ben-Ze’ev, offer a useful range of arguments about gossip's function, while questioning whether these functions can ever offset moral qualifications. Although gossip had destructive potential for communities, functional approaches to "good gossip" recognize how this talk could augment moral instruction by spreading cautionary tales about wrongdoing and its consequences (Gluckman, "Gossip and Scandal," 308, 312). For example, the shame of a literary character who has been gossiped about is instructional to a reader (Fenster and Smail, "Introduction," 5-6). Ecclesiastical and secular authorities did outlaw gossip and other speech that could lead to social rupture, and communities used these standards as one means of policing women in particular (Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*; Bardsley, "Sin, Speech, and Scolding," 145-64; Schein, "Used and Abused,” 140, 148-51; Phillips, *Transforming Talk*, 13-63; Craun, "Introduction." Yet the standard mode of communication in the Middle Ages was oral, and since accurate news would have been difficult to differentiate from falsified or exaggerated statements, sharing rumors and hearsay was not necessarily an inherently negative practice in the Middle Ages (Schein, "Used and Abused," 139, 144). The essays in *Good Gossip* make the fundamental observation that, even when gossip is much maligned, it is ever-present in reality and in texts. Overcoming modern biases against gossip allows more objective readings of texts and a nuanced understanding of why and how prescriptive warnings against gossip exist yet could not eliminate the practice. For a similar viewpoint see Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, 2-3 and Fenster and Smail, "Introduction," 9. Further evidence that gossip was not seen as inherently malicious comes from manuals on courtesy and *ars arengandi et praedicandi*, which often underscore the value of letting one's good reputation build and speak for itself, rather than self-boasting. This advice differentiates malicious from beneficial gossip not by whether a person's reputation is good or bad, but by whether the rumors are true or false (lying or flattery). See Johnston, "Treatment of Speech," for an introduction to these texts.

to his madness (170), modern readers question whether he is becoming unhinged, as Hoccleve himself questions whether he is viewing his own comportment through mad, untrustworthy eyes.[59] Yet throughout the poem he stresses categorically that he and his mind are "of suche acord / As we were" before the madness (59) and that "howe so be my countinaunce, / Debaat is nowe noon bitwixe me and my wit" (246-7). If Hoccleve appears briefly uncertain about his sanity, he does not dwell on his troubles but immediately asks himself how to proceed (173). He soon comes to find that his real problem is the reliability of his judges, because if he is potentially a bad judge of his behavior, so is *anyone*, since "uppon a look is harde men hem to grounde / What a man is" (211-12). Since outward appearance and mental disposition might be at great odds (239-45), it is a delicate matter to test who is stable and who mad, and observers have not taken care to evaluate Hoccleve fairly or rationally. He has in

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[59] Richard Lawes discusses evidence for mental disturbance in the *Series* in his "Psychological Disorder and the Autobiographical Impulse in Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe and Thomas Hoccleve," in *Writing Religious Women*, ed. Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 224, 232. Greetham notes that Hoccleve never escapes from the anxiety and melancholy associated with "thought" because writing is both cause and cure of his problems ("Self-Referential Artifacts," 246-8). Burrow reads Hoccleve's anxiety over the *Series*' reception as a symptom of mental illness ("Experience and Books," 268-9), while Hickey likewise identifies "symptoms of paranoia and depression" ("Doubting Thomas," 59). Mills sees "mood swings" in the *Dialogue*, as Hoccleve vacillates between insisting he is sane and constructing himself "as an example of human infirmity" ("Voices of Thomas Hoccleve," 93). To Harper Hoccleve's "morbid self-consciousness" verges on a panic disorder, caused by "the divide between inner and outer," part of the poet's contention "that a deranged man might appear to be sane" ("Spectacularity of Madness," 389-91). Goldie similarly argues that Hoccleve is never cured because his attempts to write himself sane and whole only reveal the extent of his fragmentation; temporal distortions and circular logic reveal that he persistently "maintain[s] an inner self different from the outer" ("Illness and Identity," 39-41). Lee Patterson argues that Hoccleve can never recuperate because the *Series* "follows…[a] pattern of resolution undone by rupture" leaving the poet "unable to advance [his] goals of integrating the self with itself and the individual within society." "'What is Me?': Self and Society in the Poetry of Thomas Hoccleve," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23 (2001): 444, 446. Knapp claims Hoccleve draws attention to his unavoidable "fragmentation of identity" and the difficulty of determining an "authentic self" (*Bureaucratic Muse*, 163-74).

the first place lacked adequate opportunity to demonstrate his sanity through speech: "sithen welny eny wiȝt for to commvne / With me loth is" (269-70), Hoccleve has had no real chance to be tested in the court of reason.

He disputes the rationality of those who have put him to the test on two grounds. First, some passers-by admit that he currently behaves sane, but believe his illness will certainly "resorte" as Hoccleve ages or "whanne passinge hete is" (*Complaint* 86-93). But they clearly “token hem amis," as for five years he has given no sign of relapse (94-7). It is unreasonable for his fellows to persistently deny him the benefit of the doubt, and it is also a "lewidnesse / Men wiser hem pretende þan thei be," because only God knows what will happen in the future (99-104). Second, and more of a problem, are the acquaintances who continue to automatically judge the man's actions and utterances insane, making foregone conclusions: "whatso þat euere I shulde answere or seie, / They wolden not han holde it worth a leke" (142-3). Witnesses interpret both his silence and his speech as equal evidence of madness, and dismiss evidence of his sanity in the form of attestations from his colleagues (291, 295-301). It is purposeless for Hoccleve to daily walk the streets if his cause is hopeless, yet if he stays home, observers mark his absence and assume he has something to hide (183-196).

This circularity exhausts Hoccleve. The mirror scene is his breaking point, but not in terms of a mental collapse. Instead he observes the absurdity of his situation—he is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. In his certainty about his mental state he censures his evaluators, who are "faulty" because unable to recognize he is "whole" (288-89). Hoccleve leaves no room for doubt

that he believes himself right and his critics baseless, describing the situation as if "[a] dirke clowde / Hir siȝt obscurid withynne and wiþoute, / And for al þat were ay in suche a doute" (292-94). He insists that anyone “resonable" will agree with him and find "nothing repreuable" in his expression (166-68).[60] He calls these unwise judgements "imaginings" (307, 380), underscoring their break from reality and rationality. He critiques the gossips as inadequate social judges and challenges those who still deem him insane to, "as I by hem goo, / Taste and assay if it be so or noo" (209-10). He is certain that he will pass this test if it is administered properly. As he reflects on the absurdity of his situation and the pointlessness of trying to prove himself sane, Hoccleve comes to the conclusion that he must stop caring what others think and say about him. He recognizes that he has been suffering patiently and silently (178), but his troubles are as unreasonable as their cause—others’ suspicion. At first despondent at the possibility of being tested accurately, he soon remembers that God is the stick against which to measure his return to good health, not the judgements of others (274-308, 379-82).

As he establishes a new paradigm for himself, to leave off "mourning" (305), he recounts the words of Reason he encountered in a book a few days previously.[61] Hoccleve's reading of this text is, rather literally, a reading of the "speche of Resoun" (315) in contrast to the speech of misinformed gossips.

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[60] This assessment of his colleagues' judgements is all the more scathing when one considers the Old Man's statement about the greater perception of the educated: "Lettred folk han gretter discrecion / And bet conceyve konne a mannes sawe, / And rather wole applie to reson" (*Regiment* 155-57).

[61] In the *Complaint* Hoccleve claims to have borrowed a book, which A. G. Rigg identified as Isidore of Seville’s *Synonyma*, a Boethian consolation. "Hoccleve's Complaint and Isidore of Seville," *Speculum* 45 (1970): 564-74.

Reason's lesson about endurance strikes a chord with Hoccleve not because he is naturally patient but because he has realized that there is no such thing as proof of sanity so long as his judges lack discernment (239-301).[62] Reason appears as a deus ex machina, right in time to confirm Hoccleve's own impulse to stop being stymied by others' mistreatment of him and instead express himself anew in speech and writing. If he receives any consolation from this philosophical book, it is not the consolation of a plan for future solace and peace, but of the corroboration that he had already been doing the right thing by enduring both the madness and its after-effects. God gave Hoccleve his afflictions to "prove" him (361); he has *already* been tested, and needn't undergo any further testing by his fellow man. If Reason is on Hoccleve's side, naturally the gossips have been *un*reasonable. This realization is all he needs to justify continuing to write poetry. He had "braste out" the *Complaint* (34) because he could no longer hold back his frustration, but by the end of the poem his reasoning processes confirmed that such self-expression was natural and necessary, as he could now "unpike / …[his] þouȝtful dissese and woo the lok" (387-88)—the lock, that is, operated by the "tunges keie" he thought he had lost (144). The communing of the *Dialogue* is not, then, a test of Hoccleve's sanity but his own testing of his friend's ability to

[62] Hoccleve's modesty claims at these junctures are, I think, intended to be ironically humorous. Within his exegesis on testing "by commvnynge," a passage deeply concerned with the need of a poet and administrator to prove the proper functioning of his mind, he backtracks to claim he actually lacks wit in the first place: "I mene, to commvne of thingis mene, / For I am but riȝt lewide, douteless, / And ignorant. My kunnynge is ful lene. / ...The gretter harme is myn, þat neuere ȝit / Was I wel lettrid, prudent and discreet. / Ther neuere stood ȝit wiis man on my feet" (218-220, 250-52). Yet the line "Not hope I founded be so resounleees / As men deemen" (222-23) suggests that if Hoccleve is put to the test as he asks to be, *he* is not the one who will turn out to be "resounlees."

judge the truth.[63]

Once the poet has destabilized false impressions of himself, he turns to a debate between himself and the Friend, who is no straw man designed to endorse the poet but represents—or indeed epitomizes—the malicious speech we find in the autobiographical poems. For the reader, Hoccleve's mental odyssey goes some distance toward showing his clarity and competence, though readers must still be suspicious of his claims. His logic certainly appears sound, that it is useless for his assayers to use circular reasoning (or no reasoning at all) when making their judgements. His conclusion about his judges is, though, at this point not necessarily more reliable than his own insistence that he is sane. He is convincing at least on the point that evaluations of madness must be done with care and caution. When Hoccleve wins over his Friend, he does so not by speaking rationally but more specifically by convincing him—and readers—that the Friend has been irrational. The Friend's utterances betray him as an untrustworthy gossip and giver of bad advice, a person to be doubted and questioned. Our first impression of him is at variance with helpful advice-givers previously encountered, including the *Regiment*'s Old Man who motivated Hoccleve to speak his mind and venture to write to the king, and the *Complaint*'s Reason who urged him to "voide woo and care" from his heart (339). The Friend urges Hoccleve to be silent and not publish the *Complaint*, as he blames the

[63] Mitchell describes the *Complaint* as “rambling discourse” with “no well-defined organization,” and the *Dialogue* as “A metrical hodgepodge of varying moods and ideas” (“Autobiographical Element,” 280-1, 282). This sort of impression has underlain critical evaluations of Hoccleve’s continued mental imbalance. Carefully attention to the order of the poet’s thoughts, however, reveals the narrative and purpose of his mental odyssey.

poet's madness on excessive reading and writing of texts (*Dialogue* 25-28, 379-85). But such enforced silence has been Hoccleve's torment, rendering this advice thoughtless and unsympathetic.

After Hoccleve recites the *Complaint,* he rebukes the Friend for his unkind words and unwise evaluation of it:

> 'Thouȝ I be lewide I not so ferforthe dote.
> I woote what men han seide and seien of me.
> Her wordis haue I not as ȝit forgote.
> But greet meruaile haue I of ȝow, that ȝe
> No bet of my compleint avisid be...'
>
> (*Dialogue* 36-40)

The Friend is a naysayer like the gossips whom we have learned are wicked and not to be trusted to provide sensible counsel, who speak with "the venym of favelous tongue" (*Male regle* 211) and "displesance in lordes courtes breewe" (*Regiment* 550-3). Hoccleve feels his friend should know better: "Shuld we be now al neewe to aqweynte, / Þat han so wel aqweynted be ful yore?" (*Dialogue* 320-21). But he lacks discernment like the wretches who believe any false information they hear on the streets yet refuse to believe Hoccleve's truth-telling colleagues, even though their "prophecie" of his inevitable relapse "took...noon effecte at al" (*Complaint* 95). The Friend is likewise misinformed and imperceptive, and admits to relying on hearsay for updates on Hoccleve's condition: "'Thy bisy studie… / Hath causid thee to stirte into the plyt / That thow wer in, as fer as I can heere'" (*Dialogue* 302-4). Hoccleve's harangue about friendship (330-64) suggests that the Friend character exists not as a doubter in need of convincing, but as a foil to the trusting, "verray freend" Hoccleve needs (332), much like the *Complaint*'s gossips stand in contrast to competent judges.

Hoccleve calls him inconstant (459), and explicitly states that his friend's argumentation about Solomon's wisdom was full or "errour" so that "in this cas yee can nat wel consaille" (460-2). He damningly describes his friend as a "blynd counseillour," one who offers advice though ignorant of the matter (463-5).

If this resemblance to Hoccleve's detractors does not in itself condemn the Friend as a poor source of advice and friendship, he later reveals himself to be a liar by backtracking from his assurance at lines 29-35 of the *Dialogue* that he, and others, accepted Hoccleve's returned sanity and had moved on. As part of his insistence that Hoccleve not tax himself with poetry, the Friend tries to negotiate moderation until the sanity is fully proven:

> "And thogh thow deeme thow be thereof qwyt,
> Abyde, and thy purpos putte in respyt
> Til þat right wel stablisshid be thy brayn,
> And therto thanne I wole assente fayn"
> (*Dialogue* 305-8)

He later cautions that recovery from a mental disorder is rarely quick and one does not fully recover to be the person he was before (375-78). Like the acquaintances of the *Complaint,* then, the Friend never truly believed that Hoccleve was fully healed, or that full healing was even possible. It is perhaps harsh to call the Friend a liar—he was hoping to comfort a companion for whom the truth would only exacerbate his problems. But as part of Hoccleve's poetic strategy, the Friend's falseness discredits him, leading the reader to perceive Hoccleve as the winner in the debate. He does not defend himself with proof upon proof and then wait for the Friend's judgement but rather dismisses the friend as a judge entirely, commanding him to "deemeth no more" because "ther

cometh but smal fruyt of swich deemynge" (429, 432). Hoccleve's clarity shows when he repeatedly puts an end to arguments that are getting nowhere with his friend, wishing to "make a pause" and "no lenger trete" subjects that are not to his purpose (*Dialogue* 434, 441). The poet declares a mistrial, exonerating himself by demonstrating his judges to be illogical and his jury rigged.

Once Hoccleve has successfully silenced his indiscriminate judge, the poet allows the Friend a change of heart. He challenges the Friend just as he challenged his critics in the *Complaint* to judge him fairly: "'Han yee aght herd of me in communynge / Wherthurgh yee oghten deeme of me amis?'" (*Dialogue* 470-1). When the issue is put to him in this way, the Friend can find no evidence to hold against the poet, and as he observes Hoccleve's "good plyt," he also admits that he himself had been wrong: "þat I nat eer kneew, now is to me wist" (525). This admission is key. From this point on, the Friend acts as a trustworthy advisor, and Hoccleve is careful to describe him as a new man. The remaining *Dialogue* and additional linking scenes between the narrator and Friend in the *Series*, many critics say, feature not Hoccleve but the Friend in control of his textual production, directing the nature and content of his writing.[64] To the contrary, these scenes comprise a series of steps in which Hoccleve takes ownership of the conversation and of his voice, refusing to let others dictate his image. For lonely Hoccleve, the greatest gift would be a touchstone with which to

[64] For example Mills states that Hoccleve "repeatedly surrenders control of his work to others" ("Voices of Thomas Hoccleve," 98). See also Goldie, "Illness and Identity," 44-51. To Burrow, the Friend's suggestions account for Hoccleve's renewed confidence in his "ability to fulfill literary commissions" and concomitantly his "status regained" ("Experience and Books," 269). The Friend continues to evaluate Hoccleve to the end, so that when in the prologue to the final tale the Friend asks for Hoccleve's advice regarding his misbehaving son, readers see that Hoccleve has completely assured this friend of his sensibility (270).

navigate a hostile and dismissive society. We learn from the two men's quoting of Solomon that a wise man will always "do by reed and by conseil" (*Dialogue* 452), a lesson also prominent in the *Regiment*. If Hoccleve has at one point ordered the Friend to "deemeth no more" (429), he now urges him to "iugeth yourself. Yee been prudent and wys" (511). Hoccleve repeatedly asks for the Friend's advice, relying on the latter's newly-demonstrated trustworthiness.[65] Far from refusing advice, as the Friend accused him previously (450), he demonstrates himself quite willing and capable of taking good advice.

Now that he has corrected the Friend's misinformation, the two can collaborate as London literati (and members of the Privy Seal) customarily do, and so the Friend transforms into a cautious advisor.[66] Earlier in the poem he was forceful, insisting repeatedly that Hoccleve listen and heed his words, that he "herkne a word, and be souffrable" (369). After his transformation, he begs off giving advice (620), and then agrees only on the condition that he be allowed to think a moment, as "whoso reed and conseil yeue shal, / May nat on heed foorth renne therwithal" (629-30). The moment the Friend admitted his mistake, he became the companion, advisor, and assistant Hoccleve had desperately needed, reminding him about the book owed to the Duke of Gloucester (532-34), warning him to plan his manuscripts as carefully as a builder would a house

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[65] *Dialogue* 540, 552-3, 617-19, 622-3, and 656-8.

[66] Although he has a different reading of the Friend's tone and believes this friend never truly trusted in Hoccleve's sanity, Knapp offers an insightful interpretation of the two men's interaction as an allegory about Privy Seal camaraderie, such that the "process of poetic composition" mimics or becomes "a product of bureaucratic and urban collaboration" (*Bureaucratic Muse*, 180). The Friend becomes collaborator as well as "copy-editor" as he participates in the production of the *Series* (183). Yet Knapp does not fully reconcile this conclusion regarding bureaucratized poetry and the importance of collegial "communyng" with his earlier arguments about Hoccleve's despondency at the lack of joyful synergy in the administrative workplace.

(638-44), and alerting him that woman readers took his poem "L'epistre de Cupide" as a misogynistic rant (667-700). Through their conversation, the Friend has learned to discern bad gossip from the truth about Hoccleve's sanity, and readers now have a standard for measuring cogent speech. For this reason readers can accept the poet's "spoken" voice as rehabilitated and trustworthy, and know the difference between false rumors and the true gossip Hoccleve hopes will spread. In his willingness to dissociate from the offensive "L'epistre de Cupide" by declaring himself a translator who cannot be blamed for the poem's contents (760-63),[67] Hoccleve offers one final lesson about not only faulty textual transmission, but about gossip:

> "Whoso þat shal reherce a mannes sawe,
> As þat he seith moot he seyn and nat varie,
> For, an he do, he dooth ageyn the lawe
> Of trouthe. He may tho wordes nat contraire."
> (764-67)

Hoccleve reminds that uncareful gossips have twisted his utterances and spread around false rumors. His misinterpreted poem is a metaphor for his misinterpreted self. Here is Hoccleve's manifesto: "I am al othir to yow than yee

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[67] This passage has seemed to some to be beside the point, a break from the narrative flow of the *Dialogue* and a sign that this set of poems was unplanned or designed to convey mental discontinuity (Patterson, "'What is me?'" 447; Greetham, "Self-Referential Artifacts," 247; Mills, "Voices of Thomas Hoccleve," 93). Considering Hoccleve's alienated position, however, his defense against his female critics reads as one example of the poet working to get back into a group's good graces. If it is true that, regarding courtly women, Hoccleve is "cleene out of hir affeccioun" (*Dialogue* 676), this seems to be equally true regarding his bureaucratic associates. As a direct example of such a false rumor, Hoccleve states that anyone who "seith I am hir adversarie" is "misauysed" and "eek to blame" (768, 771). There is hope that an attentive reader will find nothing objectionable in "L'epistre de Cupide" (775-80), much like Hoccleve has argued that a good judge will not fail to find him sensible. Ultimately, though, Hoccleve acknowledges that being defensive is no way to win over readers, and that this has in fact been part of his problem since his illness. The Friend's final piece of good advice is that regardless of whether or not he has been treated fairly, he must "amendes make" (786) and ingratiate himself with his former associates.

weene. / By my wrytynge hath it and shal be seene" (811-12).

Hoccleve's textual gossip demonstrates him to be a man different from his associates' assumptions. Their talk had classified him as a madman, following the tendency of gossip to "transform unique individual actions into typical ones" wherein subjects conform to categories their peers can easily understand and use as shorthand in their discussions.[68] Hoccleve poetically unmasked the private talk of his associates, undoing its generalizing and reductive effect in order to insist on his individuality as an idiosyncratically anxious man who is not necessarily mad. By encouraging good gossip about his recovery in exchange, Hoccleve transitions from the solitary individual whose personal life is on display to a public member of a discourse community. This is what the *Series* is about—the importance of community. Hoccleve must, in the *Complaint*, rehash a most embarrassing phase of his life because in this way he shows himself to be a subject of his peers' talk and thus claims membership in their speech community. The gossip alienated Hoccleve because of the nature of a malady which cut off his participatory voice; gossip is not itself inherently alienating. Social theorists hold that groups tend to gossip about their own members not outsiders, because only participants familiar with the "gossippee" find such talk interesting. Information-sharing is a precursor to joining a gossip community, and members maintain their ties by talking about one another. Gossip sustains interpersonal relationships and group ties by accentuating shared morals and beliefs,

[68] Yerkovich, "Gossiping," 194.

establishing common interests, and communicating information.[69]

For a bureaucrat, this communication took place with co-workers and kings, and gossip can be seen to function as a metaphor or even replacement for effective forms of bureaucratic language. Pervading Hoccleve's poems is an unease about the role he and his administrative compatriots played in contemporary courtly society, especially as they began to lose the ear of the king. Asserting themselves in another form of discourse, gossip—a potentially destructive genre certainly already rampant at court and within government offices—could allow administrators to continue performing the vital function of royal counselor which their bureaucratic forebears had performed. Gossip represents a replacement for the more intimate forms of consultation of the past, mimicking, with its attendant whispering and secrecy, the confidential counsel some kings' scribes used to offer.[70] Gossip can function from a distance, which was the only option a poet like Hoccleve had to make due with, and a form of communication modeled on gossip allowed him to make the best of his marginalized circumstances. Gossip is also a type of communal production, much like the secretariat's document production. A man's voice easily risked getting lost in the growing bureaucratic system and censored social sphere, yet Hoccleve knew that scribes and poets must speak up for themselves to ensure a

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[69] Ibid., 196. A community typically gossips *about* a potential member before gossiping *with* him (193). Hoccleve's revealing of himself as a "passive participant"—an eavesdropper—also casts him as a member of others' speech community (195; Gluckman, "Gossip and Scandal," 313).
[70] Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 2, 25, 137. Jennifer Bryan similarly suggests that personal details in Hoccleve's poems simulate a close relationship between poet and prospective patrons. "Hoccleve, the Virgin, and the Politics of Complaint," *PMLA* 117 (2002): 1181. Simpson discusses how King Henry could effectively "overhear" Hoccleve's conversation with the Old Man ("Nobody's Man," 172-3).

living. A public servant who does not remind those in power of his dues is forgotten. The gossip device contributes to this effect. Poetic appeals are public ones, and Hoccleve trusts in the idle speech of curious readers to ensure that his addressees, who themselves might not read the poem, will get the message and perhaps be embarrassed into submission.[71] To follow his own advice, Hoccleve needs a functioning voice, and for this he needs the support of his peers. He frequently found lessons and comfort in books, like Isidore of Seville's, and no doubt from association with fellow members of his bureaucratic cadre; but regarding this matter, he turns to the Bible:

> 'Wo be to him that list to been allone,
> For if he falle, help ne hath he noon
> To ryse.'
> (*Regiment* 205-7)[72]

Hoccleve offers a complex commentary on the benefits and dangers of speaking and writing, and to some modern readers the overall impression is one of unavoidable dissolution of the self with no recourse to a “social cure.” Knapp for instance argues that in the *Regiment* Hoccleve attempts to disrupt a traditional association between writing and permanence by repeatedly linking composition with mortality and bodily decay. Further, the progression of the narrator’s conversation with the Old Man produces “profound resistance to any consolations that might be offered by…writing.”[73] Though in these fifty lines

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[71] For instance, John J. Thompson notes that Hoccleve's "Ballad to Master Carpenter" may have originally have been addressed to another figure, and suggests "the poet's promise, or threat, to identify his creditors by name.” "A Poet's Contact with the Great and the Good: Further Consideration of Thomas Hoccleve's Texts and Manuscripts," in *Prestige, Authority and Power in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. Felicity Riddy (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), 92.
[72] The editor Blyth identifies this passage as Ecclesiastes 4:10.
[73] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 83, 86-193.

describing the scribal profession's nuisances by comparing it to other occupations, Hoccleve does draw "a persistent connection between writing and aging,"[74] the primary complaint is the solitariness of scribes. Craftsmen can sing, play, and chatter, but scribes "laboure in travaillous stilnesse" (1013) and "keepe moot our song and wordes yn" (1015). Knapp makes the important point that this passage must be viewed within the context of the prologue's dialogue, which he thinks serves to cast the elderly interlocutor as a sort of ghost of Hoccleve's future, underscoring the infirmities the scribe will inevitably accede to.[75] He also argues that a play on words, a plural pronoun to mark out a group of solitary scribes, underscores that while members of other occupations have a means of "joint communication" bureaucrats' own communication is precluded or absent: "the scriveners are thus defined as a community, but a community uniquely marked by the lack of any direct communication."[76] I wish to suggest that Hoccleve does not surrender to this problem, but has determined a solution to administrative muteness modeled by and within his poems. Knapp concludes that the poet "explores the possibility of a writerly community yet finds the possibility unlikely,"[77] but perhaps instead Hoccleve wishes to underscore just how vital it is to counter the silence and stillness not just of his own surroundings but of his speech community.

If Privy Seal work progressed in silent conversation, Hoccleve's poetic settings reveal the degree to which his narrators engaged with others outside the

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[74] Ibid., 86.
[75] Ibid., 89.
[76] Ibid., 92.
[77] Ibid., 93.

office. Two of the tavern companions of *Male regle* were fellow Privy Seal associates, Prentys and Arondel (321); and although this poem is rife with the narrator's victimization by greedy entrepreneurs, attending the tavern was a social activity (144) and he also has "freendes" offering useful advice (89).[78] We have already seen from the *Series* that administrative colleagues carry on conversations that sometimes include gossip, that Hoccleve has a close friend who serves in the administration or is at least part of that circle, and that the poet is dissatisfied with the status quo and envisions a communicative scenario in which bureaucratic speech is efficient, effective, and inclusive. The *Regiment*'s Old Man is pushy, undercutting the narrator's authority as I have argued, and his involvement does complicate the Boethian discourse as Knapp describes, yet as a contrived rather than real conversation there is a certain amount of humor to be derived from the very fact that the narrator bemoans his silent isolation within a lively exchange. Hoccleve grouses about the burden of twenty years in the writing office by penning an extensive poem, whose prologue is itself unnaturally long. The two men dwell on the struggles of scribal solitariness and then immediately turn to writing as a solution to pull Hoccleve into society. Similar to the *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, whose protagonist was pressed by his exchequer colleague, the *Regiment* begins in the narrator's chamber. Though the man is chased out of his room by restless thought, the Old Man accosts him and insists

[78] For the identification of these two scribes, see editor Ellis' notes, '*My Compleinte' and Other Poems*, p. 78. Hoccleve closely connects the extracurricular entertainment to his scribal labor by joking that he has trouble finding others in the office who can keep up with him; he does not identify Prentys and Arondel explicitly as colleagues, yet uses the bureaucratic word "countrefete" to state that these men "copy" his own behavior (line 322).

on conversation. This Old Man is not a bureaucrat, yet as a figuration of the poet's own old age,[79] he can serve as a mirror to the bureaucratic subject of the poem. The dialogue they share may resist Boethian consolation,[80] yet it also makes Hoccleve's access to society and counsel quite apparent. Within the poem he finds society, and by the poem itself he exhibits a versified solution to a communication problem. Knapp is one of many to interpret the triumphing of writing over speech in the *Series*,[81] yet the changeability of expression from one mode to another—such as the *Complaint*'s simultaneous existence as written poem and recited utterance—reveals Hoccleve's insistence that poetry can inscribe a bureaucrat's voice and serve as its alternative means of dissemination to prince and patron.

We can also question the accuracy of the Privy Seal's "travaillous stilnesse" given that documentary production remained a communal process, in that documents might have multiple authors and revisers as they worked their way through the system.[82] Within Hoccleve's poetic world, he wishes to present "poetic activity…as less a matter of raw creation or even compilation by one man than as a product of dialogue and negotiation."[83] Within the poet's real world, Hoccleve became a senior, supervisory scribe, writing his *Formulary* for this reason, and by the time he wrote the *Series* and possibly also the *Regiment* he would have found himself interacting with junior scribes and managing the

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[79] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 89.
[80] Ibid., 93-106; Patterson, "'What is me?'" 441, 446; Hickey, "Doubting Thomas," 58; Kohl, "Virtues and Vices," 120; Simpson, "Nobody's Man," 161, 169.
[81] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 105-6; Tolmie, "Professional," 353; Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry," 389-412; Burrow, "Experience and Books"; Goldie, "Illness and Identity.".
[82] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 12, 15, 92, 180-83.
[83] Ibid., 181.

business side of the office.[84] Documents themselves were too mobile to consider their production an isolating rather than a connecting enterprise, and their contents linked members of the later medieval administrative cadre in much the same way twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal treatises cited and narrativized contemporary and past authorities to make claims for intellectual inheritance and collaborative authority. Poems commonly address or reference fellow administrators and statesmen, including Hoccleve's "Balade to My Lord the Chancellor," "Balade to Mr. Henry Somer, Subtreasurer," and "Balade to My Master Carpenter."[85] Official productions as well are a Who's Who of important nodal points in his network, as senior scribes had a degree of control over their labor and could "choose to write the documents for the highest-ranking people who were to be remunerated by the Exchequer."[86] Yet in another sense Privy Seal letters were often communications with bureaucratic colleagues in the other departments, men Hoccleve may have known from his trips to the exchequer to accept his annuity or even from the Paul's Head tavern of *Mal regle*. Poetic petitions addressed to chancellors and treasurers regarding late payments as well as Hoccleve's autobiographical poems which themselves contained petitionary elements alongside other discussions of administrative experience, advocate for a continuity between the spoken and written voice that belies the

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[84] Mooney, "New Light," 298, 310.
[85] These items are printed in *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems in the Phillips MS. 8151 (Cheltenham) and the Durham MS. III.9*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall and I. Gollancz, rev. Jerome Mitchell and A. I. Doyle, EETS 61 (1892; rev. ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1970). Strohm judges that Hoccleve "wrote as often to impress his superiors in Chancery and other well-placed royal servants as the king or the nobility" ("Lancastrian Court," 640). Mills points out that books and texts were "token[s] of social exchange" and integral to late medieval "social networks" ("Voices of Thomas Hoccleve," 101-2).
[86] Mooney, "New Light," 298-99.

stillness the *Regiment* bemoans and which we might see as a contemporary problem Hoccleve wishes to solve.

Hoccleve's poetic labor complemented his administrative toil, working to bind him to a collaborative support system. He urges camaraderie to ensure better administrators, but also healthier, happier, more materially secure men. Gossip can reveal not malice but affection, and accordingly Hoccleve is careful to show that his gossips had good intentions:

> But somdel had I reioisinge amonge,
> And a gladnesse also in my spirite,
> That þouȝ þe peple took hem mis and wronge,
> Me deemyng of my siknesse not quite,
> Ȝit for they compleined the heuy plite
> That they had seen me in wiþ tendirnesse
> Of hertis cherte, my greef was the lesse.[87]
> (*Complaint* 285-6)

Though these "peple" are largely anonymous, Hoccleve does mark out their group identity as fellow bureaucrats or at least members of the London literati when he notes that some sought news from his Privy Seal associates (296).[88] His readers, likely to be personal associates or at least members of the poet's professional group, share in the experience of overheard gossip. Community is vital to Hoccleve because his sanity demands society. The *Regiment*'s Old Man explicitly links community and counsel to Hoccleve's mental well-being, stating

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[87] Similarly, the narrator says to the *Dialogue*'s Friend "I thanke ȝou, for of beneuolence, / Woote I ful wel, procedeþ ȝoure sentence" (46-7).

[88] Hoccleve's primary audience was likely predominately legal and administrative professionals, as well as members of university and ecclesiastical institutions in the London area (Seymour, "Manuscripts," 256-7). Critics typically interpret the *Dialogue* Friend as a fellow administrator (Goldie, "Illness and Identity," 45-6; Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 6-9. 180, 183). More recently, David Watt treats this issue in *The Making of Thomas Hoccleve's* Series (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2013).

that only the brotherhood of his peers will keep further mental illness at bay, by "voiding the poison of thought" (203). Collaboration made economic sense as well, a coping strategy in lean times, but also a response to the growing distance between the royal household and administrative offices.[89] Lay administrators faced challenges particular to the context of emerging vernacular and secular authority, and viewed one another as members of a group defined by occupation as much as by lay and middling-class status.

Hoccleve's concern with his peers' talk in the *Series* is part and parcel of a self-identified late-medieval "bureaucratic cadre" with a shared occupational and literary culture actively promoting itself as political consultants.[90] One coping strategy for late-medieval insecurity was to construct what Knapp calls "corporate social identity," a language-based community of fellow bureaucrats who aided each other by pooling money to loan for profit, acted as guarantors for loans or business ventures, and acted as executors of each others' wills.[91] One key component of late-medieval professionalization was a marking-out of membership. Men with scribal and legal training formed professional occupational groups, including secretaries, lawyers, and estate managers, around which their identities revolved.[92] Hoccleve claimed to be a member of one such group, the "Court de bone conpaignie," even acting on one occasion as its

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[89] Scribes would sometimes form "collective economic units" to bargain with officials and support each other monetarily, such as pooling money to loan it for profit (Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse,* 26).
[90] Ibid., 6, 12. He lists English, Dutch, and French members of this cadre (6).
[91] Ibid., 20, 26; Griffiths, "Bureaucracy and the State," 57, 62-3.
[92] These professions experienced upward mobility, becoming one component of the evolving gentry in towns and in the counties. Helen M. Jewell, "The Cultural Interests and Achievements of the Secular Personnel of the Local Administration," in Clough, *Profession, Vocation and Culture*, 148; Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 90-129; Brand, "Serjeants," 93, 101-2).

poetic emissary to Henry Somer.[93]

Madness threatened Hoccleve's social standing, but the most important lesson to learn in the *Series* is not that *madness* nearly destroyed his life. God tested (and punished) him with a mental illness, but *London* and its administrative milieu and personnel caused his new, social problem of alienation and despair. While the old problem was a linguistic one that left the poet tongue-tied, this new malady was paralyzing. Self-expression through speaking and writing was always the solution to the poet's bodily and social ailments, as we see in the *Regiment* and *La male regle*, and in the *Series* poetic communication in particular became the nexus around which turned others' explanations of his problems and his own defenses. He is careful to state that writing is not a burden (even though here and in the *Regiment* he has given plenty of reasons why it might be), whereas the alienating London and Westminster crowds prolonged his suffering. We have here a criticism of Hoccleve's colleagues and their quickness to discard him, yet the poet's insistence on rehabilitating his reputation and rejoining his former speech community suggests that Hoccleve wishes to advocate for the underlying strengths of this community. Humorous poetry may not always be enough to secure one's livelihood, but camaraderie and mutual support bolstered the position of the late-medieval bureaucrat. For decades scholars have debated whether Hoccleve presents writing as a therapy for old age and illness, but I think it worthwhile to consider his views on written and spoken communication as therapeutic processes more broadly for society and

[93] Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry," 405; Patterson, "'What is me?'" 469.

communities.

Talk was vital to a bureaucrat's career, especially if he could function extra-officially through a politicized poetic network as pundit and counselor. Hoccleve's autobiographical poems place so much emphasis on the potential bodily and psychological devastation of writing because he felt the same competing pressures to speak up or be silent as had Peter Blois, and the same determination to express and instruct that inspired the *Bracton*-author. Like previous administrative writers, Hoccleve faced the task of explaining his genre and purposes, and he does so not by extolling the act of recording but by stressing the great difficulty he must overcome to lay out this documentary record. In his investigation of potential weaknesses of the chancery that may have led to its discontinuance as a personal secretariat for the king, David Carpenter poses a question that we might equally apply to the secretarial staff: "we need to consider whether writing, or at least too much writing, could lead to…'mal fonctionnement.'"[94] This is Hoccleve's query exactly, probing the parallel malfunctioning of administration and bureaucrat potentially caused by too much writing. If writing is so difficult, why does he undertake it, inside the Privy Seal and inside his own chamber? Because it is difficult. Because it is difficult he writes, and in this way he insists that scribal and poetic duties perform burdensome yet critical social, political, and cultural labor—labor which he and a small cadre of men like him are uniquely suited to undertake. His task is not an uncertain one, and he has none of the hesitation of Richard fitz Nigel. Hoccleve

[94] Carpenter, "English Royal Chancery," 50.

does not write a conventional administrative manual such as the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* or even a commonplace mirror for princes, does not bother with an expression of the Privy Seal's proper function. He sees that it *isn't* functioning properly, and that his duties are weighing on and wearing out both system and functionary. One might argue that all administrative writing in England had been self-aggrandizing, yet new to the later medieval era was the need for "versified memos reminding people of…pay arrears."[95] Previous administrators worried that not enough of England's knowledge was being preserved, but Hoccleve wrote from a place where so much documentation was being produced that the scribes themselves were being forgotten, buried by the overflow. Poetry was a means of cutting through the red tape and seizing control—in fact, Tolmie gathers evidence of administrators becoming so skilled that they become a royal liability, a risk employees can use to extort and threaten[96]—and Hoccleve took steps not only to control his own utterance and reputation but also to shape traditions of vernacular poetry and administrative literature.

Father Chaucer, the "Best of any Wight"

Hoccleve's experience of the routine dilemma of whether or not to write—and what to write, and how to justify it—was refracted as well through his references to Geoffrey Chaucer in the *Regiment*. Here he mentions Chaucer four times, claiming this forebear was his teacher, heaping on praise, and labeling him the "first fyndere of our fair langage" (line 4978), "best of any wight" (1868) and

[95] Tolmie, "Professional," 342n8.
[96] Tolmie, "*Prive Scilence*."

"maistir deere and fadir reverent" (1961). Some manuscripts also include a marginal illumination of Chaucer.[97] An overwhelming body of literature has already been written on the topic of Chaucer's heirs, and for many years critics evaluated such poets as John Gower, Thomas Hoccleve, John Lydgate, Gavin Dunbar, and Richard Henryson as mere epigones struggling to mimic the masterful verse style of Chaucer and scrabbling at his coat-tails for fame and patronage. Now, the unique skills and contributions of these late-medieval poets is apparent, yet there remain questions about how and why they engaged with Chaucer's memory. If critics have come to treat Hoccleve's modesty claims with reservations, their interpretations of the *Regiment* still typically hinge on the poet's sincere desire to situate Chaucer as Father so that he might himself receive some trickle-down authority or attention. Some do argue that Hoccleve constructed a more adversarial relationship to Chaucer to assert his own independent authority. Knapp suggests he "interrogates the notions of origins and authority that underwrite the idea of generational succession" to destabilize assumptions of who and what is authoritative.[98] Sarah Tolmie claims Hoccleve must work against Chaucer and his contemporaries like Langland and Gower because they failed to mark out an authoritative position for anyone writing outside traditional clerical or courtly love genres.[99]

Yet even for Knapp and Tolmie Chaucer remains the poetic father

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[97] BL MS Harley 4866, fol. 88; BL MS Royal 17.D.vi; and MS Rosenbach 1083/10. See M. C. Seymour, "Manuscript Portraits of Chaucer and Hoccleve," *Burlington Magazine* 124 (1982): 618-23; Jeanne E. Krochalis, "Hoccleve's Chaucer Portrait," *Chaucer Review* 21 (1986): 234-45; David R. Carlson, "Thomas Hoccleve and the Chaucer Portrait," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 54 (1991): 283-300.
[98] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 109, 123-4.
[99] Ibid., 13, 50, 71; Tolmie, "Professional," 347.

generating his heir's complex responses in the realm of a poetry career, and in this way both men's literary and bureaucratic endeavors are divorced and Chaucer's administrative identity is downplayed.[100] Tolmie's purpose is to investigate Hoccleve's attempts to professionalize vernacular poetry-writing, explicitly pushing back against a trend of earlier historicist studies which spotlighted his primary identity as "scribe" and "bureaucrat."[101] Knapp, so aware of the bureaucratic experience bleeding into Hoccleve's poetry, insists on Hoccleve's utilization of Chaucer as a model poet-adviser whose literary skills alone count.[102] Yet Sebastian Langdell recently made the important contribution of underscoring how little-known Chaucer's poetry was before Hoccleve's invention of him as literary patriarch.[103] Langdell argues that during his lifetime Chaucer was mainly known among the London administrative class, and by the time the *Regiment* appeared in 1410 "there is no evidence that Chaucer enjoyed widespread literary celebrity in England."[104] If Hoccleve invented a paradigm shift

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[100] A recent and thorough discussion of Chaucer's bureaucratic career is found in David R. Carlson's *Chaucer's Jobs* (New York: Palgrave, 2004). Another useful resource is Derek Pearsall's biography, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). These studies draw on the *Chaucer Life-Records*, ed. Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). Chaucer was an administrator for only about fourteen years, from 1374 to 1391, after years of military and diplomatic service. He served as Controller of the Wool Custom and Wool Subsidy, Controller of the Perry Custom, Clerk of the Works, Commissioner of Walls and Ditches, and Justice of the Peace in Kent (Mead, "Subject of Bureaucracy," 41-2).

[101] These include Schulz' "Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe" and Reeves' "Thomas Hoccleve: Bureaucrat."

[102] The *Regiment*, the first English-language mirror for princes, "may have been a bid to assume the role of poetic advisor to the court" (Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 80, 121). Pearsall also believes that Hoccleve viewed Chaucer as "the iconographic type of the poet-counselor" ("Royal Self-Representation," 401).

[103] Langdell, "'What Shal I Calle Thee? What Is Thy Name?': Thomas Hoccleve and the Making of 'Chaucer,'" *New Medieval Literatures* 16 (2016): 250-76.

[104] "Making of Chaucer," 259. Chaucer's audience was typically "a sympathetic circle of social equals…rather than pressed upon his betters in a vain quest for patronage." Paul Strohm, "Politics and Poetics: Usk and Chaucer in the 1380s," in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380-1530*, ed. Lee Patterson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 107.

otherwise unmarked by his peers, we might ask why he chose Chaucer in particular. This poet's vernacular skill and the extent of his body of work seem to offer an obvious answer, making him a ready choice to fashion into a literary icon useful for framing Hoccleve's own poetic aspirations. But more attention is deserved to the significance of the fact that Chaucer was, like Hoccleve, both a poet and administrator, and was remarked upon by contemporaries for his maintenance of these two activities. If anything, in 1410, Chaucer would have been better known as a literature-writing civil servant than as a master of the English vernacular, and this draws a clear comparison to Hoccleve's own identity at the time. It remains to explore how administrative skills may have formed a conceptual backbone to support an advisory capacity for writers of poetry.

Chaucer himself says little about his administrative experience and his narrative personae rarely delve into potentially autobiographical territory, nor does he engage in explicit political commentary.[105] For this reason critics typically downplay the impact of his career on his poetry or influence on later writers.

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[105] Well-known exceptions include the Geffrey character of *House of Fame* who reveals that he engages in "rekenynges" at work and comments on his homely appearance and nagging wife (Mead, "Subject of Bureaucracy," 42; Mitchell, "Autobiographical Element," 275). Within the *Canterbury Tales* the *Shipman's Tale* contains accounting language and the Man of Law engaged in legal jargon and tone (Mead, "Subject of Bureaucracy," 46-7; Rebecca F. McNamara, "'Diversity in setting of words makes diversity in understanding': Bureaucratic and Political Language in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*," *New Medieval Literatures* 14 [2012]: 177). "Envoy to Scogan," "Envoy to Bukton," "Complaint to His Purse" and "Chaucers Wordes Unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn" draw on Chaucer's life are exceptions to his general "suppression of the topical and the personal" (Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," 109), yet even these are not autobiographically explicit. *Book of the Duchess* responds to the recent passing of John of Gaunt's wife Blanche, yet is not political, and "the reader of Chaucer must be struck by how infrequently he attempted to advance his worldly career through literary exertions" (106-7). Strohm argues that rather than explicitly engage in political commentary Chaucer encodes it in his form, by means of "genre- and discourse-conflict" which "assimilates his social vision into a textual model of unresolved and unresolvable conflict" (84, 109-12). Regarding his longer works Richard Firth Green reads *Melibee* and *Boece* as potential mirrors or responses to contemporary events, as well as "Lak of Stedfastnesse" (*Poets and Princepleasers*, 166).

Such neutrality allows his poetic content and form to seem adaptable to other poets' needs, to comprise a disinterested foundation for a paradigm of secular English poetry. This contrast with Hoccleve's own high degree of self-revelation can leave the latter's poetry appearing inelegant, especially given the critical consensus that Chaucer's groundbreaking personae inspired Hoccleve's.[106] Hoccleve's quite different, revelatory persona becomes a trait of his verses that we find explained away as inexpert or outright amateurish imitation or an otherwise odd authorial choice.[107] I wish to suggest that the heavy presence of the self in Hoccleve's poems intends to underscore the subjective silences of Chaucer, silences that speak loudly to Hoccleve because of his own position on the fringes of a politically charged court culture that demands allegiance. Chaucer was able to navigate Ricardian politics by distancing himself from court at times of danger via administrative positions outside London.[108] Lacking this occupational flexibility or Chaucer's connections, Hoccleve may have been

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[106] For example, Mitchell, "Autobiographical Element," 272, 275-76; Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 29; and Strohm, "Lancastrian Court," 648.

[107] Tolmie, "Professional," 349. Burrow says regarding Chaucer's few petitions: "we may see it as a testimony to his sense of the dignity of his art that he did not more often write like Hoccleve; or perhaps his salary was paid more regularly"; the nature of his few petitions "suggests that Chaucer was not quite happy—as a poet at least—in the role of humble petitioner to the great" ("Poet as Petitioner," 69).

[108] Although 1380s London politics in particular left "factional involvement…a virtual inevitability for the upwardly mobile lawyer or civil servant," rather than engaging in politics Chaucer managed to "[avoid] direct personal and political commentary" in part because of his "more secure position" (Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," 83-4). Between 1385-88 especially Chaucer "wisely and systematically curtailing the extent of his factional visibility," laying low as Richard struggled with the Appellants, a situation which put royal servants in an awkward position (91). In 1386 he took up a position in Kent and resigned his wool and petty customs controllerships as a "precautionary action…to scale down his visibility as a member of the royal faction" (92-3). Chaucer likewise preemptively gave up exchequer annuities in 1388 after the Merciless Parliament (93-4). See also Mead, "Subject of Bureaucracy," 43; Pearsall, *Life of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 95-6; William A. Quinn, "Chaucer's Janglerye," *Viator* 18 (1987): 309-20; and Lee Patterson, "'What Man Artow?': Authorial Self-Definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989): 117-75 for Chaucer's taking of employment that removed him from the machinations of court and his refusal to be taken as a court poet.

dissatisfied with not just his forebear's decision to physically remove himself from danger but his parallel figurative removal from his poetry. This was a strategy Hoccleve's identity politics and material well-being did not seem to permit.[109] Chaucer was brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, after all, and a minister known within Richard II's circles well enough that he needn't offer regular reminders of who he was by means of begging poems.[110] Safety or success were not guaranteed for Chaucer, but Hoccleve found himself trying to mimic the dual career of administrator and poet from a much more vulnerable position.

Chaucer failed to aggrandize vernacular poetizing, argues Tolmie, leaving Hoccleve to reveal Chaucer's authorial vacancies through a contrast with his own presence. To Tolmie, what Hoccleve sees in Chaucer's work is absence, a critical absence of an author who is both poet and administrator. Hoccleve's references to Chaucer within his self-revelations are "an act of professional solidarity…a strong response to the tasteful silences of Chaucer and the guilty fulminations of Langland about a group to which they all belonged."[111] Hoccleve's desire was to resurrect the vernacular poet's authorized voice free from his predecessor' hesitation or uncertainty, to "establish the poetic estate" by filling in Chaucer's gaps and penning a sort of "poet's prologue" that would fit within the

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[109] Under the Lancastrian kings "in order to be politically useful and therefore politically popular, English poets needed to participate in th[e] game of polarizing people and ideas" (Langdell, "Poetic Authority," 282).
[110] Chaucer's father also had served the Crown and been "a prosperous London merchant," so that Geoffrey was "born with assured access to the very ranks of gentry in court service" (Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," 90).
[111] Tolmie, "Professional," 347.

Canterbury Tales.[112] Yet there is evidence that any "professional solidarity" Hoccleve felt was targeted toward others who like him merged the occupations of bureaucrat and poet. It is difficult to know the truth about Hoccleve's claim within the *Regiment* of having been mentored by Chaucer, yet this poet did certainly have the opportunity shortly before his death to teach Hoccleve an important lesson about the material realities of administrative life. In November 1399 a document in Hoccleve's hand addressed to the exchequer commands that esquire Geoffrey Chaucer receive ten pounds owed to him from an annuity.[113] Linne Mooney suggests this production might reveal Hoccleve "taking care that his mentor continues to receive" his due from the new king, Henry IV.[114] Yet it is also telling that this aspiring poet (his earliest datable work appeared in 1402, though his religious lyrics may have been older) was put in the position to witness firsthand the difficulty a respected civil servant and composer could find himself in, either due to political shifts or typical administrative delays. At this point, Hoccleve had been at the Privy Seal for upwards of twelve years, and his participation in a process that hindered men such as himself—as well as the unfortunate parallel it may have seemed to draw with his own life—may have been a caustic moment for Hoccleve.[115] At any rate, when Hoccleve chose to memorialize Chaucer in his *Regiment* a decade later, his subject's administrative

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[112] Ibid., 347, 351. Tout also pointed out long ago that the *Canterbury Tales* lacked a civil servant character ("English Civil Service," 29).
[113] Mooney, "New Light," 323 reproduces this document.
[114] Ibid., 312.
[115] The first datable Privy Seal document in Hoccleve's hand is from 1391 but a line in the *Regiment* stating how long he has worked in the office leads critics to establish 1387 as the start of his tenure (Mooney, "New Light," 297n11, 311). It is worth noting that 1387 was an important moment in the London-based contention between Nicholas Brembre and John Northampton and the national struggles of Richard II with the Appellants (Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," 83).

career and woes were likely on the poet's mind. What he writes in his final mention of Chaucer in this poem could well have served him in his missive to the exchequer: "Of his persone, I have heere his liknesse/ Do make, to this ende…/ That they that han of him lost thoght and mynde/ By this peynture may ageyn him fynde" (4995-4998).

It is right at this time, Henry IV's succession, that Mooney interprets Hoccleve to be a sort of supervisor or business manager for the Privy Seal, able to choose which documents to involve himself in.[116] If it is the case that he chose to pen the document safeguarding Chaucer's annuity payment, it may be that he took this decision not only out of collegiality but out of his own sense of the irony of the documentary position men in his occupation experienced. Hoccleve would also find himself producing documents ordering his own payment, either the annuity or reimbursement for office supplies.[117] As of 1399 we do not yet have Hoccleve's observations and responses to his circumstances manifesting in poetry, but this exchequer missive may mark an early crossover between his bureaucratic and literary mentalities, an attempt to inscribe onto official documentary output a layer of subjective expression and social commentary. Mooney notes that Hoccleve received his first annuity very shortly after this order for Chaucer's final payment.[118] When Hoccleve wrote out the letter, then, he did not yet know the degree to which his career might parallel Chaucer's, or to which he would inherit his exemplar's burdens, but he was in a position to hope for

[116] Mooney, "New Light," 298.
[117] Ibid., 295, 296-8.
[118] Ibid., 312.

success while suspecting that challenges lay ahead. He entered into a patronage relationship with the Crown just after this moment when he saw, unavoidably, the down side to reliance on royal memory and goodwill. In 1402, Hoccleve produced a unique document that may likewise indicate early awareness of bureaucratic absurdity: a receipt for his own annuity. Mooney suggests that such receipts may have been common practice, though admits this is a unique artifact.[119] In light of the petitionary poems which would soon spring from his pen, this item—an announcement that a wage owed had actually been paid—may be an expression of the other side of the coin, a coin he knew often arrived in bureaucrats' pockets late. When the scribe cannot write out a receipt of payment, the poet takes over and pens the receipt's inverse, a begging poem.

Chaucer was a figure of bureaucratic labor to Hoccleve, then, but he still appears in the *Regiment* more as the Father of the English Language than the Father of Poet-Administrators. Hoccleve underscores Chaucer's other job by means of omission, thus illuminating the degree to which Hoccleve himself unifies the two halves of his occupation. Hoccleve, bureaucrat and versifier, is fully present to a degree that even aureate Chaucer could or would not be. Hoccleve does subtly mark out Chaucer as a member of the bureaucratic community that Hoccleve was otherwise crafting within and by means of his poetry, and these hints lead readers to wonder why Chaucer's bureaucratic employment is not directly remarked upon. We first hear Chaucer's name as the

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[119] Ibid., 315-16. In this same year Hoccleve wrote his "Letter of Cupid," in which he may already be setting himself up in relation to Chaucer, as this first datable work of his translates a French courtly love tale, which Chaucer had also done early in his career (Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 54-6).

Regiment's Old Man urges Hoccleve to write to Prince Henry; at this point the man finally asks his interlocutor's name, and exclaims: "Sone, I have herd or this men speke of thee;/ Thow were aqweyntid with Chaucer, pardee" (1866-67). Although the broader discussion is of poetry Hoccleve might write for his desired patron, the Old Man links Hoccleve's name to Chaucer's after he has advised the poet to write in French or Latin as he would have learned these languages well in the Privy Seal (1854-58). Yet the Lancastrian kings were advocating English as the language of patriots,[120] and a purported relationship with Chaucer would tell readers that Hoccleve must also be conversant with that poet's language of choice. Hoccleve wishes to assure Henry that he is not limited to his administrative skills but instead is just as flexible and clever as that other English-writing bureaucrat, Chaucer. This invocation of Chaucer within a context of the bureaucrat defending his abilities as poet does not absolutely rely on a reader's perception of Chaucer as a man in a similar position, but this recognition of Chaucer as bureaucrat offers the fullest level of meaning from this passage. Later, Hoccleve likens Chaucer to Cicero and Aristotle (2085-88), two rhetors and advisors to princes,[121] certainly, but also figures known for statesmanship. Again these men's bureaucratic associations are silent, their identity instead based on "rethorik" (2085) and "philosophie" (2087). This does not mean that such a role is unimportant to Hoccleve; rather, a more powerful evocation of Chaucer's bureaucratic identity comes from its conspicuous absence here rather

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[120] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 51. See also John Fisher, "A Language Policy for Lancastrian England," *PMLA* 107 (1992): 1168-80; John Lehr, "Hoccleve and the National Language," *Medieval English Studies* 5 (1997): 243-82; and Pearsall, "Royal Self-Representation," 397.
[121] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 121.

than any insistence on the connection.

Even with his immense poetic skill, Ciceronian wisdom, and political connections, Chaucer did not cause the sea change that Hoccleve wished to inherit. Chaucer did not establish a paradigm in which administrator-poets achieve an ultimate relationship with kings as royal advisors. Scholars have been quick to interpret Hoccleve as a frustrated follower unable to match Chaucer's literary or occupational successes. Yet if Chaucer's renown in both spheres was limited, as Langdell argues, Hoccleve did not so much put a label on the Ricardian-era literary paradigm shift ushered in by Chaucer as much as he himself created it—frustrated at Chaucer, not himself. If Hoccleve wished to mark out a more important place in society for the poet-advisor, Chaucer was a useful exemplar to fix upon, yet Hoccleve would certainly take issue with his program of removing himself from court at times of danger. It is apparent in the *Regiment* that Hoccleve considered his own occupational identity and other elements of his personality to be relevant and important components of his mirror dedicated to the future Henry V and his presumption to be a person qualified to offer princely advice. If this poem reads as a sort of job application for the position of Lancastrian poet laureate, we must consider that Hoccleve needed to present himself as a different sort of poet from Chaucer. If Chaucer was a poet for a Ricardian court and a king like Richard II, Hoccleve must be a solution to Lancastrian problems and an appropriate fixture in a court practicing characteristically Lancastrian kingship. The Ricardian era was dead, and so must its unofficial laureate, Chaucer, be. By means of drawing attention to Chaucer's

hesitation to personalize or politicize his poetry Hoccleve emphasized a break with the Ricardian past, thus avoiding the taint of belonging to the wrong faction which he may have risked had he straightforwardly mimicked a Ricardian servant.[122] This poet does not wish to "claim to inherit…an office now vacated by Chaucer's death," as Knapp writes;[123] he does not wish to step directly into his predecessor's shoes. If he is to construct a position for himself in a paradigm in which Lancastrian administrator-poets perform vital government work, Chaucer's specter is useful in suggesting to readers what Hoccleve has in mind for himself but Chaucer himself must be gone and unimitatable: "so is myn herte wo/ That the honour of Englissh tonge is deed,/ Of which I wont was han conseil and reed" (*Regiment* 1958-60).

Hoccleve does not declare his intent to follow Chaucer's model but instead declares that England "May nevere man foorth brynge lyk to thee" (2104). Chaucer has initiated only a broken line of transmission since his like will never be met. It is in fact Hoccleve who manages to secure an unbroken lineage, reaching back to Chaucer, which his own generation and those following can benefit from. In this way Chaucer is more an anti-model for the poet-administrator, and Hoccleve an ideal associate of the new, legitimate, successor to Richard, an administrator to a new and hopeful era which will not repeat

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[122] For a discussion of how Henry IV purged his central administration and reorganized it to ensure loyalty, see Douglas Biggs, "A Plantagenet Revolution in Government? The Officers of Central Government and the Lancastrian Usurpation of 1399," *Medieval Prosopography* 20 (1999): 191-211.
[123] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 121.

Richard's mistakes.[124] Chaucer has ushered in a new phase of vernacular writing, but is, importantly, not present himself to shape the nature of the bureaucratic poet. Links between Chaucer's occupation and literary production allow Hoccleve to suggest that the best professional vernacular poets are also bureaucrats, but he does not glorify Chaucer simply as a modest means of earning glory for himself as a follower. Chaucer appears as a father of administrative poetry, but it is Hoccleve who masters this role—or at least, that is what he wishes readers of his *Regiment* to determine. Compared to Chaucer, Hoccleve's is a poetry of presence—dogged presence in the face of alienation and socio-political pressures. His poetry is an offer to be continually available to a king or patron via poetized council, forcibly at a distance due to the Privy Seal's location rather than because of his own decisions to flee. Hoccleve never managed the physical presence at court that Chaucer warranted, but he found a means of asserting himself from a distance as a faithful and capable servant who never ducked duty to save his own head. Hoccleve writes himself into his books—both the poems and *Formulary*—eliding scribe into document much like the 1381 rebels.[125] He writes Chaucer into the *Regiment* as well, to act as an

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[124] Strohm has argued that Chaucer's "unquestioned legitimacy" allows Hoccleve not just to bolster his own reputation but to broach the theme of genealogy in order to legitimize the Lancastrian lineage ("Lancastrian Court," 645). Since Langdell has just put the lie to Chaucer's "unquestioned legitimacy," it makes more sense to view Hoccleve's act of lineage-building rather than the lineage itself as a marker of legitimacy.

[125] An examination of the letters which Hoccleve chose to include in his *Formulary*, some of which are "firmly linked to specific historical moments," and his habit of initialing some of them with "T.H." allows Knapp to conclude that seemingly-unnecessary "autobiographical touches" comment on the anonymous and objective nature of bureaucratic documents (*Bureaucratic Muse*, 29-36). Matthew Brown notes that Hoccleve likely wrote the *Formulary* and *Series* at around the same time, perhaps because the latter would earn money to compensate for the time away from regular duties the former would require ("Bureaucratic Textuality," 30). Brown believes that the bureaucratic treatment of citation and authority Hoccleve experienced while compiling texts—

exemplar of disunity, of two separable halves, a poet and an administrator acting independently and thus a weak version of a poet-advisor. In contrast, Hoccleve's literary productions underscore unity. His occupational and literary struggles are intertwined, and not solely because he turns to poetry as a tool for acquiring his scribe's wages.

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We might judge Hoccleve's poetic talk about Chaucer to be an example of the sort of bureaucratic gossip that he envisions administrator-poets harnessing to construct and maintain bureaucratic culture. If quiet does reign in the Privy Seal, here is one means by which colleagues communicate. Though this was a posthumous communication on Chaucer's part, Hoccleve imagined his predecessor continuing to be enmeshed in patronage structures even after his death: in his final appearance in the *Regiment*, Chaucer is recommended to the protection of the Virgin Mary, whom Hoccleve wishes to serve as the late poet's advocate to Christ in exchange for the many poems Chaucer wrote in honor of her (4984-4991). Though Chaucer may not have viewed his day job as one worth poetic memorialization, Hoccleve wrote his predecessor into the bureaucratic network of shared labor and reciprocated support, self-definition and subjectification which he would come to advocate for even more strongly in his later *Series*. While still alive, Chaucer was a subject in another contemporary's poetic communication, that of Thomas Usk. Usk was a London factionalist whose

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whose details were sometimes swapped out with anonymizing references—caused "the self-conscious separation of formulaic representations of human relationship from their historical subjects [to become] thinkable as a poetic act," which realization took root in the *Series* (33, 43-4).

writing skills managed to save his life and resuscitate his career after his support of mayor Northampton landed him in prison in 1384. His self-defense within his *Appeal* rested on the notion that he was mere scribe not generator of Northampton's lies and propaganda, and on his willingness to testify against his former employer.[126] Usk's writing was not able to save him a second time, and he was executed in 1388 once the tide turned against the royalists he had joined.[127] In the meantime, Usk had written a second text akin to Hoccleve's *Series*, *The Testament of Love*, in which he struggles to justify his switch of faction, insist upon new loyalties, and come to terms with his own subjectivity and identity given his political vacillations.

His *Testament* refers to Chaucer as "the noble philosophical poete in Englissh," in whose "noble sayenges" Usk will find answers to his philosophical musings.[128] In these lines Love claims Chaucer as her servant, and thus like Hoccleve Usk insists on ascribing to Chaucer a patron, to understand his poetizing by means of a patronage framework and draw him into the politics that Chaucer steadily kept himself above. Strohm argues that Usk targeted Chaucer because the latter was a member of a faction Usk wished to join, and his *Testament*'s kind words about Chaucer were Usk's means of "courting" the

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[126] Strohm "Politics and Poetics," 85-7. *The Appeal of Thomas Usk* is printed in *A Book of London English, 1384-1425*, ed. R. W. Chambers and M. Daunt (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931), 22-31.
[127] Strohm "Politics and Poetics," 89.
[128] Thomas Usk, *The Testament of Love*, ed. R. Allen Shoaf (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), bk. 3, ch. 4, lines 559-69, p. 266). Strohm suggests that while Usk only refers to Chaucer as a literary icon, "it probably carries a political charge," because he would have been well aware of Chaucer's royalist connections and the work's own aims require any reference to be viewed in a political light ("Politics and Poetics," 106). To Usk, Chaucer provided a model of a careerist who melded artistry and "service of faction"; though his encomium mentions the wisdom of the *Troilus*, Usk may not actually have had access to Chaucer's current publications and thus based his words on the poet's reputation (106).

royalist cause.[129] In fact "Usk would seem at least partially to have modeled his career on Chaucer's own, to have been a 'reader'…of the older poet's career"; Chaucer, in turn, may have viewed Usk as an acute warning about caution in politics.[130] Strohm believes that Usk reacted to the sort of poet and civil servant he saw in Chaucer: "Chaucer must have remained an elusive and constantly frustrating example, with his calmer and broader-based and ultimately more successful attitude toward both the politics and the poetics of faction."[131] For Hoccleve, who experienced only the slightest institutional overlap with Chaucer, this man may more likely have been a figure of the growing-more-distant past who can represent what has been lost to time and what has changed about English society, rather than representing as he did for Usk what is actively out of reach to and unobtainable by one but not another. I suggest that Hoccleve had enough distance from Chaucer as to be motivated less by professional jealousy than by an intrigue regarding his predecessor's differing circumstances, and it is this distance rather than any intimacy between the two men that Hoccleve displayed in his *Regiment*.

Yet Usk's reaction to Chaucer and willingness to manipulate his name and reputation for his own ends informs a study of Hoccleve's similar fashioning of his literary father. Usk's *Appeal* and *Testament* thus demonstrate another late medieval writer's politicized approach to Chaucer couched in solely literary terms, and, alongside administrative records he inscribed for the Goldsmiths'

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[129] Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," 84.
[130] Ibid., 84, 96.
[131] Ibid., 112.

guild, they are further examples of the close relationship between official and extra-official writing. McNamara remarks that Usk uses "legal phraseology and structure as well as contemporary political jargon" most frequently when he is writing about himself—when he is writing autobiographical sections within broader-ranging socio-political treatises.[132] His fabrication of a textual trial in which legal advocate Lady Love and judge Mary, queen of heaven prove his loyalty—a contrived situation where a rhetorical device lends a sense of reality to readers who might otherwise disbelieve the author's position[133]—is particularly instructive regarding Hoccleve's similar means of guiding readers towards overcoming suspicion of his continued madness.

Usk found himself facing a situation of alienation very similar to that of Hoccleve in the *Series*: "his friends have turned against him, and…he seeks restoration" to his political faction by means of a *Testament* that will relay his character and prove he "has learned from and has been improved by past experience."[134] Usk's ultimate concern is "a cleared reputation in the eyes of the community and the people who can recast him into the political sphere….he longs for the public to believe his story and…reaccept him as a professional colleague."[135] Rhetorically, Usk proves himself by "adopt[ing] the register of groups from which he was excluded. For Usk the writer, these registers are

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[132] McNamara, "Bureaucratic and Political Language," 170-71.
[133] See Ibid., 171-2, 174, 186-7. She states further that "in his desperation to be included in Lady Love's circle, Usk adopts the register of groups from which he was excluded. For Usk the writer, these registers are marked as those which signify inclusiveness to those who share them. In using these factional and bureaucratic registers he is able to construct his identity as one who is included in a favoured and powerful group" (192-3).
[134] Ibid., 194-5.
[135] Ibid., 174, 175.

marked as those which signify inclusiveness to those who share them. In using these factional and bureaucratic registers he is able to construct his identity as one who is included in a favoured and powerful group."[136] Usk's literature draws upon bureaucratic and legal language in order to build a personal and factional identity through the "communication of experience."[137] Strohm likewise styles the *Testament* "communicative," intended to "bridge the gap between himself and his hoped-for associates by persuading them of his essential trustworthiness"; like the *Series*, we might note, this work was "an outcry against his present difficulties and an expression of his future hopes."[138] I quote at length because in this context it becomes easier to see Hoccleve's poetry and specifically the autobiographical and petitionary pieces as constructive of a bureaucratic cadre in which self-fashioning and the transmission of experience and wisdom are two sides of the same coin. Yet we know that Usk actually experienced alienation and reintegrated himself through shrewd acumen, or, at least, through Richard II's great need for support in London. What does this tell us of Hoccleve's rhetoric?

Critics have long debated whether this poet's autobiographical confessions are true or convention.[139] It becomes particularly compelling to consider his

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[136] Ibid., 192-3.
[137] Ibid., 1.
[138] Strohm, "Politics and Poetics," 100, 99.
[139] Critics have gone back and forth over whether Hoccleve was "telling the truth" about his misspent youth and adult woes, and indeed whether it is anachronistic to label any medieval writing "autobiographical." Generations of scholars took Hoccleve's genuineness for granted (Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry," 391). After Eva Thornley ("The Middle English Penitential Lyric and Hoccleve's Autobiographical Poetry," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 68 [1967]: 295-321) and Doob (*Nebuchadnezzar's Children*) further unmasked the highly conventional nature of Hoccleve's psychological revelations and symptoms, growing critical distrust of autobiography led

madness trope as affectation in light of how predecessors had written about alienation and social recovery.[140] Unlike Usk Hoccleve does not claim to be the victim of politicking; in the *Series*, madness and its aftermath symbolize unruly factions and urban opportunism; and as a metaphor, madness all the more clearly equals for Hoccleve any administrative inefficiencies and interpersonal conflicts obstructing bureaucratic communication. Hoccleve's supposed madness began around the time of his estrangement from Henry V's literary retinue, though his immersion in this environment had itself inspired contemplation of bureaucratic and courtly communication in his earlier poems.[141] The *Series* can

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Burrow to challenge what he terms the "conventional fallacy" ("Autobiographical Poetry," 394). Burrow makes two important points in favor of an autobiographical interpretation: first, that whatever facts can be verified about Hoccleve from archival records have been, suggesting he deserves the benefit of the doubt about other details such as his marriage or madness; and second, that a person's thought-world often limits him to describing his real life using conventional tropes (393-4, 400). Burrow accepts use of the term "autobiography" for medieval texts so long as we keep in mind that self-references are motivated differently from modern autobiography. Namely, they are eminently practical, "written versions...of an everyday self-referring speech-act" (401; Burrow, "Poet as Petitioner," 62). Kohl explains that medieval autobiography relies on narrative, a departure from the convention of using allegorical figures to represent character traits and thoughts—and Hoccleve's successive autobiographical works become increasingly autobiographical and less allegorical ("Virtues and Vices," 116-17). We now recognize that Hoccleve is not a transparent source of information on the Privy Seal or fifteenth-century London society, but historians and literary critics still question the value of his claims. Mitchell's evaluation remains a balanced accounting of the known facts: he emphasizes how significant it is that this poet chose to include more seemingly-autobiographical passages than his contemporaries, and that his were more substantial, successful, and convincing (Mitchell, "Autobiographical Element").

[140] In addition to Thomas Usk, Galloway makes a similar argument about politically-active civil lawyer and judge Adam Usk, who ran into legal trouble in 1402 and whose chronicle both narrates and rhetorically enacts his return to Henry IV's favor ("Two Usks," 305-14).

[141] Lancastrian propaganda emphasized authenticity and a unity of inner and outer, a desire for observers to accept that "outward show" matches "inner belief," and this motif appears in court literature (Strohm, "Lancastrian Court," 644, 647-48. As a means to evaluate what has gone wrong in Lancastrian operations, madness opens up a space in which the poet's mind potentially does not match his appearance—and London itself possesses a strange countenance—in direct violation of royal directives to court poets. If *La male* and *Regiment* include poetic personae whose personal problems, including theological orthodoxy, just succession, and the right to self-definition, are meant to parallel the position of the Lancastrian kings in order to emphasize their legitimacy and control (see ibid., 644-5), then *My Complaint* reads as a testimonial of the maddened state of both poet and realm under Henry V. Strohm argues that propaganda, including "the refusal of debilitating speculation and misrepresentation in any of its forms….stabilized" the nation, and Hoccleve textually represented this by attacking sins of the

easily appear to be simple criticism of the "widespread…instabilities" of the time,[142] just as his *Regiment* may seem to authorize the poet's advice-giving in the traditional way of mirrors-for-princes by "pillorying flattery" and other sins of the tongue to position Hoccleve "as a plain-speaker and truth-teller."[143] Yet "truth-teller" and "plain speaker" are themselves rhetorical stances commenting on the nature of honest dealings and the difficulty of receiving honest royal advice.[144] In the broader contexts of Hoccleve's corpus and insular administrative writing, it emerges that conventional complaints and petitions are a later-medieval manifestation of the administrative self-reflectional anxiety, instinctive to a vocation that labored to record and preserve the past while actively fashioning roles and procedures or a functional government. Hoccleve responds to the Privy Seal's going out-of-court, yet this was not a new process during his tenure. Restrictive and inefficient as it was, Lancastrian kingship ushered in a "social and political fluidity" that represented opportunity to Hoccleve and his contemporaries, whose estates satire was re-constructive more than simply derisive.[145] It is important to an understanding of Hoccleve's self-identification to view his poetry as solution-oriented rather than defeatist, overcoming instability by offering up administrative intellectualism as a foundation for Lancastrian

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tongue in the *Regiment* (648). By the point of the *Series,* Hoccleve has himself become a target of misrepresentation, an emblem of the utter corruption of Lancastrian good intentions. Participating in this "stabilizing" discourse led to the poet's own destabilization within a few years, at least figuratively.

[142] Knapp, Bureaucratic Muse, 23; see Richard Firth Green, "Medieval Literature and Law," in Wallace *Cambridge History*, 407-31 for a discussion of the discontents late medieval writers expressed.

[143] Strohm, "Lancastrian Court," 648.

[144] See Barr and Ward-Perkins, "Rhetoric of Counsel."

[145] See Franck Collard and Aude Mairey, "In the Mirror of Mutual Representation: Political Society As Seen By Its Members," in Fletcher, *Government and Political Life*, 318 and passim.

stability. Going out of court was not necessarily an ossifying process; it could be full of new possibilities for the clever and industrious poet-bureaucrat.

There is no time here to treat Usk at any length but only to indicate that Hoccleve was not alone in his frustrations and endeavors—to briefly people Hoccleve's London with similar contemporary figures who demonstrate that late medieval administrator-authors participated in a culture that was both longstanding and undergoing a moment of acute reevaluation, dedicated to preserving the written word and anxious about its loss, inaccuracy, or misappropriation. Chaucer himself in a rare instance of personal poetry addressed to a copyist his annoyance that through haste and negligence the man often miscopied his verses.[146] What Usk likewise learned from his time inscribing Goldsmiths' Guild minutes was "the value of the recorded, written word," manifested in his scrupulous recording of guild ordinances in full.[147] The policy explicitly intended to service posterity as much as contemporary users, and McNamara shows that Usk borrowed this philosophy into his *Testament*: "And for comers hereafter shullen fully out of denwere al the sothe knowe of these thinges in acte, but as they werne I have put it in scripture, in perpetuel remembraunce of true meanynge."[148] Usk is concerned that with time (or

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[146] "Chaucers wordes unto Adam, his owne scriveyn" is printed in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 650. See Glending Olson, "Author, Scribe, and Curse: The Genre of Adam Scriveyn," *Chaucer Review* 43 (2008): 284-97. Knowledge of the many versions in which the *Canterbury Tales* was copied by members of a scribal book-copying circle Hoccleve participated in might have inspired Hoccleve's own careful shepherding of *Regiment* and *Series* manuscripts and the two holograph collections he penned (Bowers, "Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs," 39-40).
[147] McNamara, "Bureaucratic and Political Language," 173.
[148] McNamara, "Bureaucratic and Political Language," 173. This passage appears in *Testament* (Shoaf), bk. 1, ch. 6, lines 648-50, p. 102.

intentional corruption, a concept he learned in the entourage of Northampton) the "true meaning" of his words may be lost, and he is unwilling to accept that such a fate may be inevitable. We have seen a similar anxiety in the writings of late twelfth-century political theory and thirteenth-century administrative and legal manuals, an eagerness to preserve accumulated knowledge but also ensure that professionals only perpetuate accurate knowledge or wise opinions. Usk reveals a fear of spoken utterance and gossip similar to Hoccleve's assertion that inaccurate gossip outpaces accurate rumors—revealing a contemporary theory about the need to replace reliance on spoken testimony with reliable text. Immediately after claiming he must write his story so that the truth will prevail, Usk protests that "the false fame which that clerkes sayn flyeth as faste as dothe the fame of trouthe shal so wyde sprede tyl…I ben hyndred withouten any measure of trouthe."[149]

London town clerk John Carpenter also composed a bureaucratic document that reflects his anxieties over the permanence of written knowledge. Knapp introduces into his investigation of Hoccleve's scribal labor a passage from Carpenter's 1419 *Liber Albus* about the worry that plague will eliminate all persons knowledgeable about London administration. To Knapp, Carpenter's discussion of his text's purpose "offers a vision of writing as a supplement to the fragile human body," echoing Hoccleve's link between text and mortality.[150] For an urban functionary like Carpenter "bureaucratic technology" provides not just a

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[149] *Testament* (Shoaf), bk. 1, ch. 6, lines 652-54, p. 102; quoted in McNamara, "Bureaucratic and Political Language," 181.
[150] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 85.

conventional vehicle for "permanence" or "immortality," which literature had always done, but, in the form of the archive, functions beyond even human capabilities of memory and documentary production.[151] Yet if we view him alongside those administrators of previous generations who wrote comparable texts, Carpenter's motives appear grounded even more strongly in a bureaucratic anxiety surrounding a felt need to account for and explain the act of writing and thus situate the resulting text in an occupational environment comprising speech, recording, copying, dictation, record consulting, and other tasks involving written and spoken language. Carpenter's acute motive for writing may have been "a sense of crisis,"[152] but the recording of one's motives is itself a practice that extends well back into the administrative and legal texts of previous centuries. *Liber Albus* reveals the same worries shared by thirteenth-century legal writers regarding a human's capacity to hold case law in his memory, and although Knapp is correct in pointing to the passage's emphasis on human mortality, Carpenter appears more concerned about the failings of the documentary record. It is not death of municipal clerks but the disorder of already-produced records, those "committed without order or arrangement," that threatens collected knowledge.[153] *Bracton* expressed this same fear of disorder, yet now Carpenter has lived experience of the inefficiencies, the "disputes and perplexity" that develop when city officials have died and successors cannot run the city for

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[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Quoted in Ibid., 84. Knapp excerpts from Henry Thomas Riley's translation and edition of *Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London* (London: Richard Griffin, 1861), 3.

"want of such written information."[154]

Generations before, legal writers had had to introduce the novelty of recording certain types of knowledge, while Carpenter contends instead with a situation in which London's "superior authorities" had already at some point resolved to produce a "volume…containing the regulations of the city." Problematically, these "noteworthy memoranda…lie scattered without order or classification throughout the books and rolls, as well as the Charters" of London.[155] The London archive is diffuse and unusable in its current form, and the city clerk's job is not to initiate a recording program but to put into order sundry records produced for various purposes and poorly cared for.[156] Much like the prologue of *Glanvil*, Carpenter guesses that the only reason such a text had not yet been compiled was "the extreme laboriousness of the undertaking."[157] Scribal labor, so tangibly felt by earlier generations of scholars who were the first to record their profession, and so problematic to an observer like Hoccleve, is here implicated into the process of memorializing London's vital wisdom. The 1381 rebels appear uncomfortably prescient in this sense, dreaming as they did of a world where administrators died en masse and legal knowledge and procedure died with them.

Carpenter worried the law, or at least vital minutiae, would itself be slain by pestilence, just as its preservation rested upon the manual toil of the scribe—two

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[154] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 84; *Liber Albus* (Riley), 3.
[155] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 84; *Liber Albus* (Riley), 3.
[156] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 84; *Liber Albus* (Riley), 3. Ironically, the *Liber Albus* seems to have suffered the same fate, according to verses written into the fly-leaf about a hundred years later calling the text "white no more," almost unreadable due to finger grease (*Liber Albus* [Riley], 1).
[157] *Liber Albus* (Riley), 3.

indications of the bodily metonymy eliding bureaucrat into document. Carpenter insists not that human lives and capabilities are unreliable and therefore knowledge must be entrusted to books, but rather that texts have shortcomings that require humans to put in order. Documents have their keepers, be they archival records or propagandistic poems, and Carpenter does not seem to foresee a time when London can rid itself of its town clerk any more than Hoccleve downplays the bureaucracy's human element. Like Richard fitz Nigel and the *Glanvill*- and *Bracton*- authors also recognized, documentary systems do not stand alone but require people to use them and to compose manuals on their use, and Hoccleve's poetic contributions together with his *Formulary* imagine an administrator at work inside and outside the Privy Seal. In light of contemporary and near-contemporary administrative and literary texts like Carpenter and Usk's, it is all the more possible to read Hoccleve's autobiographical poems as manuals every bit as dedicated as the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* or *Bracton* to aiding in one's navigation of the turbulent shores hemming in the contested spaces of administrative service. Hoccleve was not the only civil servant to find fault with bureaucratic mechanisms. Though he utilized a different set of administrative procedures from those of London's municipal records familiar to Carpenter, his imaginative treatment of inefficiencies and deficiencies provides a comparable commentary on the limits and possibilities of England's administration.[158]

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[158] Carpenter and Hoccleve did run in the same circles and may have known one another, and the poet's "Ballad to Master Carpenter" may have been written at the same time Carpenter penned his *Liber Albus* (Brown, "Bureaucratic Textuality," 33). Speaking of permanence and textuality, Patterson suggests that Carpenter's bequeathing of books to a Guildhall library in his will may account for the survival of a manuscript of Hoccleve's poems, Beinecke MA 493.

Though the Privy Seal existed "extra curiam regis,"[159] Hoccleve's personal seal, preserved on the unique annuity receipt discussed above, communicates a telling motto: "va illa volunte"—"he goes there willingly." Mooney interprets the phrase, accompanied by the image of a pointing hand, to mean that "a Privy Seal clerk willingly goes wherever the king commands."[160] If she is correct, then we have come full circle from Peter Blois' desire to attend his king "in via, in camera, in capella." One purpose of the mirror genre is to position the writer vis-a-vis the king. Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* is a rather overt assertion of his legitimacy and competency to advise Prince Henry, a means of getting closer to the king through poetry than he can through loyal government service alone—so close, in fact, that Hoccleve imagines Prince Henry taking the verses into his chamber with him at night (2140). The *Regiment* commences in the poet-narrator's lonely room yet conceptually concludes in an intimate royal space. Hoccleve penetrates this space not bodily but synecdochically by means of a book which compiles his wisdom and advice. The book has embodied its author's "humble pacience" (5446) which allows it courage "[its] wordes to pronounce in the presence/ Of kynges ympe and prince worthynesse" (5441-42). We find in Hoccleve's poems anxiety about the bureaucrat's insecurities that stem in part from the Privy Seal's distance from Crown and court, but also a coping with and overcoming of this

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"Beinecke MS 493 and the Survival of Hoccleve's *Series,*" in *Old Books, New Learning: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Books at Yale*, ed. Robert Babcock and Lee Patterson (New Haven: Yale University Library Gazette, 2001), 91. One friend in his will, another in a ballad, wrote each other into literary history; ironically, however, in doing so Hoccleve erased another name and replaced it with Carpenter's, thus creating in his friend a palimpsest that reminds one more of impermanence and textual manipulation of the sort that Chaucer dreaded.

[159] Tout, "Household of the Chancery," 52.

[160] Mooney, "New Light," 317.

distance. Hoccleve sees a solution to his problems in bureaucratic solidarity and communication, and is secure enough in this resolution that he also considers it a solution to the realm's administrative problems and the Lancastrian dynasty's particular issues. In Hoccleve's world a very different solution had recently and violently been put forward: eliminating the administration altogether. Many wrote about the "ideal government," and the bureaucracy was a favorite target of anonymous protest poems and songs.[161] To the 1381 peasant rebels, there was no room for administrators of any rank in this ideal kingdom.[162] Poets with court ties like Gower, Chaucer, Dunbar and Hoccleve wrote to legitimate their position in the government and this government's very existence—inheriting a bureaucratic cultural imaginary and re-shaping it to solve problems of bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency.

[161] Maddicott, "Poems of Social Protest," 130, 133, 143; Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 236.
[162] Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, 6.

Conclusion: "In seculo sum et seculum sequor, immo trahit me secum"

> The soul, deceived by allurements of many kinds, proving false to its own inner light, by a sort of self-betrayal goes astray as the result of its desires amid the deception of the outer world….Who more contemptible than he who scorns a knowledge of himself
>
> —John of Salisbury

> Ioie hastow for to muse
> Upon they book, and therin stare and poure,
> Til that it thy wit consume and deuoure
>
> —Thomas Hoccleve

Evidence suggests that trilingual English poet John Gower may have been a lawyer, and that his legal experience shaped the content and message of his poetry in much the same way as Chaucer and Hoccleve's administrative background shaped theirs. Friend of Chaucer and eventual Lancastrian pensioner, Gower claims in the *Confessio Amantis* of 1390—a multi-genre text in the vein of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, part moral didacticism and part mirror for princes—to have been given the commission by King Richard due to a fortuitous meeting on the River Thames. Richard asked him to join him on the royal barge, then "this charge upon me leyde, / And bad me doo my busynesse / That to his hihe worthinesse / Som newe thing I scholde booke, / That he himself it mighte looke / After the forme of my writynge."[1] Gower is happy to oblige, and

[1] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. Russell A. Peck (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000-2004), 1:*48-53. The asterisk preceding these line numbers refers to the nature of the lines as part of the text's original prologue, removed in later recensions of 1391/2 and 1393 and thus not part of the text's conventional line numbering. We know that Hoccleve was familiar with his work because he was one of a handful of scribes who participated in copying a

rests assured that the king's protection will prevent detractors from criticizing or intentionally misreading his verses—after all, "this world is wilde / Of such jangling" (lines *57-69). This passage tells the story of the text's creation, a strategy familiar from texts like Richard fitz Nigel's *Dialogue of the Exchequer* or Thomas Hoccleve's poems. But unlike the twelfth-century treasurer, Gower, a skilled political observer, was not searching for a justification for his text so much as he wanted to situate it within a socio-political and patronage framework to shape its reputation and reception—and its very meaning. Unlike Fitz Nigel and Hoccleve's invented characters, Gower's interlocutor is a king and thus his text supposedly springs directly from the royal will.

Gower puts himself forward as royal advisor rather forcefully: "So ferforth I me recomaunde / To him which al me may comaunde" (lines *29-30). In comparison, Hoccleve's own address to Prince Henry within the *Regiment* prologue draws attention to the text's written nature, and thus the two men's lack of proximity: "Right humblely axyng of yow licence / That with my penne I may to yow declare…"[2] Gower's allegiance would shortly shift to Richard's cousin and rival, the future Henry IV, but meanwhile Gower indulges in the literary safety of royal approbation. As he does so his verse echoes conventional disapprovals of gossip and other courtly sins of the tongue, but he is a potential victim while King Richard II is a champion and guardian to those he patronizes. Such a scenario is

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manuscript of the *Confessio.* A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, "The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century," in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watcon (London: Scolar, 1978), 182-5, 198.

[2] *Regiment of Princes* (Blyth), 2024-5.

in stark contrast to the commentaries twelfth-century sage administrators wrote about courtly decadence, and to Hoccleve's conception of the poet-administrator as royal protector and linguistic defense mechanism. Gower produced (and revised) this poem in a specific political and cultural climate, and it would not do to contrast his rhetorical strategies and politicking to those of other writers without careful attention to nuance and context. I wish only to underscore the comparatively marginal position of other writers who were busily writing their way into the royal court literally and figuratively, rarely feeling the acceptance and patronage that Gower seems entitled to. His river scene is likely every bit as fictitious as Fitz Nigel's colleague bursting in upon him or Hoccleve's meeting an old almsman while melancholically wandering Westminster.[3] Yet these men's grounds for penning literature was their ability to protect the Crown, not the other way around.

Hoccleve's poetic persona did not meet the kings he served, and struggled to communicate with the functionaries like treasurer Furnival and subtreasurer Somer who controlled his annuity payments. Instead Hoccleve developed an advice-giving strategy that turns his marginality to his best advantage. The *Regiment*'s Old Man repeats a conventional statement about the court's unavoidable corruption: "Trouth and clennesse musten men forgete / In lordes courtes, for they hertes frete; / They hyndren folk. Fy upon tonges treewe! / They displesance in lordes courtes breewe" (550-3). Twelfth-century court

[3] Frank Grady convincingly goes against previous opinion when he approaches the scene with skepticism, designating it "a literary device, a scene that is not so much recollected as staged. "Gower's Boat, Richard's Barge, and the True Story of the *Confessio Amantis*: Text and Gloss," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44 (2002): 5.

critics defended the rare stalwart cleric, but Hoccleve, inescapably distant from court, must take the convention at face value. He might imagine his *Regiment* in Prince Henry's intimate spaces, but he does not imagine himself meeting with the king or regularly attending court as an advisor. His book must do this work for him, and in this Hoccleve's design resembles to a degree the contingency that civil servants had long faced. In chapter three, we see texts acting as proxies embodying the wisdom and advice of their authors, serving as an extension of the administrator that connected him to his ultimate overseers the king and God. In the twelfth century secular clergy who served periodically at court or traveled there on ecclesiastical business also dedicated treatises to kings which they could send in their stead to offer learned counsel. Yet these authors maintained the hope of a future place nearer the king, as Aristotle tutoring Alexander (or at least needed to justify a worldly career through proximity to a king), and their texts maintained the fiction of the author's presence at court or among important courtiers. John of Salisbury rather explicitly sends a book to Westminster to speak his warnings and advice to Thomas Becket, the *Policraticus*, which underscores the author's absence from court in the safety of Canterbury. Yet as has been explored above, this book served as a sort of beachhead for John or other Canterbury clerks to travel to the royal administrative offices, with Becket as protector.

He tells the book—or a Canterbury clerk traveling to court—to approach Becket and offer him some advice from John: "If perchance you withdraw from the court… / you will whisper at last a few things in the ear of your patron, /

remembering which he cannot be unmindful of himself: 'Divine law is the only mistress of life for good men…'"[4] The *Minor* likewise describes a petitioner "proceed[ing] in a hurry to the private room" of the chancellor and receiving his hospitality as well as his advice.[5] This poem asks a clerk to "Bring out one thing on leaving in his secret ear: / 'Whatever others may do, be mindful of yourself!'"[6] If John's book personifies him, allowing him to figuratively participate at court more actively than as an author, his storytelling also highlights his cosmopolitan importance. John dedicates the book to Becket, itself a presumption of friendship or association. The book does not just act in John's stead but allows him to speak in his own voice, addressing an unnamed Becket throughout the treatise. This is true of the *Entheticus Major* and *Minor*, the *Policraticus* which the *Minor* introduces, and the *Metalogicon* that accompanies the *Policraticus* in manuscripts. John addresses a second-person subject which is concurrently the book itself and its primary intended reader Becket.[7] This device serves to strengthen moral advice and admonitions, as they seem not to come from obsolete and antiquated tomes but from a living associate. Regular second-person addresses to Becket also create the air of conversation, a continued discourse between the men, or at least reminders that many conversations have taken place and will continue to take place between them in the future. This book counsels by proxy, but only because of temporary distance.

Throughout Book 2 of the *Policraticus*, for instance, John references

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[4] *Entheticus Maior* (Van Laarhoven), 1513-17, 1:202.
[5] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 50-60, 1:233-34.
[6] *Entheticus Minor* (Van Laarhoven), 103-4, 1:236.
[7] Van Laarhoven, "Introduction," 1:48-52, 82-3; Nederman, *John of Salisbury*, 44.

previous conversations with an unnamed “you,” working out his philosophical positions in response to what an erstwhile interlocutor has stated or advised. He states within one disquisition that “I know the point you are wont to make,” and demands a reply (“What is your next step?”).[8] This second person, known to a reader to be Becket, clearly must have engaged our author in many serious exchanges, likely therefore trusting John as an educated colleague or even advisor. Writing himself into conversations with Becket demonstrates this Canterbury clerk has an important connection to Westminster, but beyond reputation-building, this textual device allows John to be seen maintaining his assistive role across the distance between Canterbury and Westminster. The air of continued debate suggests that the men’s relationship is not permanently broken or even suspended due to their distance, but that instead Becket will continue to rely on his friend’s wisdom during his chancellorship. The *Policraticus* is not solely an admonitory guide for Becket to take away but an invitation for continued discourse and exchanges of counsel. Much like epistolary relationships common at the time between friends who exchanged letters in between meetings, infrequent as they may be, John’s texts maintained an in-person relationship rather than capitulating to distance.[9] These addresses also function somewhat like the textual gossip in Hoccleve’s works, allowing readers to be privy to intimate conversations between the men, drawing them in to the

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[8] *Policraticus* (Pike), 2.22, 108.

[9] For discussion of such epistolary friendship networks see John McLoughlin, "*Amicitia* in Practice: John of Salisbury (c.1120-1180) and His Circle,” in *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxtan Symposium*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 1990), 165-81; Cary Nederman, "Friendship in Public Life during the Twelfth Century: Theory and Practice in the Writings of John of Salisbury,” *Viator* 38 (2007): 385-97.

network. Further, much like Hoccleve's persona in the *Series* may have wished to circulate information through gossip, readers learn lessons intended for Becket and might themselves, whenever able, pick up the mission and lobby the chancellor on John's behalf.[10]

John constructs a similar relationship to Pope Adrian IV, stating that the latter "allowed me into closest friendship with him….And so since, as it is customary to do among friends, we frequently consulted together over many matters, and he inquired most intimately and diligently of me what men felt both about himself and about the Roman Church."[11] John retells stories of his talks with Adrian in part by quoting his own and the Pope's utterances. Direct discourse produces an immediacy and reality for a reader, which makes for a lively reading experience but also helps to substantiate the claims of friendship as such an assertion could be exaggerated by a place seeker, but detailed remembered conversations smack of truth. John's wisdom is also patently valuable if it has been vetted by a powerful man in this way, and we can trust that John has thought through his positions carefully before conveying them to a pope. His opinions about secular clergy appear to be honest reality rather than propagandistic rhetoric since they were first presented to Adrian who asked for a practical helpful assessment of clerical integrity. In this passage the two men admit to the complexity of the issue, that there are corrupt clergy as well as good, and this sentiment allows a reader to better understand the broader *Policraticus*

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[10] As editor Van Laarhoven cautions, John's texts offer advice to Becket which might never come in front of a busy chancellor who had little time for reading ("Introduction," 83).
[11] *Policraticus* (Nederman), 6.24, 132-5.

with its ambiguous message about the advisability of clergy serving as bureaucrats. Even Pope Adrian does not have all the answers. Furthermore, coming as it does within John's organic body metaphor, this extended conversation participates in John's Christianization of advice supposedly culled from Plutarch.

Textual dialogue allows John to speak to those he wishes to council, rather than *about* them. If the author can show that his advice has successfully reached the ears of important men, his textual exercise will appear grounded in reality and he himself will be less anonymous. Otherwise, writing about Pope Adrian or other members of his network outside of these captured conversations might risk coming across as politicking or dangerous gossip. At one point for instance John rebukes Adrian for the policy of allowing the Church to accept gifts, and John assures readers that the pope was happy to receive John's "great candour."[12] Twelfth-century court criticism is a deeply personal genre, and its writers did not rest their endeavor solely on convincing arguments of a cleric's utility to a king or bishop and his government. Their personal experiences—and authority—mattered in this economy of advice-giving. If the natural advisor on issues of statecraft was "the magnates [who] were more likely to offer their monarch the older feudal virtues of loyalty…and military prowess,"[13] clerical authors needed to assert their own value and proficiency in courtly communication. Kings like Henry II may have been coming to recognize the value of skills held by educated clergy, but texts like the *Policraticus* drove that

[12] *Policraticus*, trans. Nederman, 135. See also pp. 224-5 regarding another visit with Adrian.
[13] Turner, *Men Raised*, 9.

demand and defined the utility which a king could hope for from this sort of administrator. Slightly later, Walter Map engaged in a similar self-fashioning that also attempted to fashion the nature of clerical employment at court using an authority that, like John's, stemmed from a hermeneutics of presence. Map writes about finding Henry II's court perplexing, and his lengthy *De nugis curialium* attempts to fathom it. His statement that "in the court I exist" is a claim to a storytelling authority, notes Sebastian Coxon, and Map's appearance in the form of shifting personae has been remarked upon as a justificatory device for the collection and expression of wisdom.[14]

Map not only likes to tell stories, as did many contemporary text writers, but he likes to tell stories of storytelling. In other words, he employs a technique of presenting anecdotes in which he himself features as a character at court or in the presence of kings and courtiers, and he or other clergy relate an anecdote which was considered so clever that it made its original audience laugh. Coxon argues that these scenes allow Map to cultivate his personality and "author-mythology" in order to fix himself as the text's author and build his reputation as a useful court wit.[15] Yet this technique also stresses the utility of a clerical advisor physically present at court and not just offering advice from a distance, through writing. It is significant that Map captures and relates spoken performances of his stories, as this method emphasizes the necessity of proximity in the sharing of

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[14] Sebastian Coxon, "Wit, Laughter, and Authority in Walter Map's *De nugis curialium* (Courtiers' Trifles)," in *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, ed. Stephen Partridge and Erik Kwakkel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 43; see also Echard, "Map's Metafiction."

[15] Coxon, "Wit, Laughter, and Authority," 47 and passim.

wisdom and advice—either in the form of jokes, or more serious modes of transmission. Telling of his court performances is his way of demonstrating to readers how secular clerks function at court and why they are beneficial. Map does not simply write to instruct and entertain readers, but to offer proof that in person at court (or away on official business) he regularly performs in an instructive and productive capacity. In one story he places himself at the Third Lateran Council as Henry II's representative, and repeats his feat in tricking two Waldensians into ridiculing themselves with a theological error.[16] Map casts himself as a defender of heresy, relating this incident within a long discussion of threats to the Church and civil order in the form of improper monastic orders and heretical movements. In another place, he recounts an exchange with Henry II's lay chief justiciar, Ranulf de Glanvill. The two men joke about the speed of kings' men and popes' men in carrying out judicial business. The distinction casts Map, a secular cleric serving the court as a clerk, as the agent of ecclesiastical justice while Glanvill is the king's man.

Though himself an administrative dignitary, Map appears here as a mediator between papal authority and the king's will, the separate spheres of church and state.[17] He displays his political acumen and dedication to justice and protecting the Church by dealing with a difficult situation, namely a falling out with Henry II's son Geoffrey Plantagenet. In a long passage he details Geoffrey's exploitation of first a bishopric and then the position of Chancellor, and his own

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[16] *De nugis curialium* (James, Brooke, and Mynors), 1.24, 81; see Coxon, "Wit, Laughter, and Authority," 41.
[17] *De nugis curialium* (James, Brooke, and Mynors), 5.7, 509; Coxon, "Wit, Laughter, and Authority," 42.

verbal and material measures for resisting and overcoming.[18] He first insists on his relationship to the king, calling himself "dear and acceptable to the king" and placing himself within a lineage of men who had served Henry.[19] He also felt close enough to the king to appeal directly to him regarding Archbishop Geoffrey's improper exactions of tithe money, inserting himself between royal father and son and winning the battle.[20] At this time Map held various prebends and balanced their administration with time at court,[21] and this passage in which he defends his churches—and subsequently comes up against the newly appointed Chancellor Geoffrey and his threats of rising transaction costs—underscores the close association between diocesan and central administration and the interrelationship between Map's strictly clerical duties and his links to the king's government. His wit defuses tense situations and allows Map to bring others onto his side, but his storytelling device also locates him figuratively within the interstices between the ecclesiastical and royal orbits and materially near the king, court and courtiers. In very many other places throughout *De nugis curialium* Map refers to himself in the first person and mentions his actions or experiences, yet the stories of storytelling preserve moments during which Map's actions or location evidence his courtier status. If texts can serve as proxies of their authors, inserting wise men into chambers otherwise closed off to them or bringing their counsel before the king's eyes, Map wished to leverage his textual

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[18] *De nugis curialium* (James, Brooke, and Mynors), 5.6, 495-99; Coxon, "Wit, Laughter, and Authority," 44-6.
[19] *De nugis curialium* (James, Brooke, and Mynors), 5.7, 495.
[20] *De nugis curialium* (James, Brooke, and Mynors), 5.7, 497.
[21] C. N. L. Brooke, "Introduction," in James, Brooke, and Mynors, *De nugis curialium,* xvii.

circulation into permanent echoes of his place at court.

Recently, Christine Carpenter and Olivier Mattéoni argued in a comparison of French and English administrative history that England did not have an "equivalent…of the French 'discourse of office,' that is, a serious consideration of what it was to be an officer, written for the benefit of those in government."[22] The authors find in England mostly criticism of civil servants, and "although there were early treatises on government and the law, when these institutions were in their infancy in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the idea that office per se was something that was worth considering really only began to appear towards the end of the fifteenth century"—and thus emerged "positive works on office" and those with "more reflective views on office."[23] Close reading of administrative literature and its elements shared over a few hundred years of government development shows the degree to which England did in fact have positive, reflective, and reflexive discourse about the nature of bureaucratic labor and a bureaucratic identity earlier on. We see that the later medieval discussions of office are not a new phenomenon so much as they are built on textual and cultural precedents. Examples of administrative literature might appear small in number, even when collected over generations, and it is admittedly more surprising that so few educated men wrote than that a few did. Yet attention to the subjective nature of letters, mirrors for princes, verse, and manuals reveals a deeper awareness of and attention to the place of individuals and collectivities in England's broader cultural hierarchies and government

[22] Carpenter and Matteoni, "Offices and Officers," 108.
[23] Ibid., 109.

operations. What Carpenter and Matteoni seem to mean in their evaluation of France and England is that in the former there developed a discourse of the royal protection of civil servants, which “helped to solemnise the role of serving the public power,” and such protectionism did not appear in England.[24] As we have seen from Gower’s exceptionalism, English bureaucratic discourse existed but in a different form, asserting service to and protection of the king as the linchpin of authority and respectability among the “fourth estate.”

Centuries of social and political changes in England unified the corpus of civil servants and their culture more than they divided. Nearness to a king remained a touchstone for defining an administrator’s role at court and in society, even when that nearness was only rhetorical. Government employment and other aspects of life were different in the late middle ages from the twelfth century, yet not unrecognizable. Thomas Hoccleve was a starting point and inspiration for this dissertation, but it appears most appropriate to situate him as more of an ending point in the history of medieval English bureaucratic culture. Far from being "an early chapter in the genealogy of bureaucratic culture,”[25] Hoccleve reflects currents of bureaucratic thought processes and worldviews present from the early days of administration. His service under a new and upstart royal dynasty and his own insistence that he followed Father Chaucer’s vernacular poetic paradigm, has resulted in Hoccleve rarely being considered alongside writers further back than John Gower or William Langland. Present within longstanding textual tropes about sins of the tongue, courtly decadence,

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[24] Ibid., 108.
[25] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 5, 186.

and misspent youth are bureaucratic strategies for self-aggrandizement, self-care, and advice to powerful persons about proper governance and the shepherding of collected wisdom. Twelfth-century sage administrators, thirteenth-century lawmen and fifteenth-century scribes recognized the king's need for a special sort of advisor and protector, and envisioned themselves and others like them serving this role due to their unique skills and experience. Administrative writers harnessed destructive discourses (real or imagined) like court criticism, denunciations of detractors regarding proper education and writing practices, documentary errors, and gossip, and negotiated them into constructive discourses defining and maintaining administrative personalities and operations. Hoccleve receives much attention for his experimentation with textual speech techniques to establish sympathetic and trustworthy poetic personae, in control of himself and his representation. But he inherits this enthusiasm from early administrative writers who likewise wrote themselves into their texts as narrators and/or characters for various rhetorical purposes.

Viewing the development of bureaucratic culture over time makes more apparent the characteristics of administrative employment and the significance of coping mechanisms. Writers navigated changes in hierarchical social relations, political scandals and upsets, and technological advancement all the while evolving means of situating themselves near to the king physically or figuratively as legitimate advisor. The texts at issue here are "semi-official," but it is apparent they were a vital component of career development and professionalization, advancing individual interests while also anticipating procedural developments

and the emergence of record-keeping principles. Citing Richard Firth Green, Knapp posits that there is a gulf between Hoccleve and his twelfth-century colleagues that leaves their textual work intrinsically different. The latter were important men, politically, influencing Henry II and serving sometimes in high Church positions; they wrote in Latin and thus drew their "subject matter…[from] the tradition of ecclesiastical learning";[26] and their texts were thoroughly didactic.[27] Yet one cannot help but notice that, important as they may have been relative to a Thomas Hoccleve, twelfth-century clerical writers like Peter of Blois, John of Salisbury, and Walter Map often appear in modern scholarly reports as "failed" or "disappointed" in their careers. Hoccleve, returned to mental health, finds himself with this same problem.

On one hand, a lesson scholars have learned about Hoccleve—to take his professions of poverty and weak poetic skill with a grain of salt—is usefully applied to the twelfth century. There is an odd dissociation between proclamations of John of Salisbury, for example, as the most educated and well-written man of his generation, and attempts to understand his own modesty as truthful expressions of failure. A reading of twelfth-century letters and politico-didactic treatises along the same lines as a modern critic reads Hoccleve's personal poetry reveals not simply convention, but a manipulation of convention that conveys personal truths even as it distorts factual details. One approach, therefore, to the *Policraticus* or *De nugis curialium* is to look for a carefully-crafted rhetoric of conflict and struggle that allows the author and his narrator-

[26] Ibid., 5-6
[27] Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 102.

character to emblematize the point of contention. By being present in their texts, John of Salisbury or Walter Map do not simply advocate for a position and persuade readers, sometimes changing their mind; instead they exist as human figures who hold complex beliefs and face the material and psychological consequences of policy. They break from a world of textual rhetoric in which readers must evaluate the effectiveness of arguments, and insist upon the human reality belied by *sic et non* methodology. In much the same way, the specter of mental illness prevents Hoccleve's narrator-character from using spoken or written language to instruct readers, and he must construct a textual situation in which he exists as a real, holistic person. Twelfth-century writers who conceive of the sage administrator express their feelings and responses to their world, but they do so as educated persons always do: through carefully-crafted and layered prose. Likewise, the semi-official manuals and legal treatises crafted by the next generation of English administrators discuss and develop the bureaucratic self alongside the bureaucratic apparatus, and ought not be read either as disinterested or as straightforward depictions of the author's worldview.

On the other hand, it is valuable to consider that the privilege twelfth-century clergy and central and ecclesiastical administrators held did not prevent occupational frustrations. Like other secular clergy, Peter, John, and Walter could have pursued more traditional paths less open to criticism or material difficulty, but they held occupational goals that placed them in a contentious position leading to real vacillation and loss of heart. What they share with Hoccleve, and with the composers of the *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, *Glanvill*, and *Bracton*, is a

marginality born from the novelty of their socio-economic circumstances. Medieval thinkers held onto the concept of the estate-based hierarchy of laborers, clergy, and nobility far longer than it factually represented social groups. The existence of in-between categories was uncomfortable, even though members of these groups were vital for government, economic and military operations. The clerical ideal, for instance, continued to generate canon law opposed to clerical occupation as civil servants and judges, even though such policies were regularly transgressed or even waived by popes themselves.[28] Composers of administrative literature have in common a perceived lack of stability within the social hierarchy which they sought to stabilize by writing of their singular and distinct ability to serve the king and government and further its program of turning increasingly to documentary records.

One way to write about this instability of employment and identity was to mimic it textually by means of vacillating assertions and opinions. Peter of Blois wrote about himself analogically in the form of a letter to a second Peter of Blois, distressed that he was “limping in two directions,” of the church yet caught in the spaces between church and court, made to feel that he could not be wholly dedicated to either. His dilemma was one topic of his writing, a trial he wanted to learn more about and instruct others on. But alongside this problem he presents his resolution, not truly a solution because itself still problematic, but a path he found himself following whether for better or worse. In the midst of his vacillating opinions on clergy employed at court or in secular government, Peter of Blois

[28] Turner, “Clerical Judges,” 159-79.

wrote in one of his latest letters what appears to be a begrudging end to his clerical dilemma: “I am of the world and I follow the world, and it drags me down with it.”[29] Peter admits that his life has been a worldly one, and accepts the consequences of such a life. This position does not require that secular clergy defend their roles in administration as ideal or spiritually spotless, but surrenders to a less-than-spotless life that is nevertheless justified, important, and fulfilling. A cleric at work in the world might have to resign himself to some loss, which, as twelfth-century court critics like Peter or John of Salisbury tell us, took the form of physical as well as spiritual maladies. Illness and despondency led Peter to write denunciations of curial clergy and clerical bureaucrats that he later retracted, and illness or restoration to health become expressed reasons for writing and reflection.[30] Writing of the modern age’s vices and errors in the final book of his *Policraticus*, John says of himself that he has been “subjected to constant assaults of disease,” which he endured and which led him to a “strengthened…knowledge of God” through a process of struggling to “regain control of soul and body and not be drawn away from…activities by the violence of disease.”[31]

These comments are strikingly similar to Thomas Hoccleve’s extended reflections on his mental and physical illnesses, brought on by overwork, penury,

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[29] This appears in a letter edited by Elizabeth Revell in *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois*, Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 13 (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1993), 169. Cotts discusses it in "Problem of the ‘Court,’" 82.
[30] I have explored the paired Letters 14 and 150, but also Letter 233 apologizes after Archbishop Baldwin’s death to the Canterbury monks for his work as a legal consultant in Baldwin’s attempt to place secular canons near Canterbury, again claiming sickness as a reason for reflection and writing (Cotts, "Critique," 148).
[31] *Policraticus* (Pike), 8.8, 340.

and social alienation. Hoccleve's mind if not his career is pulled in different directions, and modern readers of the S*eries* and even the earlier autobiographical poems often find a high degree of "fragmentation" and "disunity" of both genre and self. His personae, far more personal than those of his contemporaries, are "disjointed," "insecure," and dripping with "Lancastrian unease."[32] His "multivocality"[33] can sometimes border on schizophrenia. He and his Ricardian and Lancastrian colleagues are seen to "deconstruct" and "reconstruct" the self, paralleling their own identity and occupational experience to the progression of England's government or her current monarch.[34] Much like Peter's letter to his namesake might reveal an intentional commentary on a fragmentation of the self, the letter-writer's perception of himself as one pulled until broken into pieces, so the writing of late medieval England recognizes even more acutely than had this twelfth-century statesman the disjointed experience of deploying and expressing loyalty to occupation, monarch, Church, and self.[35] Yet as an heir to Chaucer's reputation, Hoccleve insists he is a supremely uniform figure, whose treatment of language and speech acts reveals his desire for the two halves of his self—poet and bureaucrat—to be united. He wishes to achieve unity among his bureaucratic colleagues amidst the forces of estrangement and isolation that beset the fifteenth-century Privy Seal employee.

Bureaucratic specialization, that force that helped to professionalize

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[32] Tolmie, "Professional," 345, 348, 350.
[33] Strohm, "Lancastrian Court," 650.
[34] See ibid., 644.
[35] Strohm discusses how some disorder arose in late medieval English poetry because of the impossibility of complicit poets fully papering over the hypocrisies and outrages of the ruling monarchs. Of course, whether or not Hoccleve was complicit with the Lancastrian agenda, by choice or by coercion, is a matter of debate (ibid., 659-1).

England's administration by offering an alternative claim to authority for those away from the king's immediate orbit, may also have been a centrifugal force regarding bureaucratic identity-formation. Andrew Galloway finds in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love* the assertion that malleability and changeability are essential features of a servant or follower, that "the means to advancement is…a fragmenting of identity into the functions necessary in late-medieval civic and courtly service."[36] The omnicompetence of twelfth-century officials had long given way to extreme specialization of duties, perhaps to the point that individuals were themselves being divided up into specialized pieces which performed separate duties. Chaucer seems to appear to Hoccleve as a fragmented being, indulging in two separate specialities that Hoccleve thought would be more effective if joined. Sarah Tolmie states that since Hoccleve wrote poetry while his Privy Seal colleagues didn't, "we must allow him a separate vocational commitment," that of vernacular poet, through which he finds "a proprietary voice…that models the disenchanted modernity of his Westminster."[37] But unlike Thomas Usk who might see fragmentation as the ultimate form of vital administrative flexibility, Hoccleve's insistence on his own mental and occupational unity, as argued in chapter four, suggests that fragmentation is the very cause of his "disenchanted modernity" not its solution. Like Peter of Blois, he asserts that there is no easy solution to his personal problems and the challenges of Lancastrian governance, but that the way forward for a man who must nevertheless live his life is to be resolute in his own sense of self.

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[36] Galloway, "Two Usks," 301.
[37] Tolmie, "Professional," 343.

Hoccleve does not wish to generate a second identity as poet any more than Peter felt he could satisfactorily juggle separate identities as devout cleric and worldly intellectual. It was not sufficient for twelfth-century writers of court criticism to insist that civil service duties could be added to the list of permissible clerical proficiencies. John of Salisbury and his disciples undertook a more thorough re-imagining of the bureaucratic secular cleric, one who could be adapted as wise Christian advisor and policymaker, tax official, or royal justice. Specific characteristics of central administrators changed over time, but new groups found themselves in the position John and Peter had, and textually reclaimed the identity of bureaucrat in the context of contemporary discourses about who was naturally suited to serve a king and who held authority in government. If Chaucer fell short of constructing a unified administrator-poet estate primed to insert imaginative and intelligent men into the royal power structure while making transparent the unfavorable business dealings inherent in patronage-based literature and document production, Hoccleve himself enacted a paradigm shift by writing what Tolmie called the "poet's prologues" missing from the *Canterbury Tales*,[38] thus demanding recognition of a type of authority that Chaucer backed away from. But I argue that this paradigm was one of occupational and mental unity, fighting against the forces of fragmentation that had scattered his wits and pushed him from his community of peers. Twelfth-century monk and court critic Nigel Longchamps used the phrase "double man" to criticize clergy with divided loyalties to church and state, and it is this concept

[38] Ibid., 349-51.

that we find Peter of Blois reacting to uncomfortably in his letters where he is doubled and divided. To Hoccleve, Chaucer is such a double man, and his magnum opus, the *Series*, uses the trope of madness to express his great desire that he be unified, that his community of peers be united, and the English administrative apparatus be as consolidated as possible. As administrator and poet Hoccleve can be an effective political actor for the king because his verse productions allow him to act as an unencumbered free agent while his Privy Seal work officially advances royal causes. Crucially, Hoccleve links poetizing to the combatting of malicious speech, a duty that various advisory individuals and groups have claimed over the centuries to perform.

Hoccleve has been cut off from the opportunity for doubleness that twelfth-century secular clergy had, in the form of clerical benefices or other promotions. Literary critics have recognized Hoccleve's awkward position between traditional modes of authority and his need to seek alternatives. Early on, in his first datable poem of 1402, the "Letter of Cupid," a translation of Christine de Pizan's *L'Epistre au Dieu d'Amours*, he is poised between the "masculine literary…models of *chevalerie* and *clergie.*"[39] His solution is to alter the translated text to aggrandize the "estate category of the clerk…thus enabling and highlighting self-referential reflections on his own status as authority."[40] By the time he wrote the *Regiment* he had married,[41] and he returns to the subject of his categorical indeterminacy

[39] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 50, 71.
[40] Ibid., 61-3.
[41] A 1409 raise in his annuity might indicate a marriage around this time, though Knapp's analysis of the "Letter of Cupid" from 1402 requires that the poet already be responding to "the emerging

by problematizing the traditional estate system. Tolmie finds evidence of Hoccleve emphasizing vernacular poetic authority by means of co-opting clerical authority: “He reconfigures the traditional tripartite division of society into those who fight, those who work, and those who write. Those who pray, the clergy, are elided, which suggests structurally that governmental clerks have usurped their place, becoming, in effect, the high priests of the bureaucratic state.”[42] In this way Hoccleve seems to have solved the problem as Knapp described it, that the late medieval bureaucrat “is an impossible hybrid caught between the demands of two incommensurate cultural traditions.”[43]

Such a dilemma had long faced clerical-administrators, however, and Hoccleve engages in discourse familiar from twelfth-century court criticism. Though by the fifteenth century the spiritual role of the administrator had long been eclipsed and constituted a sort of de facto secular functionary, the *Regiment*’s Old Man returns to the idealized binary which Gregorian reformers like Peter Damian insisted on. He calls Hoccleve a courtier, explaining the problem with courtiers who, out of greed, seek church promotion: "Of Holy Chirche, my sone, I conceyve / As yit ne hast thow noon avancement. / Yee courteours, ful often yee deceyve / Youre soules for the desirous talent / Yee han to good; and for that thow art brent / With covetyse now, par aventure, / Oonly for muk [worldly gain] thow yernest soules cure” (1401-1407). There is no middle ground here like that which Peter of Blois came to rest on, declaring that he

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identity of the married lay clerk” by “creating an authorial voice that strives for a skeptical distance from all such categories of authorial identity” (ibid., 21, 72-3).

[42] Tolmie, “*Prive Scilence*,” 291.

[43] Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 74.

would “follow the world” even if it dragged him down. The Old Man continues with a criticism of clerical pluralists who neglect their churches and flocks. Peter and others in the twelfth century became clerks as a matter of course and longed for worldly relevance, while Hoccleve’s narrator-character wished to be a priest (1447-8) and “gazid longe first and waytid faste / Aftir sum benefice” (1451-2). Although the Old Man admits there are good priests (1443-4) he also insists Hoccleve would not have been one of them, so all happened for the best (1471-7). Hoccleve seems to resent the condition his loss of clerical authority has left him in, as he here launches into the well-known passage about his patron “Nemo” and how poorly Nemo protects him from clients who cheat scribes out of money (1485-1547).[44] The following extended passage on Hoccleve’s reasons for marrying (love) might also intend to cause readers to dwell on that other reason—lack of Church promotion.

Late medieval anticlericalism stressed not only curial administrators’ neglect of spiritual duties and general corruption, but also their presumption to offer advice to a king “notwithstanding their inexperience in concrete matters.”[45] This one feature of clerical identity that twelfth-century sage administrators tried to overcome by asserting the great need for Christian advisors at sinful courts. Perhaps Hoccleve distanced his poetic persona (if not also his real self) from the Church in part because doing so would free him from problematic associations contemporaries had with clergy. By the later middle ages *not* being a cleric may have been the greater position of strength for a middling administrator looking for

[44] The classic study is Simpson, “Nobody's Man,” 149-80.
[45] Collard and Mairey, “Mutual Representation,” 331, 336.

job security. For that matter, many other social categories were targeted by counsel-based criticism, including wealthy nobles and lawmen.[46] Though Hoccleve may have been emotionally affected by his break with the Church, he also turned this plight into a rhetorical nodal point for self-fashioning and social commentary, as had the twelfth-century court critics. In the voice of the Old Man, Hoccleve asserts that clerical administrators are doubly vexed, because of their twofold opportunity to exploit both government and spiritual service for financial gain. Customary as his discourse in the *Regiment* on clerical shortcomings might seem, its context inverts its meaning. While John of Salisbury or Peter of Blois attempted to overcome suspicions that a cleric who improperly served the court neglected spiritual duties, the Old Man suggests that if Hoccleve had continued to distract himself with longings for a priestly career, he would have neglected his Privy Seal duties. Moreover, the great competence he had gained from twenty-four years' experience would be wasted on a change in calling.[47]

As he divests himself of clerical authority he balances this loss with an assertion of what he as a lay scribe has to offer. While clergy "owith to be mirours of sadnesse [soberness] / And weyve jolitee and wantonnesse" (1441-2), a lay Hoccleve can offer something "fressh and gay" (1906), "a goodly tale or two, / On which he may desporten him by nyght" (1902-3). The narrator's conversation with the Old Man about the late annuities makes clear the degree to which Hoccleve

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[46] Ibid., 39-40 and passim.

[47] Hoccleve reveals the length of his tenure in lines 802-5. The Old Man remarks at this point that "this is a fair tyme; / The tokne is good of they continuance" (806-7), and again later in the poem reminds Hoccleve of the length of his administrative labor (1857-8). During the priesthood conversation, the Old Man insists God would not have looked favorably on Hoccleve's prolonged waiting for a benefice (1464-70).

depends upon noble or royal patronage, and the poet's willingness to undertake the additional labor of literature production in order to fulfill his lord's demands. Unlike a beneficed cleric Hoccleve is not torn between masters, and with undivided loyalty he can serve as a man "that your good lyf fayn wolde" (2037).[48] He concludes this address with the chess-related puns on the exchequer discussed above, underscoring the administrative nature of the learning and wisdom about to be recounted in the remaining treatise. This counsel is layered with personal touches reminding of Hoccleve's circumstances among an increasingly-lay administration and its particular experiences. Judith Ferster points to what she calls a passage about "mutual advice-giving among a universal brotherhood,"[49] which is reminiscent of the scribal dependence on colleagues inside and outside the Privy Seal (2486-99). Hoccleve finishes his story of John of Canace with a moral about men who spend unwisely hoping that others will support them in their poverty, naming himself as a witness who can vouchsafe this knowledge: "I, Hoccleve, in swich cas am gilty; this me touchith" (4360). This leads into advice about how a king spends his money, but Hoccleve is even more heavy-handed in a section on royal prudence when he advises Henry to pay his servants' annual wages or risk losing "the peples benevolence" (4794). Hoccleve is brutally honest, a counter to the typical courtier who will not honestly inform lords about problems with their rule and instead offer "hony wordes wrappid in errour" (*La male regle* 220-1) which will cause them to "fare

[48] For a discussion of the importance to administrators of expressions of loyalty after 1399 see Biggs, "Lancastrian Usurpation," 191-211.
[49] Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 155-6.

amis" (224) and "forgete hemself" (230), harming the health of the realm.

In addition to distance from a degenerate court, a second important characteristic of an honest counsellor in the late middle ages was a willingness to become destitute in service to the truth and a potentially resistant king.[50] Intentional or not, this irony positioned Hoccleve, with his late annuities and poverty-driven maladies, as the ideal advice-giver, too poor to be seen as self-serving and greedy. Though his repeated petitions may seem to suggest otherwise, they underscore continued deprivation shouldered and endured by a civil servant who far from seeking other employment broke from his clerical status and committed yet more fully to a secular, central administrative career. It is often remarked that mirrors for princes are also “mirrors for magistrates,” guides for statesmen, public servants, or other public figures on how to achieve and maintain courtly and administrative work.[51] In his *Complaint*, Hoccleve literally holds up a mirror to himself, an actual, working clerk, and is appalled at what he sees. This mirror reflects a bureaucracy in which the perfection of work and worker has already broken down. He thus produces in the *Series* not a typical administrative manual for the Privy Seal in the vein of the *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, but a proposal for how to correct the disarray. This text asks what happens when a bureaucrat or poet loses the ability to communicate, and by extension what happens when an administrative system predicated on conveying the king’s will ceases to function effectively. England’s civil servants had long

[50] Barr and Ward-Perkins, "Rhetoric of Counsel,” 252.
[51] Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 155, 179-81, 186; Pearsall, "Royal Self-Representation,” 394-96; Nederman "Origins of ‘Policy,’" 155.

been dwelling on this same question, writing about the creation, transfer, and maintenance of information. More than he fears malicious speech Hoccleve fears being forgotten, being swallowed into the same black hole which his predecessors worried would swallow up bureaucratic wisdom.

Walter Map wrote that he was a perpetual stranger to court, "know[ing] not" what it is: "When I leave it, I know it perfectly: when I come back to it I find nothing or but little of what I left there: I am becoming a stranger to it, and it to me."[52] His bureaucratic successor Hoccleve similarly fought against the strange countenances of London confederates alienating him from his productive and communicative labor. Administrative service had challenging if not outright destructive potential, and these two men, on opposite poles of medieval government history, both penned texts that sought to penetrate into the darkness and shed light on their surroundings, acquainting themselves to its operations and mastering its nuances. But Map's statement also underscores the changeability of court, an evolution which caused administrative employees in later generations to not only repeatedly come to terms with the court's and the government's characteristics but to also shape and manage its functioning by describing and prescribing textually. The medieval discourse on advice-giving was implicated in the material reality of administrators' roles, but as a rhetorical trope it was also useful for discussing the relationships between bureaucratic entities. Although clerical roles within a royal court were nothing new in twelfth-century England, developments in education and religious reform caused an

[52] *De nugis curialium* (James, Brooke, and Mynors), 1.1, 3.

acute disapproving tenor surrounding clerical careerism. Entering into a province without stable precedent, twelfth-century school-trained clergy asserted a spiritual-based advisory capacity for themselves near the king. Over time, the numbers of clergy rose in the growing bureaus, and writers like Fitz Nigel and the composers of legal treatises identified themselves not in terms of religious authority or function but in terms of specialized administrative skills.

In a later period, when the term “clerk” no longer automatically connotes a cleric, what is he? Where does his authority lie?[53] To Thomas Hoccleve, he may very well be a poet, whose experiential authority and language facility serves Lancastrian kings who no longer live in a time of religious revival demanding spiritual advisors at court; whose tax collection and legal mechanisms are well-developed; and whose rule has become decidedly more personal with more royal administrative oversight.[54] The Lancastrian renovation of English governance raised the opportunity for *literati* to put forward their ideas about what was wrong and what could be made right. Hoccleve asserts that the proper functioning of government hinges on the proper functioning of its administrators, which cannot happen if they do not adapt to the growing social and geographic distance between the king and his administrative apparatus. I argue that he uses language to construct and idealize this scribal community; just as bad language, including his own mad ramblings, caused communication to break down, so good speech, including constructive forms of gossip, could strengthen the community and allow it to serve the king as a bulwark against less worthy officials and

[53] See Astell, "Division of Clerks,” 32-60.
[54] See Strohm, *England's Empty Throne* regarding the nature of Lancastrian governance.

courtiers. I do not mean to say that he wishes all fellow secretarial scribes to become poets, but that his conception of a collegial administrative collective—or bureaucratic culture—depends on bureaucrats' idiosyncratic control of language. He himself represents a niche field employed in both capacities, and as such, he seeks an authorizing model to help him compete with other sources of wisdom. He writes poems seemingly critical of the court and its flatterers but also imagines an ideal sort of earnest and honest communication between civil servants. Talk mediates relationships between Crown and subject, potentially alienating yet also reuniting lords, servants, and friends; as Hoccleve defends his position to influence the government he uses texts to make sure his voice, at once trustworthy and gossipy, is heard.

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